

mains of the true Gothic *un-Gibbs'd**, and the profusion of painted glass, were entertainment enough to me. In the picture-gallery are quantities of portraits; but in general they are not only not so much as copies, but *proxies*—so totally unlike they are to the persons they pretend to represent. All I will tell you more of Oxford is, that Fashion has so far prevailed over her collegiate sister, Custom, that they have altered the hour of dinner from twelve to one. Does not it put one in mind of reformations in religion? One don't abolish Mahomedism; one only brings it back to where the impostor himself left it.—I think it is at the South-sea-house, where they have been forced to alter the hours of payment, instead of from ten to twelve, to from twelve to two; so much do even moneyed citizens sail with the current of idleness!

Was not I talking of religious sects? Methodism is quite decayed in Oxford, its cradle. In its stead, there prevails a delightful fantastic system, called the sect of the Hutchinsonians, of whom one seldom hears any thing in town. After much enquiry, all I can discover is, that their religion consists in driving Hebrew to its fountain head, till they find some word or other in every text of the Old Testament, which may seem figurative of something in the New, or at least of something that may happen God knows when, in consequence of the New. As their doctrine is novel, and requires much study, or at least much invention, one should think that they could not have settled half the canon of what they are to believe—and yet they go on zealously, trying to make and succeeding in making converts.—I could not help smiling at the thoughts of *etymological salvation*†; and I am sure you will smile when I tell you, that according to their gravest doctors, *Soap is an excellent type of Jesus Christ, and the York-buildings waterworks of the Trinity*.—I don't know whether this is not as entertaining as the passion of the Moravians for the *little side-hole*! Adieu! my dear sir!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

* Mr. Walpole means, unaltered by the architect Gibbs.

† Alluding to what he has said above of driv-

ing Hebrew to its fountain head, and so making salvation to depend upon the meaning or etymology of some particular word. E.

LETTER IV.

Arlington-street, December 19, 1753.

I LITTLE thought when I parted with you, my dear sir, that your absence¹ could indemnify me so well for itself; I still less expected that I should find you improving daily: but your letters grow more and more entertaining; your drawings more and more picturesque; you write with more wit, and paint with more *melancholy*, than ever any body did: your woody mountains hang down *somewhat so poetical*, as Mr. Ashe² said, that your own poet Gray will scarce keep tune with you. All this refers to your cascade scene and your letter. For the library, it cannot have the Strawberry imprimatur: the double arches and double pinnacles are most ungraceful; and the doors below the book-cases in Mr. Chute's design had a conventual look, which yours totally wants. For this time, we shall put your genius in commission, and, like some other regents, execute our own plan without minding our sovereign. For the chimney, I do not wonder you missed our instructions: we could not contrive to understand them ourselves; and therefore, determining nothing but to have the old picture stuck in a thicket of pinnacles, we left it to you to find out *the how*. I believe it will be a little difficult; but as I suppose *facere quia impossibile est*, is full as easy as *credere*, why—you must do it.

The present journal of the world and of me stands thus: King George II. does not go abroad—Some folks fear nephews³, as much as others hate uncles. The castle of Dublin has carried the Armagh election by one vote only—which is thought equivalent to losing it by twenty. Mr. Pelham has been very ill, I thought of St. Patrick's fire⁴, but it proved St. Antony's. Our house of commons, mere poachers, are piddling with the torture of Leheup, who extracted so much money out of the lottery.

¹ Mr. Bentley was now in the island of Jersey, whither he had retired on account of the derangement of his affairs; and whither all the following letters are addressed to him.

down somewhat poetical."

² Frederic II. king of Prussia, nephew to George II. Mr. Walpole alludes to himself, who was upon bad terms with his uncle Horace E. Walpole, afterwards lord Walpole of Wolterton. E.

³ A nursery-man at Twickenham. He had served Pope. Mr. Walpole telling him he would have his trees planted irregularly, he said, "Yes, sir, I understand; you would have them hang

⁴ Alluding to the disturbances and opposition to government, which took place in Ireland during the viceroyalty of Lionel duke of Dorset.

The robber of *Po Yang*¹ is discovered, and I hope will be put to death, without my pity interfering, as it has done for Mr. Shorter's servant², or lady ———'s, as it did for Maclean³. In short, it was a heron. I like this better than thieves, as I believe the gang will be more easily destroyed, though not mentioned in the king's speech or Fielding's treatises.

Lord Clarendon, lord Thanet, and lord Burlington, are dead. The second sent for his taylor, and asked him if he could make him a suit of mourning in eight hours: if he could, he would go into mourning for his brother Burlington⁴—but that he did not expect to live twelve hours himself.

There are two more volumes come out of Sir Charles Grandison. I shall detain them till the last is published, and not think I postpone much of your pleasure. For my part, I stopped at the fourth; I was so tired of sets of people getting together, and saying, *Pray, miss, with whom are you in love?* and of mighty good young men that convert your *Mr. M——s* in the twinkling of a sermon!—You have not been much more diverted, I fear, with Hogarth's book '—'Tis very silly!—Palmyra is come forth, and is a noble book; the prints finely engraved, and an admirable dissertation before it. My wonder is much abated: the Palmyrene empire which I had figured, shrunk to a small trading city with some magnificent public buildings out of proportion to the dignity of the place.

The operas succeed pretty well; and music has so much recovered its power of charming, that there is started up a burletta at Covent-garden, that has half the vogue of the old Beggar's opera: indeed there is a soubrette, called the Nicolina, who, besides being pretty, has more vivacity and variety of humour than ever existed in any creature.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

¹ Mr. Walpole had given this Chinese name to a pond of gold fish at Strawberry-hill.

² A celebrated highwayman.

³ A Swiss servant of Erasmus Shorter's, maternal uncle to Mr. Walpole, who was not without suspicion of having hastened his master's death. E.

⁴ The countesses of Thanet and Burlington were sisters.

⁵ The Analysis of Beauty.

LETTER

LETTER V.

Arlington-street, March 2, 1754.

AFTER calling two or three times without finding him, I wrote yesterday to lord Granville¹, and received a most gracious answer, but desiring to see me. I went. He repeated all your history with him, and mentioned your vivacity at parting; however, consented to give you the apartment, with great good humour, and said he would write to his bailiff; and added, laughing, that he had an old cross housekeeper, who had regularly quarrelled with all his grantees. It is well that some of your desires, though unfortunately the most trifling, depend on me alone, as those at least are sure of being executed. By Tuesday's coach there will go to Southampton, two orange-trees, two Arabian jasmines, some tuberose roots, and plenty of cypress seeds, which last I send you in lieu of the olive-trees, none of which are yet come over.

The weather grows fine, and I have resumed little flights to Strawberry. I carried G. Montagu thither, who was in raptures, and screamed, and hooped and hollaed, and danced, and crossed himself a thousand times over. He returns to-morrow to Greatworth, and I fear will give himself up entirely to country *'squirehood*. But what will you say to greater honour which Strawberry has received? Nolkejumskoi² has been to see it, and liked the windows and staircase. I can't conceive how he entered it. I should have figured him like Gulliver cutting down some of the largest oaks in Windsor forest to make joint-stools, in order to straddle over the battlements and peep in at the windows of Lilliput. I can't deny myself this reflection (even though he liked Strawberry), as he has not employed you as an architect.

Still there is little news. To-day it is said that lord George Sackville is summoned in haste from Ireland, where the grand juries are going to petition for the re-fitting of the parliament. Hitherto they have done nothing but invent satirical healths, which I believe gratify a taste more peculiar to Ire-

¹ John earl Granville, then secretary of state, had an estate in Jersey.

² Cant-name for William duke of Cumberland.

land than politics, drinking. We have had one considerable day in the house of commons here. Lord Egmont, in a very long and fine speech, opposed a new mutiny-bill for the troops going to the East Indies (which I believe occasioned the reports with you of an approaching war). Mr. Conway got infinite reputation by a most charming speech in answer to him, in which he displayed a system of military learning, which was at once new, striking, and entertaining. I had carried monsieur de Gisors thither, who began to take notes of all I explained to him : but I begged he would not ; for, the question regarding French politics, I concluded the Speaker would never have done storming at the Gaul's collecting intelligence in the very senate-house. Lord Holdernefs made a magnificent ball for these foreigners last week : there were 140 people, and most staid supper. Two of my Frenchmen learnt country-dances, and succeeded very well. T'other night they danced minuets for the entertainment of the king at the masquerade ; and then he sent for lady Coventry to dance : it was quite like Herodias—and I believe if he had offered her a boon, she would have chosen the head of *St. John*—I believe I told you of her passion for the young lord B.

Dr. Meade is dead, and his collection going to be sold—I fear I have not virtue enough to resist his miniatures—I shall be ruined !

I shall tell you a new instance of the *Sortes Walpolianæ* : I lately bought an old volume of pamphlets ; I found at the end a history of the dukes of Lorrain, and with that an account of a series of their medals, of which, says the author, there are but two sets in England. It so happens that I bought a set above ten years ago at lord Oxford's sale ; and on examination I found the duchess, wife of duke René, has a head-dress, allowing for being modernised, as the medals are modern, which is evidently the same with that figure in my marriage of Henry VI. which I had imagined was of her. It is said to be taken from her tomb at Angiers ; and that I might not decide too quickly en connoisseur, I have sent to Angiers for a draught of the tomb.

Poor Mr. Chute was here yesterday, the first going out after a confinement of thirteen weeks ; but he is pretty well. We have determined upon the plan for the library^{*}, which we find will fall in exactly with the proportions of the room, with no variations from the little door-case of *St.*

^{*} At Strawberry-hill.

TO RICHARD BENTLEY, Esq.

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Paul's, but widening the larger arches. I believe I shall beg your assistance again about the chimney-piece and ceiling; but I can decide nothing till I have been again at Strawberry. Adieu! my dear sir,

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER VI.

Arlington-street, March 6, 1754.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOU will be surprised at my writing again so very soon; but, unpleasant as it is to be the bearer of ill news¹, I flattered myself that you would endure it better from me, than to be shocked with it from an indifferent hand, who would not have the same management for your tenderness and delicacy as I naturally shall, who always feel for you, and on this occasion with you! You are very unfortunate: you have not many real friends, and you lose—for I must tell it you, the chief of them! indeed, the only one who could have been of real use to you—for what can I do, but wish, and attempt, and miscarry?—or from whom could I have hoped assistance for you, or warmth for myself and my friends, but from the friend I have this morning lost?—But it is too selfish to be talking of our losses, when Britain, Europe, the world, the king, Jack Roberts², lord Barnard³, have lost their guardian angel.—What are private misfortunes to the affliction of one's country? or how inglorious is an Englishman to bewail himself, when a true patriot should be acting for the good of mankind!—Indeed, if it is possible to feel any comfort, it is from seeing how many true Englishmen, how many *true Scotchmen*, are zealous to replace the loss, and snatch at the rudder of the state, amidst this storm and danger! Oh! my friend, how will your heart glow with melancholy admiration, when I tell you, that even the poor duke of Newcastle himself conquers the torrent of his

¹ This is an ironic letter on the death of Henry Pelham, first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, with whom Mr. Walpole was on ill terms.

² John Roberts, esquire, secretary to Mr. Pelham.

³ Henry Vane, afterwards earl of Darlington.

grief,

grief, and has promised Mrs. Betty Spence¹, and Mr. Graham the apothecary, that, rather than abandon England to its evil genius, He will even submit to be lord treasurer himself! My lord chancellor², too, is said to be willing to devote himself in the same manner for the good of his country. Lord Hartington³ is the most inconsolable of all; and when Mrs. Molly Bodens⁴ and Mrs. G. were entreated by some of the cabinet council to ask him whom he wished to have minister, the only answer they could draw from him was, *A Whig! a Whig!* As for lord B. I may truly say, he is humbled and licks the dust; for his tongue, which never used to hang below the waistband of his breeches, is now dropped down to his shoe-buckles; and had not Mr. Stone assured him, that if the worst came to the worst, they could but make their fortunes under another family, I don't know whether he would not have despaired of the commonwealth. But though I sincerely pity so good a citizen, I cannot help feeling most for poor lord Holderness, who sees a scheme of glory dashed which would have added new lustre to the British annals, and have transmitted the name of D'Arcy down to latest posterity. He had but just taken Mr. Mason the poet into his house to write his deserts; and he had just reason to expect that the secretary's office would have gained a superiority over that of France and Italy, which was unknown even to Walsingham.

I had written thus far, and perhaps should have elegized on for a page or two farther, when Harry, who has no idea of the dignity of grief, blundered in, with satisfaction in his countenance, and thrust two packets from you into my hand.—Alas! he little knew that I was incapable of tasting any satisfaction but in the indulgence of my concern.—I was once going to commit them to the devouring flames, lest any light or vain sentence should tempt me to smile; but my turn for true philosophy checked my hand, and made me determine to prove that I could at once launch into the bosom of pleasure and be insensible to it.—I have conquered; I have read your letters, and yet think of nothing but Mr. Pelham's death! Could lady —— do thus? Could she receive a love-letter from Mr. ——, and yet think only on her breathless lord?

¹ Companion to the duchess of Newcastle. vonshire.

² Philip earl of Hardwicke.

⁴ Companion of lady Burlington, lord Hartington's mother-in-law.

³ William, afterwards fourth duke of Devonshire.

Thursday 7.

I WROTE the above last night, and have staid as late as I could this evening, that I might be able to tell you who the person is in whom all the world is to discover the proper qualities for replacing the national loss. But, alas! the experience of two whole days has showed, that the misfortune is irreparable; and I don't know whether the elegies on his death will not be finished before there be any occasion for congratulations to his successor. The mystery is profound. How shocking it will be if things should go on just as they are! I mean by that, how mortifying, if it is discovered, that when all the world thought Mr. Pelham did and could alone maintain the calm and carry on the government, even he was not necessary, and that it was the calm and the government that carried on themselves! However, this is not my opinion. — I believe all this *will make a party*.

Good-night! There are two more new plays: Constantine, the better of them, expired the fourth night at Covent-garden. Virginia, by Garrick's acting and popularity, flourishes still: he has written a remarkably good epilogue to it. Lord Bolingbroke is come forth in five pompous quartos, two and a half new and most unorthodox. Warburton is resolved to answer, and the bishops not to answer him. I have not had a moment to look into it. Good-night!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

 LETTER VII.

Arlington-street, March 17, 1754.

IN the confusion of things, I last week hazarded a free letter to you by the common post. The confusion is by no means ceased. However, as some circumstances may have rendered a desire of intelligence necessary, I

Mr. Walpole, when young, loved faction; Mr. W. said eagerly, "Will they make a party?"
and Mr. Bentley one day saying, "that he believed certain opinions would make a sect,"

send

send this by the coach, with the last volume of Sir Charles Grandison, for its chaperon.

After all the world had been named for chancellor of the exchequer, and my lord chief justice Lee, who is no part of the world, really made so pro tempore; lord Hartington went to notify to Mr. Fox, that the cabinet council having given it as their unanimous opinion to the king, that the duke of Newcastle should be at the head of the treasury, and he (Mr. Fox) secretary of state with the management of the house of commons; his grace, who had submitted to so *oracular* a sentence, hoped Mr. Fox would not refuse to concur in so salutary a measure; and assured him, that *though* the duke would reserve the sole disposition of the secret service-money, his grace would bestow his entire confidence on Mr. Fox, and acquaint him with the most minute details of that service. Mr. Fox bowed and obeyed—and, as a preliminary step, received the chancellor's' absolution. From thence he attended his—and our new master.—But either grief for his brother's death, or joy for it, had so intoxicated the new *maire du palais*, that he would not ratify any one of the conditions he had imposed: and though my lord Hartington's virtue interposed, and remonstrated on the purport of the message he had carried, the duke persisted in assuming the whole and undivided power himself, and left Mr. Fox no choice, but of obeying or disobeying, as he might choose. This produced the next day a letter from Mr. Fox, carried by my lord Hartington, in which he refused secretary of state, and pinned down the lye with which the new ministry is to commence. It was tried to be patched up at the chancellor's on Friday night, though ineffectually; and yesterday morning Mr. Fox in an audience desired to remain secretary at war. The duke immediately kissed hands—declared, in the most unusual manner, universal minister. Legge was to be chancellor of the exchequer; but I can't tell whether that disposition will hold, as lord Duplin is proclaimed the acting favourite. The German sir Thomas Robinson was thought on for the secretary's seals; but has just sense enough to be unwilling to accept them under so ridiculous an administration.—This is the first act of the comedy.

On Friday this august remnant of the Pelhams went to court for the

* With whom he was at variance.

first time. At the foot of the stairs he cried and sunk down: the yeomen of the guard were forced to drag him up under the arms. When the closet-door opened, he flung himself at his length at the king's feet, sobbed, and cried "God bless your majesty! God preserve your majesty!" and lay there howling and embracing the king's knees, with one foot so extended, that my lord C——, who was *luckily* in waiting, and begged the standers-by to retire, with "For God's sake, gentlemen, don't look at a great man in distress," endeavouring to shut the door, caught his grace's foot, and made him roar out with pain.

You can have no notion of what points of ceremony have been agitated about the tears of the family. George Selwyn was told that my lady Catherine had not shed one tear: "And pray," said he, "don't she intend it?" It is settled that Mrs. —— is not to cry till she is brought-to-bed.

You love George Selwyn's bons-mots: this crisis has redoubled them: here is one of his best. My lord chancellor is to be earl of Clarendon:—"Yes," said Selwyn, from the very summit of the whites of his demure eyes; "and I suppose he will get the title of Rochester for his son-in-law, my lord A——." Do you think he will ever lose the title of lord Rochester?

I expected that we should have been over-run with elegies and panegyrics: indeed I comforted myself, that one word in all of them would atone for the rest—the *late* Mr. Pelham. But the world seems to allow that their universal attachment and submission was universal interestedness: there has not been published a single encomium: orator Henley alone has held forth in his praise:—yesterday it was on *charming lady Catherine*. Don't you think it should have been in these words, in his usual style?

Oratory-chapel.—Right reason; madness; charming lady Catherine; hell-fire, &c.

Monday, March 18.

ALMOST as extraordinary news as our political, is, that it has snowed ten days successively, and most part of each day: it is living in Muscovy, amid ice and revolutions: I hope lodgings will begin to let a little dear in Siberia!

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Beckford and Delaval, two celebrated partisans, met lately at Shaftesbury, where they oppose one another : the latter said,

“ Art thou the man, whom men fam'd Beckford call ? ”

T'other replied,

“ Art thou the much more famous Delaval ? ”

But to leave politics, and change of ministries, and to come to something of *real* consequence, I must apply you to my library ceiling ; of which I send you some rudiments. I propose to have it all painted by Clermont ; the principal part in chiaro scuro, on the design which you drew for the Paraclete : but as that pattern would be surfeiting so often repeated in an extension of 20 feet by 30, I propose to break and enliven it by compartments in colours, according to the enclosed sketch, which you must adjust and dimension. Adieu !

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER VIII.

MY DEAR SIR,

Arlington-street, May 18, 1754.

UNLESS you will be exact in dating your letters, you will occasion me much confusion. Since the undated one which I mentioned in my last, I have received another as unregistered, with the fragment of the rock, telling me of one which had set sail on the eighteenth, I suppose of last month, and been driven back : this I conclude was the former undated. Yesterday I received a longer, tipped with May 8th. You must submit to this lecture, and I hope will amend by it. I cannot promise that I shall correct myself much in the intention I had of writing to you seldomer and shorter at this time of year. If you could be persuaded how insignificant I think all I do, how little important it is even to myself, you would not wonder that I have not much empressement to give the detail of it to any body else. Little ex-
cursions

curfions to Strawberry, little parties to dine there, and many jaunts to hurry Bromwich, and the carver, and Clermont, are my material occupations. Think of fending these 'cross the sea!—The times produce nothing: there is neither party, nor controversy, nor gallantry, nor fashion, nor literature—the whole proceeds like farmers regulating themselves, their business, their views, their diversions, by the almanac. Mr. Pelham's death has scarce produced a change; the changes in Ireland, scarce a murmur. Even in France the squabbles of the parliament and clergy are under the same opiate influence.—I don't believe that mademoiselle Murphy* (who is delivered of a prince, and is lodged openly at Versailles) and madame Pompadour will mix the least grain of ratbane in one another's tea. I, who love to ride in the whirlwind, cannot record the yawns of such an age!

The little that I believe you would care to know relating to the Strawberry annals, is, that the great tower is finished on the outside, and the whole whitened, and has a charming effect, especially as the verdure of this year is beyond what I have ever seen it: the grove nearest the house comes on much: you know I had almost despaired of its ever making a figure. The bow-window room over the supper-parlour is finished; hung with a plain blue paper, with a chintz bed and chairs; my father and mother over the chimney in the Gibbons frame, about which you know we were in dispute what to do. I have fixed on black and gold, and it has a charming effect over your chimney with the two dropping points, which is executed exactly; and the old grate of Henry VIII. which you bought, is within it. In each pannel round the room is a single picture; Grey's, sir Charles Williams's, and yours, in their black and gold frames; mine is to match yours; and on each side the door are the pictures of Mr. Churchill and lady Mary, with their son, on one side, Mr. Conway and lady Ailesbury on the other. You can't imagine how new and pretty this furniture is.—I believe I must get you to send me an attestation, under your hand that you knew nothing of it, that Mr. Rigby may allow that at least this one room was by my own direction. As the library and great parlour grow finished, you shall have exact notice.

* An Irishwoman for a short time mistress to Louis XV.

From Mabland¹ I have little news to send you, but that the obelisk is danced from the middle of the rabbit-warren into his neighbour's garden, and he pays a ground-rent for looking at it there. His shrubs are hitherto unmolested,

Et Maryboniacos² gaudet revirescere lucos!

The town is as busy again as ever on the affair of Canning, who has been tried for perjury. The jury would have brought her in guilty of perjury, but not wilful, till the judge informed them that that would rather be an Irish verdict: they then brought her in simply guilty, but recommended her. In short, nothing is discovered: the most general opinion is that she was robbed, but by some other gipsy. For my own part, I am not at all brought to believe her story, nor shall, till I hear that living seven-and-twenty days without eating is among one of those secrets for doing impossibilities, which I suppose will be at last found out. You know my system is, that every thing will be found out, and about the time that I am dead, even some art of living for ever.

You was in pain for me, and indeed I was in pain for myself, on the prospect of the sale of Dr. Meade's miniatures. You may be easy; it is more than I am quite; for it is come out that the late prince of Wales had bought them every one.

I have not yet had time to have your granite examined, but will next week. If you have not noticed to your sisters any present of Ormer shells, I shall contradict myself, and accept them for my lady Lyttelton, who is making a grotto. As many as you can send conveniently, and any thing for the same use, will be very acceptable. You will laugh when I tell you that I am employed to reconcile sir George and Moore³: the latter has been very flippant, say impertinent, on the latter's giving a little place to Bower, in preference to him.—Think of my being the mediator!

¹ A cant name which Mr. Walpole had given to lord Radnor's whimsical house and grounds at Twickenham. E.

² Lord Radnor's garden was full of statues, &c. like that at Marybone.

³ Author of *The World*, and some plays and poems. Moore had written in defence of lord Lyttelton against the *Letters to the Whigs*, which were not known to be Mr. Walpole's.

TO RICHARD BENTLEY, Esq.

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The parliament is to meet for a few days the end of this month, to give perfection to the regency-bill. If the king dies before the end of this month, the old parliament revives, which would make tolerable confusion, considering what sums have been laid out on seats in this.—Adieu! This letter did not come kindly; I reckon it rather extorted from me, and therefore hope it will not amuse. However, I am in tolerable charity with you, and

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER IX.

Strawberry-hill, July 9, 1754.

I ONLY write a letter for company to the inclosed one. Mr. Chute is returned from the Vine, and gives you a thousand thanks for your letter; and if ever he writes, I don't doubt but it will be to you. Gray and he come hither to-morrow, and I am promised Montagu and the 'colonel in about a fortnight—How naturally my pen adds, but when does Mr. Bentley come? I am sure Mr. Wicks wants to ask me the same question every day—*Speak to it, Horatio!*—Sir Charles Williams brought his eldest daughter hither last week: she is one of your real admirers, and, without its being proposed to her, went on the bowling-green, and drew a perspective view of the castle from the angle, in a manner to deserve the thanks of the *committee*²: she is to be married to my lord Essex in a week, and I begged she would make you overseer of the works at Cashibury. Sir Charles told me, that on the duke of Bedford's wanting a Chinese house at Woburn, he said, "Why don't your grace speak to Mr. Walpole? He has the prettiest plan in the world for one."—"Oh," replied the duke, "but then it would be too dear!" I hope this was very great oeconomy, or I am sure ours would be very great extravagance—Only think of a plan for poor little Strawberry giving the alarm to thirty thousand pounds a year!—My dear sir, it is time

¹ Charles Montagu, brother of George, and afterwards general, and knight of the bath.

² Mr. Walpole in these letters calls the Strawberry committee, those of his friends who had assisted in the plans and Gothic ornaments of Strawberry-hill. E.

to retrench! Pray send me a slice of granite¹ no bigger than a Naples biscuit.

The monument for my mother is at last erected: it puts me in mind of the manner of interring the kings of France: when the reigning one dies, the last before him is buried. Will you believe that I have not yet seen the tomb? None of my acquaintance were in town, and I literally had not courage to venture alone among the Westminster-boys at the abbey; they are as formidable to me as the ship-carpenters at Portsmouth. I think I have showed you the inscription, and therefore I don't send it you.

I was reading t'other day the Life of colonel Codrington, who founded the library at All Souls: he left a large estate for the propagation of the gospel, and ordered that three hundred negroes should constantly be employed upon it: did one ever hear a more truly christian charity, than keeping up a perpetuity of three hundred slaves to look after the gospel's estate? How could one intend a religious legacy, and miss the disposition of that estate for delivering three hundred negroes from the most shocking slavery imaginable? Must devotion be twisted into the unfeeling interests of trade? I must revenge myself for the horror this fact has given me, and tell you a story of Gideon². He breeds his children christians: he had a mind to know what proficiencie his son had made in his new religion; so, says he, I began, and asked him, who made him? He said, God. I then asked him, who redeemed him? He replied very readily, Christ. Well, then I was at the end of my interrogatories, and did not know what other question to put to him—I said, Who—who—I did not know what to say—at last I said, Who gave you that hat? The holy ghost, said the boy.—Did you ever hear a better catechism?—The great cry against Nugent at Bristol was for having voted for the Jew bill: one old woman said, “What, must we be represented by a Jew and an Irishman?” He replied with great quickness, “My good dame, if you will step aside with me into a corner, I will show you that I am *not* a Jew, and that *I am* an Irishman.”

¹ Mr. Walpole had commissioned Mr. Bentley to send him a piece of the granite found in the island of Jersey, for a side-board in his dining-room. It is now at Strawberry-hill. E.

² Sampson Gideon, a noted rich Jew.

³ Of Wales.

The prince^s ¹ has breakfasted at the long fir Thomas Robinson's at Whitehall: my lady T—— will never forgive it. The second ² dowager of Somerset is gone to know whether all her letters from the living to the dead have been received. Before I bid you good-night, I must tell you of an admirable curiosity: I was looking over one of our antiquarian volumes, and in the description of Leeds is an account of Mr. Thoresby's famous museum there—What do you think is one of the rarities? *A knife taken from one of the Mohocks!* Whether tradition is infallible or not, as you say, I think so authentic a relique will make their history indisputable—Castles, Chinese houses, tombs, negroes, Jews, Irishmen, princesses, and Mohocks—what a farrago do I send you! I trust that a letter from England to Jersey has an imposing air, and that you don't presume to laugh at any thing that comes from your mother island. Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER X.

Strawberry-hill, November 3, 1754.

I HAVE finished all my parties, and am drawing towards a conclusion here: the parliament meets in ten days: the house, I hear, will be extremely full—curiosity drawing as many to town as party used to do. The minister ³ in the house of lords is a new fight in these days.

Mr. Chute and I have been at Mr. Barret's ⁴ at Belhouse; I never saw a place for which one did not wish, so totally void of faults. What he has done is in Gothic, and very true, though not up to the perfection of the committee. The hall is pretty; the great dining-room hung with good family pictures; among which is his ancestor, the lord Dacre, who was hanged. I remember, when Barret was first initiated in the college of arms by the present dean of Exeter ⁵ at Cambridge, he was overjoyed at

¹ Of Wales.

² Frances Thynne.

³ The duke of Newcastle.

⁴ Afterwards lord Dacre.

⁵ Dr. Charles Lyttelton.

the first ancestor he *put up*, who was one of the murderers of Thomas Becket. The chimney-pieces, except one little miscarriage into total Ionic (he could not resist statuary and Siena marble), are all of a good king James the first Gothic. I saw the heronry so fatal to Po Yang, and told him that I was persuaded they were descended from Becket's assassin, and I hoped from my lord Dacre too. He carried us to see the famous plantations and buildings of the last lord Petre. They are the Brobdignag of bad taste. The unfinished house is execrable, massive, and split through and through: it stands on the brow of a hill, rather to see *for* a prospect than to see one, and turns its back upon an outrageous avenue, which is closed with a screen of tall trees, because he would not be at the expence of beautifying the back front of his house. The clumps are gigantic, and very ill placed.

George Montagu and the colonel have at last been here, and have screamed with approbation through the whole *Cu-gamut*¹. Indeed the library is delightful. They went to the Vine, and approved as much. Do you think we wished for you? I carried down incense and mass-books, and we had most catholic enjoyment of the chapel. In the evenings, indeed, we did *touch a card*² a little to please George—so much, that truly I have scarce an idea left that is not spotted with clubs, hearts, spades and diamonds. There is a vote of the Strawberry committee for great embellishments to the chapel, of which it will not be long before you hear something. It will not be longer than the spring, I trust, before you see something of it. In the mean time, to rest your impatience, I have inclosed a scratch of mine, which you are to draw out better, and try if you can give yourself a perfect idea of the place. All I can say is, that my sketch is at least more intelligible than Gray's was of Stoke, from which you made so like a picture.

Thank you much for the box of Guernsey lilies, which I have received. I have been packing up a few seeds, which have little merit but the merit they will have with you, that they come from the Vine and Strawberry. My chief employ in this part of the world, except surveying my li-

¹ Mr. George Montagu, who used many odd expressions, called his own family the Montagu's the *Cu's*.

² An expression of Mr. Montagu's.

brary, which has scarce any thing but the painting to finish, is planting at Mrs. Clive's, whither I remove all my superabundancies. I have lately planted the green lane, that leads from her garden to the common: "Well," said she, "when it is done, what shall we call it?"—"Why," said I, "what would you call it but Drury-lane?" I mentioned desiring some samples of your Swiss's abilities: Mr. Chute and I even propose, if he should be tolerable, and would continue reasonable, to tempt him over hither, and make him work upon your designs—upon which, you know, it is not easy to make you work. If he improves upon our hands, do you think we shall purchase the fee-simple of him for so many years, as Mr. Smith did of Canaletti? We will *sell to the English*. Can he paint perspectives, and cathedral-isses, and holy glooms? I am sure you could make him paint delightful insides of the chapel at the Vine, and of the library here. I never come up the stairs without reflecting how different it is from its primitive state, when my lady T. all the way she came up the stairs, cried out, "Lord God! Jesus! what a house! It is just such a house as a parson's, where the children lie at the feet of the bed!" I can't say that to-day it puts me much in mind of another speech of my lady's, "that it would be a very pleasant place, if Mrs. Clive's face did not rise upon it and make it so hot!" The fun and Mrs. Clive seem gone for the winter.

The West-Indian war has thrown me into a new study: I read nothing but American voyages, and histories of plantations and settlements. Among all the Indian nations, I have contracted a particular intimacy with the Ontaouanous, a people with whom I beg you will be acquainted: they pique themselves upon speaking the purest dialect. How one should delight in the grammar and dictionary of their *Crusca*! My only fear is, that if any of them are taken prisoners, general Braddock is not a kind of man to have proper attentions to so polite a people; I am even apprehensive that he would damn them, and order them to be scalped, in the very worst plantation-accent. I don't know whether you know that none of the people of that immense continent have any labials: they tell you *que c'est ridicule* to shut the lips, in order to speak. Indeed I was as barbarous as any polite nation in the world, in supposing that there was nothing worth knowing

¹ Mr. Muntz, a Swiss painter.

years to paint exclusively for him, at a fixed

² Mr. Smith, the English consul at Venice, price, and sold his pictures at an advanced price had engaged Canaletti for a certain number of to English travellers. E.

among these charming savages. They are in particular great orators, with this little variation from British eloquence, that at the end of every important paragraph they make a present; whereas we expect to receive one. They begin all their answers with recapitulating what has been said to them; and their method for this is, the respondent gives a little stick to each of the by-standers, who is, for his share, to remember such a paragraph of the speech that is to be answered. You will wonder that I should have given the preference to the Ontaouanous, when there is a much more extraordinary nation to the north of Canada, who have but one leg, and p— from behind their ear; but I own I had rather converse for any time with people who speak like Mr. Pitt, than with a nation of jugglers, who are only fit to go about the country, under the direction of T— and M—. Their existence I do not doubt; they are recorded by Pere Charlevoix, in his much admired history of New France, in which there are such outrageous legends of miracles for the propagation of the gospel, that his fables in natural history seem strict veracity.

Adieu! You write to me as seldom as if you were in an island where the duke of N. was sole minister, parties at an end, and where every thing had done happening.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. I have just seen in the advertisements that there are arrived two new volumes of madame de Sevigné's Letters.—Adieu, my American studies!—adieu, even my favourite Ontaouanous!

LETTER XI.

Arlington-street, Nov. 11, 1754.

IF you was dead, to be sure you would have got somebody to tell me so. If you was alive, to be sure in all this time you would have told me so yourself. It is a month to-day since I received a line from you. There was a Florentine ambassador here in Oliver's reign, who with great circumspection

Two English gentlemen who were shut up in Fort l'Evêque for cheating a Jew.

wrote

wrote to his court, "Some say the protector is dead, others say he is not: for my part, I believe neither one nor t'other." I quote this sage personage, to show you that I have a good precedent, in case I had a mind to continue neutral upon the point of your existence. I can't resolve to believe you dead, lest I should be forced to write to Mr. S. again to bemoan you; and on the other hand, it is convenient to me to believe you living, because I have just received the inclosed from your sister, and the money from Ely. However, if you are actually dead, be so good as to order your executor to receive the money and to answer your sister's letter. If you are not dead, I can tell you who is, and at the same time whose death is to remain as doubtful as yours till to-morrow morning. Don't be alarmed! it is only the queen dowager of Prussia. As *excessive* as the concern for her is at court, the whole royal family, out of great consideration for the mercers, lacemen, &c. agreed not to shed a tear for her till to-morrow morning, when the birth-day will be over; but they are all to rise by six o'clock to-morrow morning to cry quarts. This is the sum of all the news that I learnt to-day on coming from Strawberry-hill, except that lady Betty Waldegrave was robbed t'other night in Hyde-park, under the very noses of the lamps and the patrol. If any body is robbed at the ball at court to-night, you shall hear in my next dispatch. I told you in my last that I had just got two new volumes of madame Sevigné's letters; but I have been cruelly disappointed; they are two hundred letters which had been omitted in the former editions, as having little or nothing worth reading. How provoking, that they would at last let one see that she could write so many letters that were not worth reading! I will tell you the truth: as they are certainly hers, I am glad to see them, but I cannot bear that any body else should. Is not that true sentiment? How would you like to see a letter of hers, describing a wild young Irish lord, a lord P——, who has lately made one of our ingenious wagers, to ride I don't know how many thousand miles in an hour, from Paris to Fontainebleau? But admire the politesse of that nation: instead of endeavouring to lame his horse, or to break his neck, that he might lose the wager, his antagonist and the spectators showed all the attention in the world to keep the road clear, and to remove even pebbles out of his way. They heaped coals of fire upon his head with all the good-breeding of the gospel. Adieu!—If my letters are short, at least my notes are long.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XII.

Arlington-street, November 20, 1754.

IF this does not turn out a scolding letter, I am much mistaken. I shall give way to it with the less scruple, as I think it shall be the last of the kind; not that you will mend, but I cannot support a commerce of visions! and therefore, whenever you send me mighty cheap schemes for finding out longitudes and philosophers' stones, you will excuse me if I only smile, and don't order them to be examined by my council.—For heaven's sake, don't be a projector! Is not it provoking, that, with the best parts in the world, you should have so gentle a portion of common sense? But I am clear, that you never will know the two things in the world that import you the most to know, yourself and me.—Thus much by way of preface: now for the detail.

You tell me in your letter of November 3d, that the quarry of granite might be rented at twenty pounds or twenty shillings, I don't know which, no matter, per annum. When I can't get a table out of it, is it very likely you or I should get a fortune out of it? What signifies the cheapness of the rent? The cutting and shippage would be articles of some little consequence! Who should be supervisor? You, who are so good a manager, so attentive, so diligent, so expeditious, and so accurate? Don't you think our quarry would turn to account? Another article, to which I might apply the same questions, is the project for importation of French wine: it is odd that a scheme so cheap and so practicable should hitherto have been totally overlooked.—One would think the breed of smugglers was lost, like the true spaniels, or genuine golden pippins! My dear sir, you know I never drink three glasses of any wine—Can you think I care whether they are sour or sweet, cheap or dear?—or do you think that I, who am always taking trouble to reduce my trouble into as compact a volume as I can, would tap such an article as importing my own wine? But now comes your last proposal about the Gothic paper. When you made me fix up mine, unpainted, engaging to paint it yourself, and yet could never be persuaded to paint a yard of it, till I was forced to give Bromwich's man God knows what to do it, would you make me believe that you will paint a room eighteen feet by fifteen?—But, seriously, if it is possible for you to lay

lay aside visions, don't be throwing continual discouragements in my way. I have told you seriously and emphatically, that I am labouring your restoration: the scheme is neither facile nor immediate:—but, for God's sake, act like a reasonable man. You have a family to whom you owe serious attention. Don't let me think, that if you return, you will set out upon every wild-goose chase, sticking to nothing, and neglecting chiefly the talents and genius which you have in such excellence, to start projects, which you have too much honesty and too little application ever to thrive by. This advice is, perhaps, worded harshly: but you know the heart from which it proceeds, and you know that, with all my prejudice to it, I can't even pardon your wit, when it is employed to dress up schemes that I think romantic. The glasses and Ray's Proverbs you shall have, and some more gold-fish, when I have leisure to go to Strawberry; for you know I don't suffer any fisheries to be carried on there in my absence.

I am as newsless as in the dead of summer: the parliament produces nothing but elections: there has already been one division on the Oxfordshire of two hundred and sixty-seven whigs to ninety-seven tories: you may calculate the burial of that election easily from these numbers. The queen of Prussia is not dead, as I told you in my last. If you have shed many tears for her, you may set them off to the account of our son-in-law the Prince of Hesse, who is turned Roman catholic. One is in this age so unused to conversions above the rank of a house-maid turned methodist, that it occasions as much surprise as if one had heard that he had been initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries. Are not you prodigiously alarmed for the protestant interest in Germany?

We have operas, burlettas, cargoes of Italian dancers, and none good but the Mingotti, a very fine figure and actress. I don't know a single bon-mot that is new: George Selwyn has not waked yet for the winter. You will believe that, when I tell you, that t'other night having lost eight hundred pounds at hazard, he fell asleep upon the table with near half as much more before him, and slept for three hours, with every body stamping the box close at his ear. He will say prodigiously good things when he does wake. In the meantime can you be *content* with one of madame Sevigné's best bons-mots, which I have found amongst her new letters? Do you remember her German friend the princess of Tarente, who was
always

always in mourning for some sovereign prince or princess? One day madame de Sevigné happening to meet her in colours, made her low curtsy, and said, "*Madame, je me rejouis de la santé de l'Europe.*" I think I may apply another of her speeches, which pleased me, to what I have said to you in the former part of my letter. Mademoiselle du Plessis had said something she disapproved: madame Sevigné said to her, "*Mais que cela est sot, car je veux vous parler doucement.*" Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XIII.

Arlington-street, Friday, December 13, 1754.

"IF we do not make this effort to recover our dignity, we shall only fit here to register the arbitrary edicts of one too powerful a subject!"—Non riconosci tu l'altèro viso? Don't you at once know the style? Shake those words all altogether, and see if they can be any thing but the disjecti membra of Pitt!—In short, about a fortnight ago, this bomb burst. Pitt, who is well, is married, is dissatisfied—not with his bride, but with the duke of N. has twice thundered out his dissatisfaction in parliament, and was seconded by Fox. The event was exactly what I dare say you have already foreseen. Pitt *was to be* turned out; overtures were made to Fox; Pitt is *not* turned out; Fox is quieted with the dignity of cabinet-counsellor, and the duke of N. remains affronted—and omnipotent. The commentary on this text is too long for a letter; it may be developed some time or other. This scene has produced a diverting interlude: fir George Lyttelton, who could not reconcile his content with Mr. Pitt's discontents, has been very ill with the cousinhood. In the grief of his heart he thought of resigning his place; but, *somehow or other*, stumbled upon a negotiation for introducing the duke of Bedford into the ministry again, to balance the loss of Mr. Pitt. Whatever persuaded him, he thought this treaty so sure of success, that he lost no time to be the agent of it himself; and whether commissioned or non-commissioned, as both he and the duke of N. say, he carried carte blanche to the duke of B. who

bounced

bounced like a rocket, frightened away poor sir George, and sent for Mr. Pitt to notify the overture. Pitt and the Grenvilles are outrageous; the duke of N. disclaims his ambassador, and every body laughs. Sir George came hither yesterday, to *expectorate* with me, as he called it. Think how I pricked up my ears, as high as king Midas, to hear a Lyttelton vent his grievances against a Pitt and Grenvilles! Lord Temple has named sir George the *apostolic nuntio*; and George Selwyn says, "that he will certainly be invited by miss A. among the foreign ministers." There are greater storms than perhaps you expected yet: they have occasioned mighty bustle, and whisper, and speculation; but you see

Pulveris exigui jactu composita quiescunt!

You will be diverted with a collateral incident. — me Dick Edgumbe, and asked him with great importance if he knew whether Mr. Pitt was out. Edgumbe, who thinks nothing important that is not to be decided by dice, and who consequently had never once thought of Pitt's political state, replied, "Yes."—"Ay! how do you know?"—"Why, I called at his door just now, and his porter told me so." Another political event is, that lord E. comes into place; he is to succeed lord Fitzwalter, who is to have lord Grantham's pension, who is dead immensely rich—I think this is the last of the old opposition of any name except sir John Bernard—If you have curiosity about the Ohio, you must write to France: there I believe they know something about it: here it was totally forgot, till last night, when an express arrived with an account of the loss of one of the transports off Falmouth, with eight officers and sixty men on board.

My lady T. has been dying, and was wofully frightened, and *took* prayers; but she is recovered now, even of her repentance. You will not be undiverted to hear that the mob of Sudbury have literally sent a *card* to the mob of Bury, to offer their assistance at a contested election there: I hope to be able to tell you in my next that Mrs. H. has sent cards to both mobs for her assembly¹.

¹ Of this lady Mr. Walpole in a letter to another correspondent gives the following account: "You would be diverted with a Mrs. H—, whose passion is keeping an assembly and inviting literally every-body to it. She

goes to the drawing-room to watch for sneezes, whips out a curtsey, and then sends next morning to know how your cold does, and desire your company on Thursday." E.

304 LETTERS FROM THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

The shrubs shall be sent, but you must stay till the holidays; I shall not have time to go to Strawberry sooner. I have received your second letter, dated November 22d, about the Gothic paper. I hope you will by this time have got mine, to dissuade you from that thought. If you insist upon it, I will send the paper: I have told you what I think, and will therefore say no more on that head; but I will transcribe a passage which I found the other day in Petronius, and thought not unapplicable to you: "Omnium herbarum succos Democritus expressit; & ne lapidum virgultorumque vis lateret, acetum inter experimenta consumpsit." I hope Democritus could not draw charmingly, when he threw away his time in extracting tints from flints and twigs!

I can't conclude my letter without telling you what an escape I had at the sale of Dr. Meade's library, which goes extremely dear. In the catalogue I saw Winstanley's views of Audley-inn, which I concluded was, as it really was, a thin dirty folio worth about fifteen shillings. As I thought it might be scarce, it might run to two or three guineas: however, I bid Graham *certainly* buy it for me. He came the next morning in a great fright, said he did not know whether he had done very right or very wrong, that he had gone as far as *nine-and-forty guineas*—I started in such a fright! Another bookseller had luckily had as unlimited a commission, and bid fifty—when my Graham begged it might be adjourned, till they could consult their principals. I think I shall never give an unbounded commission again, even for views of *Les Rochers*! Adieu! Am I ever to see any more of your *hand-drawing*? Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

L E T T E R X I V.

Strawberry-hill, December 24, 1754.

MY DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED your packet of December 6th, last night, but intending to come hither for a few days, had unluckily sent away by the coach in the

* Madame de Sevigné's seat in Bretagne.

morning

morning a parcel of things for you; you must therefore wait till another bundle sets out, for the new letters of madame Sevigné. Heaven forbid that I should have said they were bad! I only meant that they were full of family details, and mortal distempers, to which the most immortal of us are subject; and I was sorry that the profane should ever know that my divinity was ever troubled with a fore leg, or the want of money; though indeed the latter defeats Buffy's ill-natured accusation of avarice; and her tearing herself from her daughter, then at Paris, to go and save money in Bretagne to pay her debts, is a perfection of virtue which completes her amiable character. My lady Hervey has made me most happy, by bringing me from Paris an admirable copy of the very portrait that was madame de Simiane's: I am going to build an altar for it, under the title of *Notre Dame des Rochers*!

Well! but you will want to know the contents of the parcel that is let out. It contains another parcel, which contains I don't know what; but Mr. C—— sent it, and desired I would transmit it to you. There are Ray's Proverbs in two volumes interleaved; a few seeds, mislaid when I sent the last; a very indifferent new tragedy, called *Barbarossa*, now running, the author unknown, but believed to be Garrick himself: there is not one word of *Barbarossa's* real story, but almost the individual history of Merope; not one new thought, and, which is the next material want, but one line of perfect nonsense;

And rain down transports in the shape of sorrow.

To complete it, the manners are so ill observed, that a Mahometan princess royal is at full liberty to visit her lover in Newgate, like the banker's daughter in *George Barnwell*. I have added four more *Worlds*², the second of which will, I think, redeem my lord Chesterfield's character with you for wit, except in the two stories, which are very flat: I mean those of two mispelt letters. In the last *World*³, besides the hand, you will find a story of your acquaintance: *Bon cœur* means Norborne Berkeley, whose horse sinking up to his middle in Woburn-park, he would not allow that it

¹ It was written by Dr. Browne.

² Numbers 92, 98, 100, and 101 of the third volume of that periodical paper.

³ Number 103 by Mr. Walpole.

was any thing more than a little damp. The last story of a highwayman happened almost literally to Mrs. Cavendish.

For news, I think I have none to tell you. Mr. Pitt is gone to the Bath, and Mr. Fox to Newcastle-house; and every body else into the country for the holidays. When lord Bath was told of the first determination of turning out Pitt, and letting Fox remain, he said, it put him in mind of a story of the gunpowder plot. The lord chamberlain was sent to examine the vaults under the parliament-house, and, returning with his report, said, he had found five-and-twenty barrels of gunpowder; that he had removed ten of them, and hoped the other fifteen would do no harm—Was ever any thing so well and so just?

The Russian ambassador is to give a masquerade for the birth of the little great prince¹; the king lends him Somerset-house: he wanted to borrow the palace over against me, and sent to ask it of the cardinal-nephew², who replied, “Not for half Russia.”

The new madness is Oratorys. Macklin has set up one, under the title of The British Inquisition: Foote another, against him: and a third man has advertised another to-day. I have not heard enough in their favour to tempt me to them: nor do I in the world know enough to compose another paragraph. I am here quite alone; Mr. Chute is setting out for his Vine; but in a day or two I expect Mr. Williams³, George Selwyn, and Dick Edgumbe. You will allow that when I do admit any body within my cloister, I choose them well. My present occupation is putting up my books; and thanks to arches, and pinnacles, and pierced columns, I shall not appear scantily provided! Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

¹ The present czar, Paul I.

² Henry earl of Lincoln, nephew to the duke of Newcastle, to whose title he succeeded.

³ George James Williams, esq.

LETTER XV.

Arlington-street, January 9, 1755.

I USED to say that one could not go out of London for two days, without finding at one's return that something very extraordinary had happened; but of late the climate had lost its propensity to odd accidents. Madness be praised, we are a little restored to the want of our senses! I have been twice this Christmas at Strawberry-hill for a few days, and at each return have been not a little surprised: the first time, at the very unexpected death of my lord Albemarle, who was taken ill at Paris, going home from supper, and expired in a few hours; and last week at the far more extraordinary death of —. He himself, with all his judgment in bets, I think would have betted any man in England against himself for self-murder: yet after having been supposed the sharpest genius of his time, he, by all that appears, shot himself on the distress of his circumstances; an apoplectic disposition I believe concurring, either to lower his spirits, or to alarm them. Ever since miss — lived with him, either from liking her himself, as some think, or to tempt her to marry his lilliputian figure, he has squandered vast sums at —, and in living. He lost twelve hundred a year by lord Albemarle's death, and four by lord Gage's, the same day. He asked immediately for the government of Virginia or the Foxhounds, and pressed for an answer with an eagerness that surprised the duke of N. who never had a notion of pinning down the relief of his own or any other man's wants to a day. Yet that seems to have been the case of —, who determined to throw the die of life or death, Tuesday was se'nnight, on the answer he was to receive from court; which did not prove favourable. He consulted indirectly, and at last pretty directly, several people on the easiest method of finishing life; and seems to have thought that he had been too explicit; for he invited company to dinner for the day after his death, and ordered a supper at White's; where he supped too the night before. He played at whist till one in the morning; it was new year's morning: lord Robert Bertie drank to him a happy new year; he clapped his hand strangely to his eyes! In the morning he had a lawyer and three witnesses, and executed his will, which he made them read twice over, paragraph by paragraph: and then asking the lawyer, if that will would stand good, though a man were to shoot himself? and being assured it would; he said, "*Pray stay while I*

step into next room;”—went into next room, and shot himself. He clapped the pistol so close to his head, that they heard no report. The housekeeper heard him fall, and, thinking he had a fit, ran up with drops, and found his skull and brains shot about the room!—You will be charmed with the friendship and generosity of fir —. — a little time since opened his circumstances to him. Sir — said, “—, if it will be of any service to you, you shall see what I have done for you;” pulled out his will, and read it, where he had left him a vast legacy. The beauty of this action is heightened by fir —’s life, not being worth a year’s purchase. I own I feel for the distress this man must have felt, before he decided on so desperate an action. I knew him but little; but he was good-natured and agreeable enough, and had the most compendious understanding I ever knew. He had affected a finesse in money matters beyond what he deserved, and aimed at reducing even natural affections to a kind of calculations like Demoiselle’s. He was asked, soon after his daughter’s marriage, if she was with child:—He replied, “Upon my word, I don’t know; I have no bet upon it.” This and poor —’s self-murder have brought to light another, which happening in France had been sunk; —’s. I can tell you that the ancient and worshipful company of lovers are under a great dilemma, upon a husband and a gamester killing themselves: I don’t know whether they will not apply to parliament for an exclusive charter for self-murder.

On the occasion of —’s story, I heard another more extraordinary. If a man insures his life, this killing himself vacates the bargain. This (as in England almost every thing begets a contradiction) has produced an office for insuring in spite of self-murder; but not beyond three hundred pounds. I suppose voluntary deaths were not then the bon-ton of people in higher life. A man went and insured his life, securing this privilege of a *free-dying* Englishman. He carried the insurers to dine at a tavern, where they met several other persons. After dinner he said to the life-and-death-brokers, “Gentlemen, it is fit that you should be acquainted with the company: these honest men are tradesmen, to whom I was in debt, without any means of paying, but by your assistance; and now I am your humble servant!” He pulled out a pistol and shot himself. Did you ever hear of such a mixture of honesty and knavery?

Lord Rochford is to succeed as groom of the stole. The duke of Marlborough is privy-seal, in the room of lord Gower, who is dead; and the duke

Duke of Rutland is lord steward. Lord Albemarle's other offices and honours are still in petto. When the king first saw this lord Albemarle, he said, "Your father had a great many good qualities, but he was a sieve!" —It is the last receiver into which I should have thought his majesty would have poured gold! You will be pleased with the monarch's politesse. Sir John Bland and Offley made interest to play at twelfth-night, and succeeded —not at play, for they lost 1400*l.* and 1300*l.* As it is not usual for people of no higher rank to play, the king thought they would be bashful about it, and took particular care to do the honours of his house to them, set only to them, and spoke to them at his levee next morning.

You love new nostrums and inventions: there is discovered a method of inoculating the cattle for the distemper—it succeeds so well that they are not even marked. How we advance rapidly in discoveries, and in applying every thing to every thing! Here is another secret, that will better answer your purpose, and I hope mine too. They found out lately at the duke of Argyle's, that any kind of ink may be made of privet: it becomes green ink by mixing salt of tartar. I don't know the process; but I am promised it by Campbell, who told me of it t'other day, when I carried him the true genealogy of the Bentleys, which he assured me shall be inserted in the next edition of the Biographia.

There sets out to-morrow morning, by the Southampton waggon, such a cargo of trees for you, that a detachment of Kentishmen would be furnished against an invasion if they were to unroll the bundle. I write to Mr. S—— to recommend great care of them. Observe how I answer your demands: are you as punctual? The forests in your landscapes do not thrive like those in your letters. Here is a letter from G. Montagu; and then I think I may bid you good-night!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER

310 LETTERS FROM THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

LETTER XVI.

Arlington-street, Feb. 8, 1755.

MY DEAR SIR,

BY the waggon on Thursday there set out for Southampton, a lady whom you must call *Phillis*, but whom George Montagu and the Gods would name *Speckle-belly*. Peter begged her for me, that is for you, that is, for captain Dumaresque, after he had been asked three guineas for another. I hope she will not be poisoned with salt-water, like the poor Poyangers¹. If she should, you will at least observe, that your commissions are not still-born with me, as mine are with you. I *draw*² a spotted dog the moment you desire it.

George Montagu has intercepted the description I promised you of the Russian masquerade: he wrote to beg it, and I cannot transcribe from myself. In few words, there were all the beauties, and all the diamonds, and not a few of the uglies of London. The duke³, like Osman the third, seemed in the centre of his new seraglio, and I believe my lady and I thought that my lord — was the chief eunuch. My lady Coventry was dressed in a great style, and looked better than ever. Lady Betty Spencer, like Rubens's wife (not the common one with the hat), had all the bloom and bashfulness and wildness of youth, with all the countenance of all the former Marlboroughs. Lord Delawar was an excellent mask, from a picture at Kensington of queen Elizabeth's porter. Lady Caroline Peterham, powdered with diamonds and crescents for a Turkish slave, was still extremely handsome. The hazard was excessively deep, to the astonishment of some Frenchmen of quality who are here, and who I believe, from what they saw that night, will not write to their court to dissuade their armaments, on its not being worth their while to attack so beggarly a nation. Our fleet is as little despicable; but though the preparations on both sides are so great, I believe the storm will blow over. They insist on our immediately sending an ambassador to Paris; and to my great satisfaction, my cousin and friend Lord Hertford is to be the man. This is still an entire secret here, but will be known before you receive this.

The weather is very bitter, and keeps me from Strawberry. Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

¹ Mr. Walpole having called his gold-fish-pond *Poyang*, calls the gold-fish *Poyangers*. E.

² Alluding to Mr. Bentley's dilatoriness in exercising his pencil at the request of Mr. Walpole.

³ William, duke of Cumberland.

TO RICHARD BENTLEY, Esq.

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LETTER XVII.

Arlington-street, Feb. 23, 1755.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR *Argosie* is arrived safe; thank you for shells, trees, cones; but above all, thank you for the landscape. As it is your first attempt in oils, and has succeeded so much beyond my expectation (and being against my advice too, you may believe the sincerity of my praises), I must indulge my *Vasarihood*, and write a dissertation upon it. You have united and melted your colours, in a manner to make it look like an old picture; yet there is something in the tone of it, that is not quite right. Mr. Chute thinks that you should have exerted more of your force in tipping with light the edges on which the sun breaks: my own opinion is, that the result of the whole is not natural, by your having joined a Claude Lorrain summer sky to a wintry sea, which you have drawn from the life. The water breaks nicely, but the distant hills are too strong, and the outlines much too hard. The greatest fault is the trees (not apt to be your stumbling-block): they are not of a natural green, have no particular resemblance, and are out of all proportion too large for the figures. Mend these errors, and work away in oil. I am impatient to see some Gothic ruins of your painting. This leads me naturally to thank you for the sweet little cul-de-lampe to the entail: it is equal to any thing you have done in perspective and for taste; but the boy is too large.

For the block of granite I shall certainly think a louis well bestowed—provided I do but get the block, and that you are sure it will be equal to the sample you sent me. My room remains in want of a table; and as it will take so much time to polish it, I do wish you would be a little expeditious in sending it.

I have but frippery-news to tell you; no politics; for the rudiments of a war, that is not to be a war, are not worth detailing. In short, we have acted with spirit, have got ready 30 ships of the line, and conclude that the French will not care to examine whether they are well manned or not. The house of commons bears nothing but elections; the Oxfordshire till seven at

It is now at Strawberry-hill.

night three times a week : we have passed ten evenings on the Colchester election, and last Monday sat upon it till near two in the morning. Whoever stands a contested election, and pays for his seat, and attends the first session, surely buys the other six very dear !

The great event is the catastrophe of Sir ———, who has *flirted* away his whole fortune at hazard. He t'other night exceeded what was lost by the late duke of Bedford, having at one period of the night (though he recovered the greatest part of it) lost two-and-thirty thousand pounds. The citizens put on their double-channeled pumps and trudge to St. James's-street, in expectation of seeing judgments executed on White's—angels with flaming swords, and devils flying away with dice-boxes, like the prints in Sadeler's Hermits. Sir ——— lost this immense sum to a captain ———, who at present has nothing but a few debts and his commission.

Garrick has produced a detestable English opera, which is crowded by all true lovers of their country. To mark the opposition to Italian operas, it is sung by some cast singers, two Italians, and a French girl, and the chapel boys ; and to regale us with sense, it is Shakespeare's Midsummer-Night's Dream, which is forty times more nonsensical than the worst translation of any Italian opera-books—But such sense and such harmony are irresistible !

I am at present confined with a cold, which I caught by going to a fire in the middle of the night, and in the middle of the ~~snow~~, two days ago. About five in the morning Harry waked me with a candle in his hand, and cried, " Pray, your honour, don't be frightened ! " " No, Harry, I am not ; but what is it that I am not to be frightened at ? " " There is a great fire here in St. James's-street. "—I rose, and indeed thought all St. James's-street was on fire, but it proved in Bury-street. However, you know I can't resist going to a fire ; for it is certainly the only horrid sight that is fine. I slipped on my slippers, and an embroidered suit that hung on the chair, and ran to Bury-street, and stepped into a pipe that was broken up for water—It would have made a picture—the horror of the flames, the snow, the day breaking with difficulty through so foul a night, and my figure, partly *pale*, mud and ge!l. It put me in mind of lady Margaret Herbert's providence, who asked somebody for a *pretty* pattern for a night-cap. Lord, said they, what signifies the pattern of a night-cap ?—" Oh, child, said she, but you know, in case
of

TO RICHARD BENTLEY, Esq.

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of fire." There were two houses burnt, and a poor maid; an officer jumped out of window, and is much hurt, and two young beauties were conveyed out the same way in their shifts. There have been two more great fires. Alderman Belchier's house at Epfom, that belonged to the prince, is burnt, and Beckford's fine house in the country, with pictures and furniture to a great value. He says, "Oh! I have an odd fifty thousand pounds in a drawer: I will build it up again: it won't be above a thousand pounds apiece difference to my thirty children." Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XVIII.

Arlington-street, March 6, 1755.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE to thank you for two letters and a picture. I hope my thanks will have a more prosperous journey than my own letters have had of late. You say you have received none since January 9th. I have written three since that. I take care, in conjunction with the times, to make them harmless enough for the post. Whatever secrets I may have (and you know I have no propensity to mystery) will keep very well till I have the happiness of seeing you, though that date should be farther off than I hope. As I mean my letters should relieve some of your anxious or dull minutes, I will tempt no post-masters or secretaries to retard them.

The state of affairs is much altered since my last epistle that persuaded you of the distance of a war. So haughty and so ravenous an answer came from France, that my lord Hertford does not go. As a *little* islander, you may be very easy: Jersey is not prey for such fleets as are likely to encounter in the channel in April. You must tremble in your *Bigendian* capacity, if you mean to figure as a good citizen. I sympathize with you extremely in the interruption it will give to our correspondence. You, in an inactive little spot, cannot wish more impatiently for every post that has the probability of a letter, than I, in all the turbulence of London, do constantly, never-faillingly, for letters from you. Yet by my busy, hurried,

ried, amused, irregular way of life, you would not imagine that I had much time to care for my friends. You know how late I used to rise: it is worse and worse: I stay late at debates and committees; for, with all our tranquillity and my indifference, I think I am never out of the house of commons: from thence, it is the fashion of the winter to go to vast assemblies, which are followed by vast suppers, and those by balls. Last week I was from two at noon till ten at night at the house: I came home, dined, new dressed myself entirely, went to a ball at lord Holderness's, and staid till five in the morning. What an abominable young creature! But why may not I be so? Old Haslang dances at sixty-five; my lady Rochford without stays, and her husband the new groom of the stole, dance. In short, when secretaries of state, cabinet counsellors, foreign ministers, dance like the universal ballet in the Rehearsal, why should not I—see them? In short, the true definition of me is, that I am a dancing senator—Not that I do dance, or do any thing by being a senator; but I go to balls, and to the house of commons—to look on: and you will believe me when I tell you, that I really think the former the more serious occupation of the two; at least the performers are most in earnest. What men say to women, is at least as sincere as what they say to their country. If perjury can give the devil a right to the souls of men, he has titles by as many ways as my lord—is descended from Edward the third.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XIX.

Arlington-street, March 27, 1755.

YOUR chimney^{*} is come, but not to honour: the cariatides are fine and free, but the rest is heavy: lord Strafford is not at all struck with it, and thinks it old-fashioned: it certainly tastes of Inigo Jones. Your myrtles I have seen in their pots, and they are magnificent, but I fear very sickly. In return, I send you a library. You will receive some time or other, or

^{*} A design for a chimney-piece, which, at Mr. Walpole's desire, Mr. Bentley had made for lord Strafford.

the French for you, the following books: a fourth volume of Doddsley's Collection of Poems, the worst tome of the four; three volumes of Worlds; Fielding's Travels, or rather an account how his dropsy was treated and teased by an inn-keeper's wife in the Isle of Wight; the new Letters of madame de Sevigné; and Hume's History of Great Britain; a book, which, though more decried than ever book was, and certainly with faults, I cannot help liking much. It is called Jacobite—but in my opinion is only not *George-abite*: where others abuse the Stuarts, he laughs at them: I am sure he does not spare their ministers. Harding, who has the History of England at the ends of his parliament fingers, says, that the Journals will contradict most of his facts. If it is so, I am sorry; for his style, which is the best we have in history, and his manner, imitated from Voltaire, are very pleasing. He has showed very clearly that we ought to quarrel originally with queen Elizabeth's tyranny for most of the errors of Charles the first. As long as he is willing to sacrifice some royal head, I would not much dispute with him which it should be. I incline every day to lenity, as I see more and more that it is being very partial to think worse of some men than of others. If I was a king myself, I dare say I should cease to love a republic. My lady ——— desired me, t'other day, to give her a motto for a ruby ring, which had been given by a handsome woman of quality to a fine man: he gave it to his mistress, she to lord ———, he to my lady; who, I think, does not deny that it has not yet finished its travels. I excused myself for some time, on the difficulty of reducing such a history to a poesy—at last I proposed this:

This was given by woman to man—and by man to woman.

Are you most impatient to hear of a French war, or the event of the Mitchell election? If the former is uppermost in your thoughts, I can tell you, you are very unfashionable. The whigs and tories in Rome, Athens, and Jerusalem, never forgot national points with more zeal, to attend to private faction, than we have lately. After triumphs repeated in the committee, lord Sandwich and Mr. Fox were beaten largely on the report. It was a most extraordinary day! The tories, who could not trust one another for two hours, had their last consult at the Horn Tavern just before the report, and all but nine or ten voted in a body (with the duke of Newcastle) against agreeing to it: then sir John Philipps, one of them, moved for a void election, but was deserted by most of his clan. We now

begin to turn our hands to foreign war. In the rebellion, the ministry was so unsettled, that nobody seemed to care who was king. Power is now so established, that I must do the engrossers the justice to say, that they seem to be determined that *their own king* shall continue so. Our fleet is great and well manned; we are raising men and money, and messages have been sent to both houses from St. James's, which have been answered by very zealous *cards*. In the mean time, sturdy mandates are arrived from France; however, with a codicil of moderation, and power to Mirepoix still to treat. He was told briskly—"Your terms must come speedily; the fleets will sail very quickly; war cannot then be avoided."

I have passed five entire days lately at doctor Meade's sale, where, however, I bought very little: as extravagantly as he paid for every thing, his name has even refold them with interest. Lord Rockingham gave two hundred and thirty guineas for the Antinous—the dearest bust that, I believe, was ever sold; yet the nose and chin were repaired, and very ill. Lord Exeter bought the Homer for one hundred and thirty. I must tell you a piece of fortune: I supped the first night of the sale at Bedford-house, and found my lord Gowen dealing at silver pharaoh to the women. "Oh!" said I laughing, "I laid out six-and-twenty pounds this morning, I will try if I can win it back;" and threw a shilling upon a card: in five minutes I won a 500-leva, which was twenty-five pounds eleven shillings. I have formerly won a 1000-leva, and another 500-leva.—With such luck, shall not I be able to win you back again?

Last Wednesday I gave a feast in form to the H——s. There was the duke of Grafton, lord and lady Hertford, Mr. Conway, and lady A. In short, all the Conways in the world, my lord Orford, and the Churchills. We dined in the drawing-room below stairs, amidst the Eagle, Vespasian, &c. You never saw so Roman a banquet; but with all my virtù, the bridegroom seemed the most venerable piece of antiquity. Good-night! The books go to Southampton on Monday.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER.

LETTER XX.

Strawberry-hill, April 13, 1755.

IF I did not think that you would expect to hear often from me at so critical a season, I should certainly not write to you to-night: I am here alone, out of spirits, and not well. In short, I have depended too much upon my constitution being like

Grass, that escapes the scythe by being low;

and having nothing of the oak in the sturdiness of my stature, I imagined that my mortality would remain pliant as long as I pleased. But I have taken so little care of myself this winter, and kept such bad hours, that I have brought a slow fever upon my nights, and am worn to a skeleton: Bethel has plump cheeks to mine. However, as it would be unpleasant to die just at the beginning of a war, I am taking exercise and air, and much sleep, and intend to see Troy taken. The prospect thickens: there are certainly above twelve thousand men at the isle of Rhè; some say twenty thousand. An express was yesterday dispatched to Ireland, where it is supposed the storm will burst; but unless our fleet can disappoint the embarkation, I don't see what service the notification can do: we have quite disarmed that kingdom of troops; and if they once land, ten thousand men may walk from one end of the island to the other. It begins to be thought that the K. will not go abroad: that he cannot, every body has long thought. You will be entertained with a prophecy which my lord Chesterfield has found in the 35th chapter of Ezekiel, which clearly promises us victory over the French, and expressly relates to this war, as it mentions the two countries (Nova Scotia and Acadia) which are the point in dispute. You will have no difficulty in allowing that *mounseer* is typical enough of France: except Cyrus, who is the only heathen prince mentioned by his right name, and that before he had any name, I know no power so expressly described.

2. Son of man, set thy face against *Mount Seir*, and prophecy against it.

3. And say unto it, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, *O Mount Seir*, I am against thee; and I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate.

4. I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate, &c.

10. Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it, &c.

I am disposed to put great trust in this prediction; for I know few things more in our favour. You will ask me naturally, what is to become of you? Are you to be left to all the chance of war, the uncertainty of packets, the difficulty of remittance, the increase of prices?—My dear sir, do you take me for a prime minister, who acquaints the *flates* that they are in damned danger, when it is about a day too late? Or shall I order my *chancellor* to assure you that this is numerically the very day on which it is fit to give such notification, and that a day sooner or a day later would be improper?—But not to trifle politically with you, your redemption is nearer than you think for, though not complete: the terms a little depend upon yourself. You must send me an account, strictly and upon your honour, what your debts are: as there is no possibility for the present but of compounding them, I put my friendship upon it, that you answer me sincerely. Should you, upon the hopes of facilitating your return, not deal ingenuously with me, which I will not suspect, it would occasion what I hope will never happen. Some overtures are going to be made to miss —, to ward off impediments from her. In short, though I cannot explain any of the means, your fortune wears another face; and if you send me immediately, upon your honour, a faithful account of what I ask, no time will be lost to labour your return, which I wish so much, and of which I have said so little lately, as I have had better hopes of it. Don't joke with me upon this head, as you sometimes do: be explicit, be open in the most unbounded manner, and deal like a man of sense with a heart that deserves you should have no disguises to it. You know me and my style: when I engage earnestly as I do in this business, I can't bear not to be treated in my own way.

Sir Charles Williams is made ambassador to Russia; which concludes all I know. But at such a period, two days may produce much, and I shall not send away my letter till I am in town on Tuesday. Good-night!

Thursday 17th.

ALL the officers on the Irish establishment are ordered over thither immediately:

diately : lord Hartington has offered to go directly¹, and sets out with Mr. Conway this day fe'nnight. The journey to Hanover is positive : what if there should be a crossing-over and figuring-in of kings ? I know who don't think all this very serious ; so that, if you have a mind to be in great spirits, you may quote lord H——. He went to visit the duchess of Bedford t'other morning, just after lord Anson had been there and told her his opinion. She asked lord H. what news ? He knew none. " Don't you hear there will be certainly war ? " " No, madam : I saw Mr. Nugent yesterday, and he did not tell me any thing of it. " She replied, " I have just seen a man who must know, and who thinks it unavoidable. " " Nay, madam, perhaps it may : *I don't think a little war would do us any harm.* " Just as if he had said, losing a little blood in spring is very wholesome ; or that a little hissing would not do the Mingotti any harm !

I went t'other morning to see the sale of Mr. Pelham's plate with G. Selwyn—" Lord ! says he, how many toads have been eaten off those plates ! " Adieu ! I flatter myself that this will be a comfortable letter to you : but I must repeat, that I expect a very serious answer, and very sober resolutions. If I treat you like a child, consider you have been so. I know I am in the right—more delicacy would appear kinder, without being so kind. As I wish and intend to restore and establish your happiness, I shall go thoroughly to work. You don't want an apothecary, but a surgeon—but I shall give you over at once, if you are either froward or relapse.

Yours till then,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XXI.

Arlington-street, April 24, 1755.

I DON'T doubt but you will conclude that this letter, written so soon after my last, comes to notify a great sea-victory, or defeat ; or that the French are landed in Ireland, and have taken and fortified Cork ; that they have been joined by all the wild Irish, who have proclaimed the pretender, and are charmed with the prospect of being governed by a true descendant of the Mac-na-O's ; or that the king of Prussia, like an unnatural ne-

² As viceroy.

phew,

phew, has seized his uncle and Schutz in a post-chaise, and obliged them to hear the rehearsal of a French opera of his own composing—No such thing! If you will be guessing, you will guess wrong—all I mean to tell you is, that thirteen gold-fish, caparisoned in coats of mail, as rich as if mademoiselle Scuderi had invented their armour, embarked last Friday on a secret expedition; which, as Mr. Weekes¹ and the wisest politicians of Twickenham concluded, was designed against the island of Jersey—but to their consummate mortification, captain Chevalier is detained by a law-suit, and the poor Chinese adventurers are now frying under deck below bridge.—In short, if your governor is to have any gold-fish, you must come and manage their transport yourself. Did you receive my last letter? If you did, you will not think it impossible that you should preside at such an embarkation.

The war is quite gone out of fashion, and seems adjourned to America: though I am disappointed, I am not surprised. You know my despair about this eventless age! How pleasant to have lived in times when one could have been sure every week of being able to write such a paragraph as this!—We hear that the *Christians* who were on their voyage for the recovery of the Holy Land, have been massacred in Cyprus by the natives, who were provoked at a rape and murder committed in a church by some young noblemen belonging to the nuntio—or—Private letters from Rome attribute the death of his holiness to poison, which they pretend was given to him in the sacrament, by the cardinal of St. Cecilia, whose mistress he had debauched. The same letters add, that this cardinal stands the fairest for succeeding to the papal tiara; though a natural son of the late pope is supported by the whole interest of Arragon and Naples.—Well! since neither the pope nor the most christian king will play the devil, I must condescend to tell you slippancies of less dignity. There is a young Frenchman here, called monsieur Herault. Lady ——— carried him and his governor to sup with her and miss ——— at a tavern t'other night. I have long said that the French were relapsed into barbarity, and quite ignorant of the world—You shall judge: in the first place, the young man was bashful: in the next, the governor, so ignorant as not to have heard of women of fashion carrying men to a tavern, thought it incumbent upon him *to do the honours* for his pupil, who was as modest and as much in a state of nature as the ladies themselves, and hazarded some familiarities with lady ———. The conse-

¹ A carpenter at Twickenham, employed by Mr. Walpole.

quence was, that the next morning she sent a card to both, to desire they would not come to her ball that evening, to which she had invited them, and to beg the favour of them never to come into her house again. Adieu! I am prodigal of my letters, as I hope not to write you many more.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XXII.

Arlington-street, May 6, 1755.

MY DEAR SIR,

DO you get my letters? or do I write only for the entertainment of the clerks of the post-office? I have not heard from you this month! It will be very unlucky, if my last to you has miscarried, as it required an answer, of importance to you, and very necessary to my satisfaction.

I told you of lord P——'s intended motion. He then repented, and wrote to my lady Yarmouth and Mr. Fox to mediate his pardon. Not contented with his reception, he determined to renew his intention. Sir Cordel Firebrace took it up, and intended to move the same address in the commons, but was prevented by a sudden adjournment. However, the last day but one of the session, lord P—— read his motion, which was a speech. My lord Chesterfield (who of all men living seemed to have no business to defend the duke of N. after much the same sort of ill usage) said the motion was improper, and moved to adjourn. T'other earl said, "Then, pray, my lords, what is to become of my motion?" The house burst out a-laughing: he divided it, but was single. He then advertised his papers as lost. Legge, in his punning style, said, "My lord P—— has had a stroke of an apoplexy; he has lost both his speech and motion." It is now printed; but not having succeeded in prose, he is turned poet—you may guess how good!

The Duke[†] is at the head of the regency—you may guess if we are afraid! Both fleets are sailed. The night the king went, there was a magnificent ball and supper at Bedford-house. The duke was there: he was playing at

[†] William duke of Cumberland.

hazard with a great heap of gold before him : somebody said, he looked like the prodigal son and the fatted calf both. In the dessert was a model of Walton-bridge in glass. Yesterday I gave a great breakfast at Strawberry-hill to the Bedford-court. There were the duke and duchess, lord Tavistock and lady Caroline, my lord and lady Gower, lady Caroline Egerton, lady Betty Waldegrave, lady Mary Coke, Mrs. Pitt, Mr. Churchill and lady Mary, Mr. Bap. Leveson, and colonel Sebright. The first thing I asked Harry was, " Does the sun shine ? " It did ; and Strawberry was all gold, and all green. I am not apt to think people really like it, that is, understand it ; but I think the flattery of yesterday was sincere ; I judge by the notice the duchess took of your drawings. Oh ! how you will think the shades of Strawberry extended ! Do you observe the tone of satisfaction with which I say this, as thinking it near ? Mrs. Pitt brought her French horns : we placed them in the corner of the wood, and it was delightful. Poyang has great custom : I have lately given count Perron some gold-fish, which he has carried in his post-chaise to Turin : he has already carried some before. The Russian minister has asked me for some too, but I doubt their succeeding there ; unless, according to the universality of my system, every thing is to be found out at last, and practised every where.

I have got a new book that will divert you, called *Anecdotes Litteraires* : it is a collection of stories and bons-mots of all the French writers ; but so many of their bons-mots are impertinencies, follies, and vanities, that I have blotted out the title, and written *Miseres des Sçavants*. It is a triumph for the ignorant. Gray says, very justly, that learning never should be encouraged, it only draws out fools from their obscurity ; and you know, I have always thought a running-footman as meritorious a being as a learned man. Why is there more merit in having travelled one's eyes over so many reams of papers, than in having carried one's legs over so many acres of ground ? Adieu, my dear sir ! Pray don't be taken prisoner to France, just when you are expected at Strawberry !

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

Strawberry-hill, June 10, 1755.

MR. MÜNTZ^{*} is arrived. I am sorry I can by no means give any commendation to the hasty step you took about him. Ten guineas were a great deal too much to advance to him, and must raise expectations in him that will not at all answer. You have entered into no written engagement with him, nor even sent me his receipt for the money. My good sir, is this the sample you give me of the prudence and providence you have learned? I don't love to enter into the particulars of my own affairs; I will only tell you in one word, that they require great management. My endeavours are all employed to serve you; don't, I beg, give me reasons to apprehend that they will be thrown away. It is much in obscurity whether I shall be able to accomplish your re-establishment; but I shall go on with great discouragement, if I cannot promise myself that you will be a very different person after your return. I shall never have it in my power to do twice what I am now doing for you; and I choose to say the worst before hand, rather than to reprove you for indolence and thoughtlessness hereafter, when it may be too late. Excuse my being so serious, but I find it is necessary.

You are not displeased with me, I know, even when I pout: you see I am not quite in good-humour with you, and I don't disguise it; but I have done scolding you for this time. Indeed I might as well continue it; for I have nothing else to talk of but Strawberry, and of that subject you must be well wearied. I believe she alluded to my disposition to *pout*, rather than meant to compliment me, when my lady Townshend said to somebody, t'other day, who told her how well Mrs. Leneve was, and in spirits, "Oh! she must be in spirits: why, she lives with Mr. Walpole, who is spirit of hartshorn!"

Princess Emily has been here:—Liked it? Oh no!—I don't wonder;—I never liked St. James's.—She was so inquisitive and so curious in prying into the very offices and servants' rooms, that her captain Bateman was sensible of it, and begged Catherine not to mention it. He addressed himself

^{*} Upon Mr. Bentley's recommendation, Mr. Walpole had invited Mr. Müntz from Jersey, and he lived for some time at Strawberry-hill. E.

well, if he hoped to meet with taciturnity ! Catherine immediately ran down to the pond, and whispered to all the reeds, " Lord ! that a princess should be such a gossip !" — In short, Strawberry-hill is the puppet-show of the times.

I have lately bought two more portraits of personages in Grammont, Harry Jermyn, and Chiffinch : my Arlington-street is so full of portraits, that I shall scarce find room for Mr. Müntz's works.

Wednesday, 11th.

I WAS prevented from finishing my letter yesterday, by what do you think ? By no less magnificent a circumstance than a deluge. We have had an extraordinary drought, no grass, no leaves, no flowers ; not a white rose for the festival of yesterday¹ ! About four arrived such a flood, that we could not see out of the windows : the whole lawn was a lake, though situated on so high an Ararat : presently it broke through the leads, drowned the pretty blue bed-chamber, passed through ceilings and floors into the little parlour, terrified Harry, and opened all Catherine's water-gates and *speech-gates*. — I had but just time to collect two dogs, a couple of sheep, a pair of bantams, and a brace of gold-fish ; for, in the haste of my zeal to imitate my ancestor Noah, I forgot that fish would not easily be drowned. In short, if you chance to spy a little ark with pinnacles sailing towards Jersey, open the sky-light, and you will find some of your acquaintance. You never saw such desolation ! A pigeon brings word that Mabland has fared still worse : it never came into my head before, that a rainbow-office for insuring against water might be very necessary. This is a true account of the late deluge.

Witness our hands,

HORACE NOAH,
CATHERINE NOAH, her \times mark,
HENRY SHEM,
LOUIS JAPHET,
PETER HAM, &c.

I was going to seal my letter, and thought I should scarce have any thing

¹ The pretender's birth-day.

more important to tell you than the history of the flood, when a most extraordinary piece of news indeed arrived—nothing less than a new gun-powder-plot—last Monday was to be the fatal day—There was a ball at Kew—Vanneschi and his son, directors of the opera, two English lords and two Scotch lords are in confinement at justice Fielding's.—This is exactly all I know of the matter; and this weighty intelligence is brought by the waterman from my housemaid in Arlington-street, who sent Harry word that the town is in an uproar; and to confirm it, the waterman says he heard the same thing at Hungerford-stairs. I took the liberty to represent to Harry, that the ball at Kew was this day se'nnight for the prince's birth-day; that, as the Duke was at it, I imagined the Scotch lords would rather have chosen that day for the execution of their tragedy; that I believed Vanneschi's son was a child, and that peers are generally confined at the Tower, not at justice Fielding's; besides, that we are much nearer to Kew than Hungerford-stairs are.—But Harry, who has not at all recovered the deluge, is extremely disposed to think Vanneschi very like Guy Fawkes; and is so persuaded that so dreadful a story could *not* be invented, that I have been forced to believe it too: and in the course of our reasoning and guessing, I told him, that though I could not fix upon all four, I was persuaded that the late lord Lovat who was beheaded must be one of the Scotch peers, and lord A.'s son who is not begot, one of the English.—I was afraid he would think I treated so serious a business too ludicrously, if I had hinted at the scene of distressed friendship that would be occasioned by lord H——'s examining his intimate Vanneschi. Adieu! my dear sir—Mr. Fox and lady Caroline, and lord and lady Kildare are to dine here to-day; and if they tell Harry or me any more of the plot, you shall know it.

Wednesday night.

WELL! now for the plot: thus much is true. A laundry-maid of the duchess of Marlborough, passing by the Cocoa-tree, saw two gentlemen go in there, one of whom dropped a letter; it was directed, *to you*. She opened it. It was very obscure, talked of designs at Kew miscarried, of new methods to be taken; and as this way of correspondence had been repeated too often, another must be followed; and it told *you* that the next letter to him should be in a bandbox at such a house in the Haymarket. The duchess concluded it related to a gang of street-robbers, and sent it to Fielding. He sent to the house named, and did find a box and a letter, which, though obscure, had
treason

treason enough in it. It talked of a design at Kew miscarried; that the opera was now the only place, and consequently the scheme must be deferred till next season, especially as *a certain person* is abroad. For the other great person (the Duke), they are sure of him at any time. There was some indirect mention too of gunpowder. Vanneschi and others have been apprehended: but a conclusion was made, that it was a malicious design against the lord high treasurer of the opera and his administration; and so they have been dismissed. Macnamara,* I suppose you Jerseyans know, is returned with his fleet to Brest, leaving the transports sailing to America. Lord Thanet and Mr. Stanley are just gone to Paris, I believe to enquire after the war.

The weather has been very bad for showing Strawberry to the Kildares; we have not been able to stir out of doors: but to make me amends, I have discovered that lady Kildare is a true Sevignist. You know what pleasure I have in any increase of our set; I thought she grew handsomer than ever as she talked with devotion of Notre Dame des Rochers. Adieu, my dear sir!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. Tell me if you receive this; for in these gunpowder-times to be sure the clerks of the post-office are peculiarly alert.

L E T T E R XXIV.

Strawberry-hill, July 5, 1755.

YOU vex me exceedingly. I beg, if it is not too late, that you would not send me these two new quarries of granite; I had rather pay the original price and leave them where they are, than be encumbered with them. My house is already a stone-cutter's shop, nor do I know what to do with what I have got. But this is not what vexes me, but your desiring me to traffick with Carter, and showing me that you are still open to any visionary project! Do you think I can turn broker, and factor, and I don't know what? And at your time of life do you expect to make a fortune by becoming

* The French admiral.

ing a granite merchant? There must be great demand for a commodity that costs a guinea a foot, and a month an inch to polish! You send me no drawings, for which you know I should thank you infinitely, and are hunting for every thing that I would thank you for letting alone. In short, my dear sir, I am determined never to be a projector, nor to deal with projects. If you will still pursue them, I must beg you will not only not employ me in them, but not even let me know that you employ any body else. If you will not be content with my plain rational way of serving you, I can do no better; nor can I joke upon it. I can combat any difficulties for your service, but those of your own raising. Not to talk any more crossly, and to prevent, if I can for the future, any more of these expostulations, I must tell you plainly, that with regard to my own circumstances, I generally drive to a penny, and have no money to spare for visions. I do and am doing all I can for you; and let me desire you once for all, not to send me any more persons or things without asking my consent, and staying till you receive it. I cannot help adding to the chapter of complaint * * * * .

These, my dear sir, are the imprudent difficulties you draw me into, and which almost discourage me from proceeding in your business. If you anticipate your revenue, even while in Jersey, and build castles in the air before you have repassed the sea, can I expect that you will be a better œconomist either of your fortune or your prudence here? I beg you will preserve this letter, ungracious as it is, because I hope it will serve to prevent my writing any more such——

Now to Mr. Müntz:—Hitherto he answers all you promised and vowed for him: he is very modest, humble, and reasonable; and has seen so much and knows so much of countries and languages, that I am not likely to be soon tired of him. His drawings are very pretty: he has done two views of Strawberry that please me extremely: his landscape and trees are much better than I expected. His next work is to be a large picture from your Mabland for Mr. Chute, who is much content with him: he goes to the Vine in a fortnight or three weeks. We came from thence the day before yesterday. I have drawn up an *inventory* of all I propose he should do there; the computation goes a little beyond five thousand pounds; but he does not go half so fast as my impatience demands: he is so reasonable, and will think of dying, and of the gout, and of twenty disagreeable things that one must do and have, that he takes no joy in planting
and

and future views, but distresses all my rapidity of schemes. Last week we were at my sister's at Chassfont in Buckinghamshire, to see what we could make of it; but it wants so much of every thing, and would require so much more than an inventory of five thousand pounds, that we decided nothing, except that Mr. Chute has designed the prettiest house in the world for them. We went to see the objects of the neighbourhood, Bulstrode and Latimers. The former is a melancholy monument of Dutch magnificence: however, there is a brave gallery of old pictures, and a chapel with two fine windows of modern painted-glass. The° ceiling was formerly decorated with the assumption, or rather *presumption*, of chancellor Jeffries, to whom it belonged; but a very judicious fire hurried him somewhere else. Latimers belongs to Mrs. Cavendish. I have lived there formerly with Mr. Conway, but it is much improved since; yet the river stops short at an hundred yards just under your eyes, and the house has undergone Batty Langley-discipline: half the ornaments are of his bastard Gothic, and half of Hallet's mungrel Chinese. I want to write over the doors of most modern edifices, *Repaired and beautified, Langley and Hallet churchwardens*. The great dining-room is hung with the paper of my staircase, but not shaded properly like mine. I was much more charmed lately at a visit I made to the Cardigans at Blackheath. Would you believe that I had never been in Greenwich-park? I never had, and am transported! Even the glories of Richmond and Twickenham hide their diminished rays.—Yet nothing is equal to the fashion of this village: Mr. Müntz says we have more coaches than there are in half France. Mrs. Pritchard has bought Ragman's castle, for which my lord Litchfield could not agree. We shall be as celebrated as Baia or Tivoli; and, if we have not such sonorous names as they boast, we have very famous people: Clive and Pritchard, actresses; Scott and Hudson, painters; my lady Suffolk, famous in her time; Mr. H—, the impudent lawyer, that Tom Hervey wrote against; Whitehead, the poet—and Cambridge, the every thing. Adieu! my dear sir—I know not one syllable of news.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

Strawberry-hill, July 17, 1755.

TO be sure, war is a dreadful calamity, &c. ! But then it is a very comfortable commodity for writing letters and writing history ; and as one did not contribute to make it, why, there is no harm in being a little amused with looking on : and if one can but keep the pretender on t'other side Derby, and keep Arlington-street and Strawberry-hill from being carried to Paris, I know nobody that would do more to promote peace, or that will bear the want of it with a better grace than myself. If I don't send you an actual declaration of war in this letter, at least you perceive I am the harbinger of it. An account arrived yesterday morning, that Boscawen had missed the French fleet, who are got into Cape Breton ; but two of his captains attacked three of their Squadron and have taken two, with scarce any loss. This is the third time one of the French captains has been taken by Boscawen.

Mr. Conway is arrived from Ireland, where the triumphant party are what parties in that situation generally are, unreasonable and presumptuous. They will come into no terms without a stipulation that the primate¹ shall not be in the regency. This is a bitter pill to digest—but must not it be swallowed ? Have we heads to manage a French war and an Irish civil war too ?

There are little domestic news. If you insist upon some, why, I believe I could persuade somebody or other to hang themselves ; but that is scarce an article uncommon enough to send cross the sea. For example, the rich ———, whose brother died of the small-pox a year ago, and left him 400,000*l.* had a fit of the gout last week, and shot himself. I only begin to be afraid that it should grow as necessary to shoot one's self here, as it is to go into the army in France. Sir Robert Browne has lost his last daughter, to whom he could have given eight thousand pounds a-year. When I tell these riches and madneses to Mr. Müntz, he stares so, that I sometimes fear he thinks I mean to impose on him. It is cruel to a person who collects the follies of the age for the information of posterity, to have one's veracity doubted : it is the truth of them that makes them

¹ Dr. Stone.

worth notice. Charles Townshend marries the great dowager Dalkeith :—his parts and presumption are prodigious. He wanted nothing but independence to let him loose : I propose great entertainment from him ; and now, perhaps, the times will admit it ! There may be such things again as parties—odd evolutions happen. The ballad I am going to transcribe for you is a very good comment on so common-place a text. My lord Bath, who was brought hither by my lady Hervey's and Billy Bristow's reports of the charms of the place, has made the following stanzas, to the old tune which you remember of Rowe's ballad on Doddington's Mrs. Strawbridge :

I.

Some talk of Gunnersbury,
For Sion some declare ;
And some say, that with Chiswick-house
No villa can compare :
But all the beaux of Middlesex,
Who know the country well,
Say, that Strawberry-hill, that Strawberry
Doth bear away the bell.

II.

Though Surry boasts its Oatlands,
And Claremont kept so jinn ;
And though they talk of Southcote's,
'Tis but a dainty whim ;
For ask the gallant Bristow,
Who does in taste excell,
If Strawberry-hill, if Strawberry
Don't bear away the bell.

Can there be an odder revolution of things, than that the printer of the *Craftsman* should live in a house of mine, and that the author of the *Craftsman* should write a panegyric on a house of mine ?

* One Franklyn, who occupied the cottage in the enclosure which Mr. Walpole afterwards called the Flower-garden at Strawberry-hill.— When he bought the ground on which this tenement stood, he allowed Franklyn to continue to occupy it during his life. E.

I dined

I dined yesterday at Wanstead: many years have passed since I saw it. The disposition of the house and the prospect are better than I expected, and very fine: the garden, which they tell you cost as much as the house, that is, 100,000*l.* (don't tell Mr. Müntz) is wretched; the furniture fine, but totally without taste: such continences and incontinences of Scipio and Alexander, by I don't know whom! such flame-coloured gods and goddesses, by Kent! such family-pieces, by—I believe the late earl himself, for they are as ugly as the children that he really begot! The whole great apartment is of oak, finely carved, unpainted, and has a charming effect. The present earl is the most generous creature in the world: in the first chamber I entered he offered me four marble tables that lay in cases about the room: I compounded, after forty refusals of every thing I commended, to bring away only a haunch of venison: I believe he has not had so cheap a visit a good while. I commend myself, as I ought; for, to be sure, there were twenty ebony chairs, and a couch, and a table, and a glass, that would have tried the virtue of a philosopher of double my size! After dinner we dragged a gold-fish-pond for my lady F. and lord S. I could not help telling my lord Tilney, that they would certainly burn the poor fish for the gold, like old lace. There arrived a marquis St. Simon, from Paris, who understands English, and who has seen your book of designs for Gray's Odes: he was much pleased at meeting me, to whom the individual cat belonged—and you may judge whether I was pleased with him. Adieu! my dear sir.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

 LETTER XXVI.

Strawberry-hill, August 4, 1755, between 11 and 12 at night.

I CAME from London to-day, and am just come from supping at Mrs. Clive's, to write to you by the fire-side. We have been exceedingly troubled for some time with St. Swithin's diabetes, and have not a dry thread in any walk about us. I am not apt to complain of this malady, nor do I: it keeps us green at present, and will make our shades very thick, against we are fourscore, and fit to enjoy them. I brought with me your two letters of

U u 2

July

July 30 and August 1; a sight I have not seen a long time!—But, my dear sir, you have been hurt at my late letters. Do let me say thus much in excuse for myself. You know how much I value, and what real and great satisfaction I have in your drawings. Instead of pleasing me with so little trouble to yourself, do you think it was no mortification to receive every thing but your 'drawings? to find you full of projects, and, I will not say, with some imprudences!—But I have done on this subject—my friendship will always be the same for you; it will only act with more or less cheerfulness, as you use your common sense or your disposition to chimerical schemes and carelessness. To give you all the present satisfaction in my power, I will tell you * * * * *

I think your good-nature means to reproach me with having dropped any hint of finding amusement in contemplating a war. When one would not do any thing to promote it, when one would do any thing to put a period to it, when one is too insignificant to contribute to either, I must own I see no blame in thinking an active age more agreeable to live in, than a soporific one.—But, my dear sir, I must adopt *your* patriotism—Is not it laudable to be revived with the revival of British glory? Can I be an indifferent spectator of the triumphs of my country? Can I help feeling a tattoo at my heart, when the duke of Newcastle makes as great a figure in history as Burleigh or Godolphin—nay, as queen Bess herself?—She gained no battles in person; she was only the actuating genius. You seem to have heard of a proclamation of war, of which we have not heard; and not to have come to the knowledge of taking of Beau Sejour by colonel Monckton. In short, the French and we seem to have crossed over and figured in, in politics. Mirepoix complained grievously that the duke of N. had over-reached him—But he is to be forgiven in so good a cause! It is the first person he ever deceived!—I am preparing a new folio for heads of the heroes that are to bloom in mezzotinto from this war. At present my chief study is West-Indian history. You would not think me very ill-natured if you knew all I feel at the cruelty and villainy of European settlers—But this very morning I found that part of the purchase of Maryland from the savage proprietors (for we do not massacre, we are such good christians as only to cheat) was a quantity of vermilion and a parcel of Jews-harps!

Indeed, if I pleased, I might have another study; it is my fault if I am not a commentator and a corrector of the press. The marquis de St. Simon, whom

whom I mentioned to you, at a very first visit proposed to me to look over a translation he had made of *The Tale of a Tub*—the proposal was soon followed by a folio, and a letter of three sides to press me seriously to revise it. You shall judge of my scholar's competence. He translates *L'Estrange*, *Dryden* and others, *l'etrange*, *Dryden*, &c. Then in the description of the taylor as an idol, and his goose as the symbol; he says in a note, that the *goose* means the dove, and is a concealed satire on the holy ghost.—It put me in mind of the Dane, who talking of orders to a Frenchman, said—"Notre St. esprit est un elephant."

Don't think, because I prefer your drawings to every thing in the world, that I am such a churl as to refuse Mrs. B.'s partridges: I shall thank her very much for them. You must excuse me, if I am vain enough to be so convinced of my own taste, that all the neglect that has been thrown upon your designs cannot make me think I have over-valued them. I must think that the states of Jersey who execute your town-house, have much more judgment than all our connoisseurs. When I every day see Greek, and Roman, and Italian, and Chinese, and Gothic architecture embroidered and inlaid upon one another, or called by each other's names, I can't help thinking that the grace and simplicity and truth of your taste, in whichever you undertake, is real taste. I go farther: I wish you would know in what you excel, and not be hunting after twenty things unworthy your genius. If flattery is my turn, believe this to be so.

Mr. Müntz is ~~at~~ the Vine, and has been some time. I want to know more of this history of the German: I do assure you, that I like both his painting and behaviour—but if any history of any kind is to accompany him, I shall be most willing to part with him. However I may divert myself as a spectator of broils, believe me I am thoroughly sick of having any thing to do in any. Those in a neighbouring island are likely to subside—and, contrary to custom, the *priest*¹ himself is to be the *sacrifice*.

I have contracted a sort of intimacy with Garrick, who is my neighbour. He affects to study my taste: I lay it all upon you—he admires you. He is building a grateful temple to Shakespeare: I offered him this motto:

¹ The primate of Ireland.

334 LETTERS FROM THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

Quod spiro et placeo, si placeo tuum est. Don't be surpris'd if you should hear of me as a gentleman coming upon the stage next winter for my diversion.—The truth is, I make the most of this acquaintance to protect my poor neighbour at *Clivden*—you understand the conundrum, *Clive's den*.

Adieu, my dear sir! Need I repeat assurances? If I need, believe that nothing that can tend to your recovery has been or shall be neglected by me. You may trust me to the utmost of my power—beyond that, what can I do? Once more, adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XXVII.

Strawberry-hill, August 15, 1755.

MY DEAR SIR,

THOUGH I wrote to you so lately, and have certainly nothing new to tell you, I can't help scribbling a line to you to-night, as I am going to Mr. Rigby's for a week or ten days, and must thank you first for the three pictures. One of them charms me, the Mount Orgueil, which is absolutely fine; the sea, and shadow upon it, are masterly. The other two I don't, at least won't, take for finished. If you please, Elizabeth Castle shall be Mr. Müntz's performance: indeed I see nothing of your in it. I do reconnoitre you in the Hercules and Nessus; but in both, your colours are dirty, carelessly dirty: in your distant hills you are improved, and not hard. The figures are too large—I don't mean in the Elizabeth Castle, for there they are neat; but the centaur, though he dies as well as Garrick can, is outrageous. Hercules and Deianira are by no means so: he is sentimental, and she most improperly sorrowful. However, I am pleas'd enough to beg you would continue. As soon as Mr. Müntz returns from the Vine you shall have a supply of colours. In the mean time, why give up the good old trade of drawing? Have you no Indian ink, no foot-water, no snuff, no coat of onion, no juice of any thing? If you love me, draw: you would, if you knew the real pleasure you can give me. I have been studying all your drawings;

drawings ; and next to architecture and trees, I determine that you succeed in nothing better than animals. Now (as the newspapers say) the late ingenious Mr. Seymour is dead, I would recommend horses and greyhounds to you. I should think you capable of a landscape or two with delicious bits of architecture. I have known you execute the light of a torch or lanthorn so well, that if it was called Schalken, a house-keeper at Hampton-court or Windsor, or a Catherine at Strawberry-hill, would show it, and say it cost ten thousand pounds. Nay, if I could believe that you would ever execute any more designs I proposed to you, I would give you a hint, for a picture that struck me t'other day in Perfixe's Life of Henry IV. He says, the king was often seen lying upon a common straw bed among the soldiers, with a piece of brown bread in one hand, and a bit of charcoal in t'other, to draw an encampment, or town that he was besieging. If this is not character and a picture, I don't know what is.

I dined to-day at Garrick's: there were the duke of Grafton, lord and lady Rochford, lady Holderness, the crooked Mostyn, and Dabreu the Spanish minister ; two regents, of which one is lord chamberlain; the other groom of the stole ; and the wife of a secretary of state. This is being sur un assez bon ton for a player ! Don't you want to ask me how I like him ? Do want, and I will tell you—I like her exceedingly ; her behaviour is all sense, and all sweetness too. I don't know how, he does not improve so fast upon me : there is a great deal of parts and vivacity and variety, but there is a great deal too of mimicry and burlesque. I am very ungrateful, for he flatters me abundantly ; but unluckily I know it. I was accustomed to it enough when my father was first minister ; on his fall I lost it all at once : and since that, I have lived with Mr. Chute, who is all vehemence ; with Mr. Fox, who is all disputation ; with sir Charles Williams, who has no time from flattering himself ; with Gray, who does not hate to find fault with me ; with Mr. Conway, who is all sincerity ; and with you and Mr. Rigby, who have always laughed at me in a good-natured way. I don't know how, but I think I like all this as well—I beg his pardon, Mr. Raftor does flatter me ; but I should be a cormorant for praise, if I could swallow it whole as he gives it me.

Sir William Yonge, who has been extinct so long, is at last dead ; and the war, which began with such a flirt of vivacity, is I think gone to sleep.

General

General Braddock has not yet sent over to claim the surname of Americanus. But why should I take pains to show you in how many ways I know nothing?—Why; I can tell it you in one word—why, Mr. ——— knows nothing!—I wish you good-night!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XXVIII.

Arlington-street, August 28, 1755.

OUR piratic laurels, with which the French have so much reproached us, have been exceedingly pruned! Braddock is defeated and killed, by a handful of Indians and by the baseness of his own troops, who sacrificed him and his gallant officers. Indeed, there is some suspicion that cowardice was not the motive, but resentment at having been draughted from Irish regiments.—Were such a desertion universal, could one but commend it? Could one blame men who should refuse to be knocked on the head for sixpence a day, and for the advantage and dignity of a few ambitious? But in this case, one pities the brave young officers, who cannot so easily disfranchise themselves from the prejudices of glory!—Our disappointment is greater than our loss: six-and-twenty officers are killed, who, I suppose, have not left a vast many fatherless and *widowless*, as an old woman told me to-day with great tribulation.—The ministry have a much more serious affair on their hands—Lord L. and lord A. have had a dreadful quarrel! *Coquus teterrima belli causa!* When lord ——— shot himself, lord L. said, “Well, I am very sorry for poor ———! but it is the part of a wise man to make the best of every misfortune—I shall now have the best cook in England.” This was uttered before lord A. Joras¹, who is a man of extreme punctilio, as cooks and officers ought to be, would not be hired till he knew whether this lord ——— would retain him. When it was decided that he would not, lord L. proposed to hire Joras. Lord A. had already engaged him. Such a breach of friendship was soon followed by an expostulation (there was jealousy of the D. of Newcastle’s favour already under the coals): in short, the nephew earl called the

¹ The name of the cook in question.

favourite

favourite earl such gross names, that it was well they were ministers ! otherwise, as Mincing says, "*I vow, I believe they must have fit.*" The public, that is, half-a-dozen toad-eaters, have great hopes that the present unfavourable posture of affairs in America will tend to cement this breach, and that *we* shall all unite hand and heart against the common enemy.

I returned the night before last from my peregrination. It is very unlucky for me that no crown of martyrdom is entailed on zeal for antiquities ; I should be a rubric martyr of the first class. After visiting the new salt-water baths at Harwich, (which, next to horse-racing, grows the most fashionable resource for people *who want to get out of town, and who love the country and retirement !*) I went to see Orford castle, and lord Hertford's at Sudborn. The one is a ruin, and the other ought to be so. Returning in a one-horse-chair over a wild vast heath, I went out of the road to see the remains of Buttley-abbey ; which however I could not see : for, as the keys of Orford castle were at Sudborn, so the keys of Buttley were at Orford ! By this time it was night ; we lost our way, were in excessive rain for above two hours, and only found our way to be overturned into the mire the next morning going into Ipswich. Since that I went to see an old house built by secretary Naunton¹. His descendant, who is a strange retired creature, was unwilling to let us see it ; but we did, and little in it worth seeing. The house never was fine, and is now out of repair ; has a bed with ivory pillars and loose rings, presented to the secretary by some German prince or German artist ; and a small gallery of indifferent portraits, among which there are scarce any worth notice but of the earl of Northumberland, Anna Bullen's lover, and of Mr. Anthony Wingfield ; who having his hand tucked into his girdle, the housekeeper told us, had had his fingers cut off by Harry VIII. But Harry VIII. was not a man pour s'arrêter à ces minuties là ! While we waited for leave to see the house, I strolled into the church-yard, and was struck with a little door open into the chancel, through the arch of which I discovered cross-legged knights and painted tombs ! In short, there are no less than eight considerable monuments, very perfect, of Wingfields, Nauntons, and a fir John Boynet and his wife, as old as Richard the second's

¹ Sir Robert Naunton, master of the court of wards. He wrote *Anecdotes of Queen Elizabeth and her favourites*.—Of his style in this work the following is a specimen : In page 1st he says of Q. Elizabeth, that "on the side of her father was disemboagued into her veins, by a confluence of blood, the very abstract of all the greatest houses in Christendom." E.

time. But what charmed me still more, were two figures of secretary Naunton's father and mother in the window in painted glass, near two feet high, and by far the finest painting on glass I ever saw. His figure, in a puffed doublet, breeches and bonnet, and cloak of scarlet and yellow, is absolutely perfect: her shoulder is damaged. This church, which is scarce bigger than a large chapel, is very ruinous, though containing such treasures! Besides these, there are brasses on the pavement with a succession of all the wonderful head-dresses, which our *plain virtuous* grandmothers invented to tempt our rude and simple ancestors.—I don't know what our nobles might be, but I am sure the milliners three or four hundred years ago must have been more accomplished in the arts, as Prynne calls them, of crisping, curling, frizzling, and frowning, than all the tirewomen of Babylon, modern Paris, or modern Pall-Mall. Dame Winifred Boynet, whom I mentioned above, is accoutred with the coiffure called piked horns, which, if there were any signs in Lothbury and Eastcheap, must have brushed them about strangely, as their ladyships rode behind their gentlemen ushers! Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XXIX.

Strawberry-hill, September 18, 1755.

MY DEAR SIR,

AFTER an expectation of six weeks, I have ~~received~~ a letter from you, dated August 23d. Indeed I did not impute any neglect to you; I knew it arose from the war; but Mr. S—— tells me the packets will now be more regular——Mr. S—— tells me!—What, has he been in town, or at Strawberry?—No; but I have been at Southampton: I was at the Vine; and on the arrival of a few fine days, the first we have had this summer, after a deluge, Mr. Chute persuaded me to take a jaunt to Winchester and Netley-abbey, with the latter of which he is very justly enchanted.

I was disappointed in Winchester: it is a paltry town, and small: king Charles the second's house is the worst thing I ever saw of sir Christopher Wren, a mixture of a town-hall and an hospital; not to mention the bad choice

choice of the situation in such a country; it is all *ups* that should be *downs*. I talk to you as supposing that you never have been at Winchester, though I suspect you have, for the entrance of the cathedral is the very idea of that of Mabland. I like the smugness of the cathedral, and the profusion of the most beautiful Gothic tombs. That of cardinal Beaufort is in a style more free and of more taste than any thing I have seen of the kind. His figure confirms me in my opinion that I have struck out the true history of the picture that I bought of Robinson; and which I take for the marriage of Henry VI. Besides the monuments of the Saxon kings, of Lucius, William Rufus, his brother, &c. there are those of six such great or considerable men as Beaufort, William of Wickham, him of Wainfleet, the bishops Fox and Gardiner, and my lord treasurer Portland—How much power and ambition under half-a-dozen stones! I own, I grow to look on tombs as lasting mansions, instead of observing them for curious pieces of architecture!—Going into Southampton, I passed Bevis-mount, where my lord Peterborough

Hung his trophies o'er his garden gate;

but general Mordaunt was there, and we could not see it. We walked long by moon-light on the terrafs along the beach—Guess, if we talked of and wished for you! The town is crowded; sea-baths are established there too. But how shall I describe Netley to you? I can only, by telling you that it is the spot in the world for which Mr. Chute and I wish. The ruins are vast, and retain fragments of beautiful fretted roofs pendent in the air, with all variety of Gothic patterns of windows wrapped round and round with ivy—many trees are sprouted up amongst the walls, and only want to be increased with cypresses! A hill rises above the abbey, encircled with wood: the fort, in which We would build a tower for habitation, remains with two small platforms. This little castle is buried from the abbey in a wood, in the very centre, on the edge of the hill: on each side breaks in the view of the Southampton-sea, deep blue, glistening with silver and vessels; on one side terminated by Southampton, on the other by Calshot-castle; and the Isle of Wight rising above the opposite hills.—In short, they are not the ruins of Netley, but of Paradise—Oh! the purple abbots, what a spot had they chosen to slumber in! The scene is so beautifully tranquil, yet so lively, that they seem only to have *retired into the world*.