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In Five Volumes

Walpole, Horace

London, 1798

Letters from the Hon. Horace Walpole to Richard West, Esq. with some
Letters in Answer from Mr. West

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LETTERS

FROM

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

TO

RICHARD WEST, ESQ.

FROM THE YEAR 1735 TO THE YEAR 1742:

WITH

SOME LETTERS IN ANSWER

FROM MR. WEST.

VOL. IV.

Ggg

LETTERS

LETTERS

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

NICHOLAS WEST, ESQ.

LONDON

1753

VOL. II

LETTERS

BETWEEN

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

AND

RICHARD WEST, ESQ.

From the Year 1735 to the Year 1742.

LETTER I.

DEAR WEST^r,

YOU expect a long letter from me, and have said in verse all that I intended to have said in far inferior prose. I intended filling three or four sides with exclamations against an university life, but you have showed me how strongly they may be expressed in three or four lines. I can't build without straw; nor have I the ingenuity of the spider to spin fine lines out of dirt: a master of a college would make but a miserable figure as a hero of a poem, and Cambridge sops are too low to introduce into a letter that aims not at punning:

Haud equidem invideo vati, quem pulpita pascunt.

But why mayn't we hold a classical correspondence? I can never forget the many agreeable hours we have passed in reading Horace and Virgil; and I think they are topics will never grow stale. Let us extend the Roman empire, and cultivate two barbarous towns o'er-run with rufficity and mathematics. The creatures are so used to a circle, that they plod on in the same eternal round, with their whole view confined to a punctum, *cujus nulla est pars*:

Their time a moment, and a point their space.

^r Richard West was the only son of the right honourable Richard West, lord chancellor of Ireland, by Elizabeth, daughter of the celebrated Dr. Burnet bishop of Salisbury.

When this correspondence commences, Mr. West was nineteen years old, and Mr. Walpole one year younger. E.

G g g 2

Orabunt

Orabunt causas melius, cœlique meatus
 Describent radio, et surgentia fidera dicent :
 Tu coluisse novem musas, Romane, memento ;
 Hæ tibi erunt artes.—

We have not the least poetry stirring here ; for I can't call verses on the 5th of November and 30th of January by that name, more than four lines on a chapter in the New Testament is an epigram. Tydeus¹ rose and set at Eton : he is only known here to be a scholar of King's. Orosmades and Almanzor are just the same ; that is, I am almost the only person they are acquainted with, and consequently the only person acquainted with their excellencies. Plato improves every day : so does my friendship with him. These three divide my whole time—though I believe you will guess there is no quadruple alliance² : that was a happiness which I only enjoyed when you was at Eton. A short account of the Eton people at Oxford would much oblige,

My dear West,

Your faithful friend,

King's College,
 Nov. 9, 1735.

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

POETRY, I take it, is as universally contagious as the small-pox ; every one catches it once in their life at least, and the sooner the better ; for methinks an old rhymester makes as ridiculous a figure as Socrates dancing at fourscore. But I can never agree with you that most of us succeed alike ; at least I'm sure few do like you : I mean not to flatter, for I despise it heartily ; and I think I know you to be as much above flattery, as the use of it is beneath every honest, every sincere man. Flattery to men of power is analogous with hypocrisy to God, and both are alike mean and contemptible ; nor is the one more an instance of respect, than the other is a proof of de-

¹ Tydeus, Orosmades, Almanzor and Plato, were names which had been given by them to some of their Eton school-fellows. E.

² Thus as boys they had called the intimacy formed at Eton between Walpole, Gray, West, and Asheton. E.

votion.

vation. I perceive I am growing serious, and that is the first step to dulness: but I believe you won't think that in the least extraordinary, to find me dull in a letter, since you have known me so often dull out of a letter.

As for poetry, I own, my sentiments of it are very different from the vulgar taste. There is hardly any where to be found (says Shaftesbury) a more insipid race of mortals, than those whom the moderns are contented to call poets—but methinks the true legitimate poet is as rare to be found as Tully's orator, *qualis adhuc nemo fortasse fuerit*. Truly, I am extremely to blame to talk to you at this rate of what you know much better than myself: but your letter gave me the hint, and I hope you will excuse my impertinence in pursuing it. It is a difficult matter to account why, but certain it is that all people, from the duke's coronet to the thresher's flail, are desirous to be poets: Penelope herself had not more suitors, though every man is not Ulysses enough to bend the bow. The poetical world, like the terraqueous, has its several degrees of heat from the line to the pole—only differing in this, that whereas the temperate zone is most esteemed in the terraqueous, in the poetical it is the most despised. Parnassus is divisible in the same manner as the mountain Chimæra.

—————mediis in partibus hircum,
Pectus & ora leæ, caudam serpentis habebat.

The medium between the rampant lion and the creeping serpent is the filthy goat—the justest picture of a middling poet, who is generally very bawdy and lascivious, and, like the goat, is mighty ambitious of climbing up the mountains, where he does nothing but browse upon weeds. Such creatures as these are beneath our notice. But whenever some wondrous sublime genius arises, such as Homer or Milton, then it is that different ages and countries all join in an universal admiration. Poetry (I think I have read somewhere or other) is an imitation of Nature: the poet considers all her works in a superior light to other mortals; he discerns every secret trait of the great mother, and paints it in its due beauty and proportion. The moral and the physical world all open fairer to his enthusiastic imagination: like some clear-flowing stream, he reflects the beautiful prospect all around, and, like the prism-glass, he separates and disposes nature's colours in their justest and most delightful appearances. This sure is not the talent of every dauber: art, genius, learning, taste, must all conspire to answer the full idea I have of a poet; a
character

character which seldom agrees with any of our modern miscellany-mongers—
But

Quid loquor? aut ubi sum? quæ mentem infania mutat?

I am got into enchanted ground, and can hardly get out again time enough to finish my letter in a decent and laudable manner. Dear sir, excuse and pardon all this rambling criticism—I writ it out of pure idleness; and I can assure you, I wish you idle enough to read it through.

I am, my dear Walpole,

Yours most sincerely,

R. WEST.

I wish you a happy new year.

Christchurch,
Jan. 12, 1736-7.

L E T T E R I I I .

MY DEAR WALPOLE,

IT seems so long to me since I heard from Cambridge, that I have been reflecting with myself what I could have done to lose any of my friends there. The uncertainty of my silly health might have made me the duller companion, as you know very well; for which reason Fate took care to remove me out of your way: but my letters, I am sure, at least carry sincerity enough in them to recommend me to any one that has a curiosity to know something concerning me and my amusements. As for Asheton, he has thought fit to forget me entirely; and for Gray, if you correspond with him as little as I do (wherever he be, for I know not), your correspondence is not very great.—Full in the midst of these reflections came your agreeable letter. I read it, and wished myself among you. You can promise me no diversion, but the novelty of the place, you say, and a renewal of intimacies. Novelty, you must know, I am sick of; I am surrounded with it, I see nothing else. I could tell you strange things, my dear Walpole, of anthropophagi, and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders. I have seen Learning drest in
old

old frippery, such as was in fashion in Duns Scotus' days: I have seen Taste in changeable, feeding like the chameleon on air: I have seen Stupidity in the habit of Sense, like a footman in the master's clothes: I have seen the phantom mentioned in The Dunciad, with a brain of feathers and a heart of lead: it walks here, and is called Wit. Your other inducement you suggested had all its influence with me; and I had before indulged the thought of visiting you all at Cambridge this next spring—But Fata obstant—I am unwillingly obliged to follow much less agreeable engagements. In the mean time I shall pester you with quires of correspondence, such as it is: but remember, you were two letters in my debt—though indeed your last letter may fully cancel the obligation. You may recollect my last was a sort of a criticism upon poetry; and this will present you with a sort of poetry¹ which nobody ever dreamt of but myself.

I am, dear sir,

Yours very sincerely,

R. WEST.

Christchurch,
February 27, 1736-7.

L E T T E R I V.

DEAR WEST,

Aug. 1736.

GRAY is at Burnham, and, what is surprizing, has not been at Eton. Could you live so near it without seeing it? That dear scene of our quadruple alliance would furnish me with the most agreeable recollections. 'Tis the head of our genealogical table, that is since sprouted out into the two branches of Oxford and Cambridge. You seem to be the eldest son, by having got a whole inheritance to yourself; while the manor of Granta is to be divided between your three younger brothers, Thomas of Lancashire², Thomas of London³, and Horace. We don't wish you dead to enjoy your feat,

¹ This poetry does not appear.

² Thomas Atheton. He was afterwards fellow of Eton-college, rector of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate-street, and preacher to the Society of

Lincoln's-inn. It is to him Mr. Walpole addressed a poetical epistle from Florence, first published in Doddsley's collection of poems. E.

³ Thomas Gray, the poet.

but

but your seat dead to enjoy you. I hope you are a mere elder brother, and live upon what your father left you, and in the way you were brought up in, poetry: but we are supposed to betake ourselves to some trade, as logic, philosophy, or mathematics. If I should prove a mere younger brother, and not turn to any profession, would you receive me, and supply me out of your stock, where you have such plenty? I have been so used to the delicate food of Parnassus, that I can never condescend to apply to the grosser studies of alma mater. Sober cloth of fylogism colour suits me ill; or, what's worse, I hate clothes that one must prove to be of no colour at all. If the Muses coelique vias & sidera monstrant, and quâ vi maria alta tumescant; why accipiant: but 'tis thrashing, to study philosophy in the abstruse authors. I am not against cultivating these studies, as they are certainly useful; but then They quite neglect all polite literature, all knowledge of this world. Indeed such people have not much occasion for this latter; for they shut themselves up from it, and study till they know less than any one. Great mathematicians have been of great use: but the generality of them are quite unconvertible; they frequent the stars, sub pedibusque vident nubes, but they can't see through them. I tell you what I see: that by living amongst them, I write of nothing else; my letters are all parallelograms, two sides equal to two sides; and every paragraph an axiom, that tells you nothing but what every mortal almost knows. By the way, your letters come under this description; for they contain nothing but what almost every mortal knows too, that knows you—that is, they are extremely agreeable, which they know you are capable of making them:—no one is better acquainted with it than

Your sincere friend,

HOR. WALPOLE,

King's College,
August 17, 1736.

LETTER V.

MY DEAREST WALPOLE,

Aug. 1736.

YESTERDAY I received your lively—agreeable—gilt—epistolary—parallelogram, and to-day I am preparing to send you in return as exact a one as my little *compass* can afford you. And so far, sir, I am sure we and our letters bear

Some resemblance to parallel lines, that, like them, one of our chief properties is, seldom or never to meet. Indeed, lately my good fortune made some *inclination* from your university to mine; but whether I can reciprocate or no, I leave you to judge, from hence—

I sent Asheton word that I should more than probably make an expedition to Cambridge this August; but Prinsep, who was to have been my fellow-traveller, and would have gone with me to Cambridge, though not to King's, is unhappily disappointed; and therefore my measures are broke, and I am very much in the spleen—else by this time I had flown to you with all the wings of impatience,

Ocyor cervis, & agente nimbos

Ocyor Euro.

But now, alas! as Horace said on purpose for me to apply it,

Sextilem totum mendax desideror—

This melancholy reflection would certainly infect all the rest of my letter, if I were not revived by the sal volatile of your most entertaining letter. I am afraid the younger brother will make much the better gentleman, and so far verify the proverb: and indeed all my brothers are so very forward, that, like the first and heaviest element, I shall have nothing but mere dirt for my share:—and really such is the case of most of your landed elder brothers, while the younger run away with the more fine and delicate elements. As for my patrimony of poetry, my dearest Horace, ut semper eris derisor! what little I have I borrowed from my friends, and, like the poor ambitious jay in the trite fable, I live merely on the charity of my abounding acquaintance. Many a feather in my stock was stolen from your treasures; but at present I find all my poetical plumes moulting apace, and in a small time I shall be nothing further than, what nobody can be more, or more sincerely,

Your humble servant and obliged friend,

R. WEST.

Gray at Burnham, and not see Eton? I am Asheton's ever, and intend him an answer soon. I beg pardon for what's over leaf; but as I am moulting my poetry, it is very natural to send it you, from whom and my other friends it originally came. I translated, and now I have ventured to imitate the divine lyric poet.

O D E. TO MARY MAGDALENE.

SAINT of this learned awful grove,
 While slow along thy walks I rove,
 The pleasing scene, which all that see
 Admire, is lost to me.

The thought, which still my breast invades,
 Nigh yonder springs, nigh yonder shades,
 Still, as I pass, the memory brings
 Of sweeter shades and springs.

Lost and inwrought in thought profound,
 Absent I tread Etonian ground;
 Then starting from the dear mistake,
 As disenchanting, wake.

What thought from sorrow free, at best
 I'm thus but negatively blest:
 Yet still, I find, true joy I miss;
 True joy's a social bliss.

Oh! how I long again with those,
 Whom first my boyish heart had chose,
 Together through the friendly shade
 To stray, as once I stray'd!

Their presence would the scene endear,
 Like paradise would all appear,
 More sweet around the flowers would blow,
 More soft the waters flow.

Adieu!

LETTER

LETTER VI.

DEAR WEST,

YOU figure us in a set of pleasures, which, believe me, we do not find^r: cards and eating are so universal, that they absorb all variation of pleasures. The operas indeed are much frequented three times a week; but to me they would be a greater penance than eating maigre: their music resembles a gooseberry tart as much as it does harmony. We have not yet been at the Italian playhouse; scarce any one goes there. Their best amusement, and which in some parts beats ours, is the comedy; three or four of the actors excel any we have: but then to this nobody goes, if it is not one of the fashionable nights, and then they go, be the play good or bad—except on Moliere's nights, whose pieces they are quite weary of. Gray and I have been at the Avare to-night: I cannot at all commend their performance of it. Last night I was in the place de Louis le grand (a regular octagon, uniform, and the houses handsome, though not so large as Golden-square), to see what they reckoned one of the finest burials that ever was in France. It was the duke de Tresmes, governor of Paris and marshal of France. It began on foot from his palace to his parish-church, and from thence in coaches to the opposite end of Paris, to be interred in the church of the Celestins, where is his family vault. About a week ago we happened to see the grave digging, as we went to see the church, which is old and small, but fuller of fine ancient monuments than any except St. Denis, which we saw on the road, and excels Westminster; for the windows are all painted in mosaic, and the tombs as fresh and well preserved as if they were of yesterday. In the Celestins' church is a votive column to Francis II. which says, that it is one assurance of his being immortalized, to have had the martyr Mary Stuart for his wife. After this long digression I return to the burial, which was a most vile thing. A long procession of flambeaux and friars; no plumes, trophies, banners, led horses, scutcheons, or open chariots; nothing but

 friars,

White, black, and grey, with all their trumpery.

This goodly ceremony began at nine at night, and did not finish till three this

^r Mr. Walpole left Cambridge towards the ^{gan} his travels, by going to Paris, accompanied end of the year 1738, and in March 1739 be- by Mr. Gray. E.

morning ; for, each church they passed, they stopped for a hymn and holy water. By the bye, some of these choice monks, who watched the body while it lay in state, fell asleep one night, and let the tapers catch fire of the rich velvet mantle lined with ermine and powdered with gold flower-de-luces, which melted the lead coffin, and burnt off the feet of the deceased before it wakened them. The French love show ; but there is a meanness reigns through it all. At the house where I stood to see this procession, the room was hung with crimson damask and gold, and the windows were mended in ten or a dozen places with paper. At dinner they give you three courses ; but a third of the dishes is patched up with sallads, butter, puff-paste, or some such miscarriage of a dish. None, but Germans, wear fine clothes ; but their coaches are tawdry enough for the wedding of Cupid and Psyche. You would laugh extremely at their signs : some live at the Y grec, some at Venus's toilette, and some at the fucking cat. You would not easily guess their notions of honour : I'll tell you one : it is very dishonourable for any gentleman not to be in the army, or in the king's service as they call it, and it is no dishonour to keep public gaming-houses : there are at least an hundred and fifty people of the first quality in Paris who live by it¹. You may go into their houses at all hours of the night, and find hazard, pharaoh, &c. The men who keep the hazard-table at the duke de Gesvres' pay him twelve guineas each night for the privilege. Even the princesses of the blood are dirty enough to have shares in the banks kept at their houses. We have seen two or three of them ; but they are not young, nor remarkable but for wearing their red of a deeper dye than other women, though all use it extravagantly.

The weather is still so bad, that we have not made any excursions to see Versailles and the environs, not even walked in the Thuilleries ; but we have seen almost every thing else that is worth seeing in Paris, though that is very considerable. They beat us vastly in buildings, both in number and magnificence. The tombs of Richelieu and Mazarine at the Sorbonne and the College de quatre nations are wonderfully fine, especially the former. We have seen very little of the people themselves, who are not inclined to be propitious to strangers, especially if they do not play, and speak the language readily. There are many English here : lord Holderness, Conway and Clinton, and

¹ It is to be lamented that this disgraceful circumstance is no longer peculiar to France.

lord George Bentinck; Mr. Brand, Offley, Frederic, Frampton, Bonfoy, &c. Sir John Cotton's son and a Mr. Vernon of Cambridge passed through Paris last week. We shall stay here about a fortnight longer, and then go to Rheims with Mr. Conway for two or three months. When you have nothing else to do, we shall be glad to hear from you; and any news. If we did not remember there was such a place as England, we should know nothing of it: the French never mention it, unless it happens to be in one of their proverbs. Adieu!

Yours ever,

Paris,
April 21, N. S. 1739.

H. W.

To-morrow we go to the Cid. They have no farces, but petites pieces like our Devil to Pay.

L E T T E R VII.

DEAR WEST,

From Paris, 1739.

I SHOULD think myself to blame not to try to divert you, when you tell me I can. From the air of your letter you seem to want amusement, that is, you want spirits. I would recommend to you certain little employments that I know of, and that belong to you, but that I imagine bodily exercise is more suitable to your complaint. If you would promise me to read them in the Temple garden, I would send you a little packet of plays and pamphlets that we have made up, and intend to dispatch to Dick's the first opportunity. —Stand by, clear the way, make room for the pompous appearance of Versailles le grand! —But no: it fell so short of my idea of it, mine, that I have resigned to Gray the office of writing its panegyric. He likes it. They say I am to like it better next Sunday; when the sun is to shine, the king is to be fine, the water-works are to play, and the new knights of the Holy Ghost are to be installed! Ever since Wednesday, the day we were there, we have done nothing but dispute about it. They say, we did not see it to advantage, that we ran through the apartments, saw the garden en passant, and slubbered over Trianon. I say, we saw nothing. However, we had time to see that the great front is a lumber of littlenesses, composed of black brick, stuck full of bad old busts, and fringed with gold rails. The rooms are all small, except the great gallery,

gallery, which is noble, but totally waincoted with looking-glasses. The garden is littered with statues and fountains, each of which has its tutelary deity. In particular, the elementary god of fire solaces himself in one. In another, Enceladus, in lieu of a mountain, is overwhelmed with many waters. There are avenues of water-pots, who disport themselves much in squirting up cascadelins. In short, 'tis a garden for a great child. Such was Louis quatorze, who is here seen in his proper colours, where he commanded in person, unassisted by his armies and generals, and left to the pursuit of his own puerile ideas of glory.

We saw last week a place of another kind, and which has more the air of what it would be, than any thing I have yet met with: it was the convent of the Chartreux. All the conveniencies, or rather (if there was such a word) all the *adaptments* are assembled here, that melancholy, meditation, selfish devotion, and despair would require. But yet 'tis pleasing. Soften the terms, and mellow the uncouth horror that reigns here, but a little, and 'tis a charming solitude. It stands on a large space of ground, is old and irregular. The chapel is gloomy: behind it, through some dark passages, you pass into a large obscure hall, which looks like a combination-chamber for some hellish council. The large cloister surrounds their burying-ground. The cloisters are very narrow, and very long, and let into the cells, which are built like little huts detached from each other. We were carried into one, where lived a middle-aged man not long initiated into the order. He was extremely civil, and called himself Dom Victor. We have promised to visit him often. Their habit is all white: but besides this, he was infinitely clean in his person; and his apartment and garden, which he keeps and cultivates without any assistance, was neat to a degree. He has four little rooms, furnished in the prettiest manner, and hung with good prints. One of them is a library, and another a gallery. He has several canary-birds disposed in a pretty manner in breeding-cages. In his garden was a bed of good tulips in bloom, flowers and fruit-trees, and all neatly kept. They are permitted at certain hours to talk to strangers, but never to one another, or to go out of their convent. But what we chiefly went to see was the small cloister, with the history of St. Bruno, their founder, painted by Le Sœur. It consists of twenty-two pictures, the figures a good deal less than life. But sure they are amazing! I don't know what Raphael may be in Rome¹, but these pictures excel all I have

¹ Lord Orford always continued to think that in these pictures Le Sœur had rivalled, if not excelled, Raphael. E.

seen in Paris and England. The figure of the dead man who spoke at his burial, contains all the strongest and horriest ideas, of ghastliness, hypocrisy discovered, and the height of damnation; pain and cursing. A Benedictine monk, who was there at the same time, said to me of this picture: *C'est une fable, mais on la croyoit autrefois.* Another, who showed me relics in one of their churches, expressed as much ridicule for them. The pictures I have been speaking of are ill preserved, and some of the finest heads defaced, which was done at first by a rival of *Le Sœur's*.—Adieu! dear West, take care of your health; and some time or other we will talk over all these things with more pleasure than I have had in seeing them.

Yours ever.

L E T T E R VIII.

DEAR WEST,

Rheims', June 18, 1739, N. S.

HOW I am to fill up this letter is not easy to divine. I have consented that Gray shall give you an account of our situation and proceedings; and have left myself at the mercy of my own invention—a most terrible resource, and which I shall avoid applying to, if I can possibly help it. I had prepared the ingredients for a description of a ball, and was just ready to serve it up to you, but he has plucked it from me. However, I was resolved to give you an account of a particular song and dance in it, and was determined to write the words and sing the tune just as I folded up my letter: but as it would, ten to one, be opened before it gets to you, I am forced to lay aside this thought, though an admirable one. Well, but now I have put it into your head, I suppose you won't rest without it. For that individual one, believe me, 'tis nothing without the tune and the dance; but to stay your stomach, I will send you one of their vaudevilles or ballads^a, which they sing at the comedy after their petites pieces.

^a Mr. Walpole was now removed to Rheims, principally to acquire the French language. E. where, with his cousin Henry Seymour Conway and Mr. Gray, he resided three months,

^a This ballad does not appear.

You

You must not wonder if all my letters resemble dictionaries, with French on one side, and English on t'other; I deal in nothing else at present, and talk a couple of words of each language alternately from morning till night. This has put my mouth a little out of tune at present; but I am trying to recover the use of it, by reading the news-papers aloud at breakfast, and by chewing the title-pages of all my English books. Besides this, I have paraphrased half the first act of your new Gustavus, which was sent us to Paris: a most dainty performance, and just what you say of it. Good night, I am sure you must be tired: if you are not, I am.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

L E T T E R IX.

DEAR WALPOLE,

Temple, June 21, 1739.

YOUR last letter puts me in mind of some good people, who, though they give you the best dinner in the world, are never satisfied with themselves, but—wish they had known sooner—quite ashamed—a little unprepared—hope you'll excuse, and so forth: for you tell me, you only send me this to stay my stomach against you are better furnished, and at the same time you treat me, *ut nunquam in vitâ melius*. Nor is it now alone I have room to say so, but 'tis always: and I know I had rather gather the crumbs that fall from under your table, than be a prime guest with most other people. Sincerely, sir, nobody in Great Britain, nor, I believe, in France, keeps a more elegant table than yourself: mistake me not, I mean a metaphorical one, for else I should lie confoundedly; for you know you did not use to keep a very extraordinary one, at least when I had the honour to dine with you:—boiled chickens and roast legs of mutton were your highest effort. But, with the metaphor, the case is quite altered: 'tis no longer *chapon toujours bouilli*: 'tis *varium & mutabile semper* enough, I am sure: 'tis *Italo perfusus aceto*: 'tis *tota merum sal*: you see too, it has a particularity, which perhaps you did not know before, that it is of all genders, and is masculine, feminine, or neuter, which you please. Your feasts are like Plato's: one feeds upon them for two or three days together, & *è convivio sapientiores resurgimus quàm accubimus*. So it is with me;

me; and I never receive any of your tables, or *tabulæ*, for you know 'tis the same thing, but I exclaim to myself,

Di magni! falicippium difertum!

If you don't understand this line, you must consult with doctor Bentley's nephew, who thinks nobody can understand it without him; when after all it does not signify a brass farthing whether you understand it or no. But, sir, this is not all: you not only treat me with a whole bushel of attic salt, and a gallon of Italian vinegar, but you give me some English-French music—a vaudeville in both languages!

Docte sermones utriusque linguæ—

But now I talk of music at a feast; I'll tell you of a feast and music too. About a fortnight ago, walking through Leicester-fields, I ran full-butt against somebody. Upon examination, who should it be but Mr. A——? I mean the nephew of the lord of ——. So we saluted very amicably, and I engaged to sup with him Thursday next. To his lodgings I went on Thursday, and there I found Plato, Puffendorf, and Prato (can't you guess who they be?) A very good supper we had, and Plato gave your health. I believe he is in love. Did you ever hear of Nanny Blundel? But I forget our music. We had, sir, for an hour or two, an Ethiopian, belonging to the duchess of Athol, who played to us upon the French-horn. A—— made me laugh about him very much. I said, I suppose you give this Ethiopian something to drink? Upon which he ordered him half a crown. I said, So *much*? Oh! he's only a Black, answered he. Puffendorf (who you know says good things sometimes) said, not amiss, Oh, sir, if he had been a White, he'd have given him a crown. I don't pretend to compare our supper with your *partie de cabaret* at Rheims; but at least, sir, our materials were more sterling than yours. You had a *goûté* forsooth, composed of *des fraises, de la crème, du vin, des gâteaux, &c.* We, sir, we supped à l'Angloise. *Imprimis*, we had buttock of beef, and Yorkshire ham; we had chickens too, and a gallon bowl of sallad, and a gooseberry pye as big as any thing. Now, sir, notwithstanding (Do you know what this notwithstanding relates to? I'll mark the cue for you—'tis—) notwithstanding, I say, I am neither *solers citbaræ, neque musæ deditus ulli,*

as you are; yet, as I am very vain, and apt to have a high opinion of my own poetry, I have a mind to treat you as elegantly as you have treated me—as you remember a certain doctor at King's college did the duke of Devonshire—and so have prepared you a little sort of musical accompanimento for your entertainment. 'Tis true, I said to myself very often——

An quodcunque facit Mæcenas, Te quoque verum est,
Tanto dissimilem, & tanto certare minorem?

Then I reflected——

Ut gratas inter menfas symphonia discors,
Et crassum unguentum, & Sardo cum melle papaver,
Offendunt; poterat duci quia cœna sine illis;
Sic animis natum inventumque pœma juvandis,
Si paulum summo discessit, vergit ad imum.

Yet in spite of these two long quotations (which I made no other use of than what you see) I still determined to scrape a little, and accordingly have sent you, in lieu of your vaudeville, a miserable elegy¹.

I dare say, you wish you could shake the pen out of my hand. But I don't know how it is; I am at present in a vein to make up for the dryness of most of my former letters, since you have been abroad; and I can't tell but I may fill up this sheet, if not another, with more such trumpery. I forget all this while to thank for the packet, which I have received, and which was more welcome to me than an Amiens-pye; for I can't help running on upon the metaphor I set out with; and you know I always was a heluo librorum. The first thing I pitched upon was Crebillon's love-letters, allured by the gar- nishing, I fancy; that is, the red leaves and the blue silk kalendar. 'Tis an ingenious account of the progress of love in a very virtuous lady's heart, and how a fine gentleman may first gain her approbation, then her esteem, then her heart, and then her——you know what. But don't you think it ends a little too tragically? For my part, I protest, I was very sorry the last letter made me cry. But the passions are charmingly described all through, and the

¹ This elegy does not appear.

language is fine. After this I would have read the Amusement Philosophique; but Asheton has run away with it—

Callidus, quicquid placuit jocosus
Condere furto.

Very jocosus indeed to rob a body! So I ha'n't seen it since. Gustave is no bad thing, as far as I can judge. One may see the author was young when he wrote it, and it looks to me like a first play of an author. But the language is natural, and in many places poetical. The plot is very entertaining, only I don't like the conclusion. It ends abrupt, and Leonor comes in at last too much like an apparition. The rest of the pieces I have not read; but from what I can discover by a transient view, I fancy they are better seen than read.

I am now at the eighth page: 'tis time to have done, and wish you adieu. I hear sir Robert is very well. My lord Conway is reckoned one of the prettiest persons about town.

Yours ever,

R. WEST.

L E T T E R X.

Rheims, July 20, 1739.

GRAY says, Indeed you ought to write to West. Lord, child, so I would, if I knew what to write about. If I were at London and he at Rheims, I would send him volumes about peace and war, Spaniards, camps and conventions; but d'ye think he cares sixpence to know who is gone to Compiègne, and when they come back, or who won and lost four livres at quadrille last night at Mr. Cockbert's?—No, but you may tell him what you have heard of Compiègne; that they have balls twice a week after the play, and that the count d'Eu gave the king a most flaming entertainment in the camp, where the Polygone was represented in flowering shrubs. Dear West, these are the things I must tell you; I don't know how to make 'em look significant, unless you will be a Rhemois for a little moment¹. I wonder you can stay out of the

¹ The three following paragraphs are a literal translation of French expressions to the same import. E.

city so long, when we are going to have all manner of diversions. The comedians return hither from Compiègne in eight days, for example; and in a very little of time one attends the regiment of the king, three battalions, and an hundred of officers; all men of a certain fashion, very amiable, and who know their world. Our women grow more gay, more lively from day to day in expecting them; mademoiselle la Reine is brewing a wash of a finer dye, and brushing up her eyes for their arrival. La Barone already counts upon fifteen of them; and madame Lelu, finding her linen robe conceals too many beauties, has bespoken one of gauze.

I won't plague you any longer with people you don't know, I mean French ones; for you must absolutely hear of an Englishman that lately appeared at Rheims. About two days ago, about four o'clock in the afternoon, and about an hour after dinner; from all which you may conclude we dine at two o'clock, as we were picking our teeth round a littered table, and in a crumby room, Gray in an undress, Mr. Conway in a morning grey coat, and I in a trim white night-gown, and slippers, very much out of order, with a very little cold; a message discomposed us all of a sudden, with a service to Mr. Walpole from Mr. More, and that, if he pleased, he would wait on him. We scuttle up stairs in great confusion, but with no other damage than the flinging down two or three glasses, and the dropping a slipper by the way. Having ordered the room to be cleaned out, and sent a very civil response to Mr. More, we began to consider who Mr. More should be. Is it Mr. More of Paris? No. Oh, 'tis Mr. More, my lady Tenham's husband? No, it can't be he. A Mr. More then that lives in the Halifax family? No. In short, after thinking of ten thousand more Mr. Mores, we concluded it could be never a one of 'em. By this time Mr. More arrives; but such a Mr. More! a young gentleman out of the wilds of Ireland, who has never been in England, but has got all the ordinary language of that kingdom; has been two years at Paris, where he dined at an ordinary with the refugee Irish, and learnt fortifications, which he does not understand at all, and which yet is the only thing he knows. In short, he is a young swain of very uncouth phrase, inarticulate speech, and no ideas. This hopeful child is riding post into Lorraine, or any where else, he is not certain; for if there is a war he shall go home again: for we must give the Spaniards another drubbing, you know; and if the Dutch do but join us, we shall blow up all the ports in Europe; for our ships are our bastions, and our ravelines, and our hornworks; and there's a devilish wide

wide ditch for 'em to pass, which they can't fill up with things—Here Mr. Conway helped him to fascines. By this time I imagine you have laughed at him as much, and were as tired of him as we were: but he's gone. This is the day that Gray and I intended for the first of a southern circuit; but as Mr. Selwyn and George Montagu design us a visit here, we have put off our journey for some weeks. When we get a little farther, I hope our memoirs will brighten: at present they are but dull, dull as

Your humble servant ever,

H. W.

P. S. I thank you ten thousand times for your last letter: when I have as much wit and as much poetry in me, I'll send you as good an one. Good night, child!

LETTER XI.

From a Hamlet among the Mountains of Savoy, Sept. 28, 1739, N. S.

PRECIPICES, mountains, torrents, wolves, rumblings, Salvator Rosa—the pomp of our park and the meekness of our palace! Here we are, the lonely lords of glorious desolate prospects. I have kept a sort of resolution which I made, of not writing to you as long as I staid in France: I am now a quarter of an hour out of it, and write to you. Mind, 'tis three months since we heard from you. I begin this letter among the clouds; where I shall finish, my neighbour heaven probably knows: 'tis an odd wish in a mortal letter, to hope not to finish it on this side the atmosphere. You will have a billet tumble to you from the stars when you least think of it; and that I should write it too! Lord, how potent that sounds! But I am to undergo many transmigrations before I come to "yours ever." Yesterday I was a shepherd of Dauphiné; to-day an Alpine savage; to-morrow a Carthusian monk; and Friday a Swiss calvinist. I have one quality which I find remains with me in all worlds and in all æthers; I brought it with me from your world, and am admired for it in this; 'tis my esteem for you: this is a common

thought among you, and you will laugh at it, but it is new here; as new to remember one's friends in the world one has left, as for you to remember those you have lost.

Aix in Savoy, Sept. 30th.

We are this minute come in here, and here's an awkward abbé this minute come in to us. I asked him if he would sit down. *Oui, oui, oui.* He has ordered us a radish soupe for supper, and has brought a chefs-board to play with Mr. Conway. I have left 'em in the act, and am set down to write to you. Did you ever see any thing like the prospect we saw yesterday? I never did. We rode three leagues to see the Grande Chartreuse; expected bad roads, and the finest convent in the kingdom. We were disappointed pro and con. The building is large and plain, and has nothing remarkable but its primitive simplicity: they entertained us in the neatest manner, with eggs, pickled salmon, dried fish, conserves, cheese, butter, grapes and figs, and pressed us mightily to lie there. We tumbled into the hands of a lay-brother, who, unluckily having the charge of the meal and bran, showed us little besides. They desired us to set down our names in the list of strangers, where, among others, we found two mottos of our countrymen, for whose stupidity and brutality we blushed. The first was of sir J — D —, who had wrote down the first stanza of *Justum & tenacem*, altering the last line to *Mente quatit Carthufiana*. The second was of one D —, *Cælum ipsum petimus stultitid; & hic ventri indico bellum*. The Goth!—But the road, West, the road! winding round a prodigious mountain, and surrounded with others, all shagged with hanging woods, obscured with pines or lost in clouds! Below, a torrent breaking through cliffs, and tumbling through fragments of rocks! Sheets of cascades forcing their silver speed down channelled precipices, and hasting into the roughened river at the bottom! Now and then an old foot-bridge, with a broken rail, a leaning cross, a cottage, or the ruin of an hermitage! This sounds too bombast and too romantic to one that has not seen it, too cold for one that has. If I could send you my letter post between two lovely tempests that echoed each other's wrath, you might have some idea of this noble roaring scene, as you were reading it. Almost on the summit, upon a fine verdure, but without any prospect, stands the Chartreuse. We staid there two hours, rode back through this charming picture, wished for a painter, wished to be poets! Need I tell you we wished for you?

Good night!

Geneva,

Geneva, Oct. 2.

By beginning a new date, I should begin a new letter; but I have seen nothing yet, and the post is going out: 'tis a strange tumbled dab, and dirty too, I am sending you; but what can I do? There is no possibility of writing such a long history over again. I find there are many English in the town; lord Brook, lord Mansel, lord Hervey's eldest son, and a son of——of Mars and Venus, or of Antony and Cleopatra, or in short, of——. This is the boy in the bow of whose hat Mr. Hedges pinned a pretty epigram: I don't know if you ever heard it: I'll suppose you never did, because it will fill up my letter:

Give but Cupid's dart to me,
Another Cupid I shall be;
No more distinguish'd from the other,
Than Venus would be from my mother.

Scandal says, Hedges thought the two last very like; and it says too, that she was not his enemy for thinking so.

Adieu! Gray and I return to Lyons in three days. Harry^s stays here. Perhaps at our return we may find a letter from you: it ought to be very full of excuses, for you have been a lazy creature; I hope you have, for I would not owe your silence to any other reason.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XII.

Turin, Nov. 11, 1739, N. S.

SO, as the song says, we are in fair Italy! I wonder we are; for, on the very highest precipice of mount Cenis, the devil of discord in the similitude of four wine had got amongst our Alpine savages, and set them a-fighting,

^s Mr. Conway.

with

with Gray and me in the chairs: they rushed him by me on a crag where there was scarce room for a cloven foot. The least slip had tumbled us into such a fog, and such an eternity, as we should never have found our way out of again. We were eight days in coming hither from Lyons; the four last in crossing the Alps. Such uncouth rocks and such uncomely inhabitants! my dear West, I hope I shall never see them again! At the foot of mount Cenis we were obliged to quit our chaise, which was taken all to pieces and loaded on mules; and we were carried in low arm-chairs on poles, swathed in beaver bonnets, beaver gloves, beaver stockings, muffs, and bear-skins. When we came to the top, behold the snows fallen! and such quantities, and conducted by such heavy clouds that hung glouting, that I thought we could never have waded through them. The descent is two leagues, but steep, and rough as O—— father's face, over which, you know, the devil walked with hob-nails in his shoes. But the dexterity and nimbleness of the mountaineers is inconceivable; they run with you down steeps and frozen precipices, where no man, as men are now, could possibly walk. We had twelve men and nine mules to carry us, our servants and baggage, and were above five hours in this agreeable jaunt! The day before, I had a cruel accident, and so extraordinary an one, that it seems to touch upon the traveller. I had brought with me a little black spaniel, of king Charles's breed; but the prettiest, fattest, dearest creature! I had let it out of the chaise for the air, and it was waddling along close to the head of the horses, on the top of one of the highest Alps, by the side of a wood of firs. There darted out a young wolf, seized poor dear Tory by the throat, and, before we could possibly prevent it, sprung up the side of the rock and carried him off. The postillion jumped off and struck at him with his whip, but in vain. I saw it and screamed, but in vain; for the road was so narrow, that the servants that were behind could not get by the chaise to shoot him. What is the extraordinary part is, that it was but two o'clock, and broad sun-shine. It was shocking to see any thing one loved run away with to so horrid a death.

Just coming out of Chamberri, which is a little nasty old hole, I copied an inscription, set up at the end of a great road, which was practised through an immense solid rock by bursting it asunder with gun-powder: the Latin is pretty enough, and so I send it you:

Carolus Emanuel II. Sab. dux, Pedem. princeps, Cypri rex, publicâ felicitate partâ, singulorum commodis intentus, breviorẽ securiorẽque viam regiam,

giam, naturâ oclusam, Romanis intentatam, cæteris desperatam, dejectis scopulorum repagulis, æquatâ montium iniquitate, quæ cervicibus immincbant precipitia pedibus substernens, æternis populorum commerciis patefecit. A. D. 1670.

We passed the Pas de Suze, where is a strong fortrefs on a rock, between two very neighbour mountains; and then, through a fine avenue of three leagues, we at last discovered Turin.

E l'un à l'altro mostra, & in tanto oblia
La noia, e'l mal de la passata via.

'Tis really by far one of the prettiest cities I have seen—not one of your large straggling ones that can afford to have twenty dirty suburbs, but clean and compact, very new and very regular. The king's palace is not of the proudest without, but of the richest within; painted, gilt, looking-glassed, very costly, but very tawdry; in short, a very popular palace. We were last night at the Italian comedy—The devil of a house, and the devil of actors! Besides this, there is a sort of an heroic tragedy, called *La rappresentazione dell' anima dannata*. A woman, a sinner, comes in and makes a solemn prayer to the Trinity: enter Jesus Christ and the Virgin: he scolds, and exit: she tells the woman her son is very angry, but she don't know, she will see what she can do. After the play, we were introduced to the assembly, which they call the *Conversazione*: there were many people playing at ombre, pharaoh, and a game called taroc, with cards so *bigb'*, to the number of seventy-eight. There are three or four English here; lord Lincoln, with Spence, your professor of poetry; a Mr. B——, and a Mr. C——, a man that never utters a syllable. We have tried all stratagems to make him speak. Yesterday he did at last open his mouth, and said *Bec*. We all laughed so at the novelty of the thing, that he shut it again, and will never speak more. I think you can't complain now of my not writing to you. What a volume of trifles! I wrote just the fellow to it from Geneva; had it you? Farewell!

Thine,

HOR. WALPOLE.

* In the manuscript, the writing of this word is extraordinarily tall. E.

LETTER XIII.

DEAR WALPOLE,

BEG! for I have not spoke to-day, and therefore I am resolv'd to speak to you first. Asheton is of opinion you have read Herodotus; but I imagine no such thing, and verily believe the gentleman to be a Phœnician. I can't forgive Mont Cenis poor Tory's death! I can assure her I'll never sing her panegyric, unless she serves all her wolves as Edgar the Peaceable did. It did touch a little upon the traveller. What do you think it put me in mind of? Not a bit like, but it put me in mind of poor Mrs. Rider in Cleveland, where she's tore to pieces by the savages. I can't say I much like your Alps by the description you give; but still I have a strange ambition to be where Hannibal was: it must be a pretty thing to fetch a walk in the clouds, and to have the snow up to one's ears. But I am really surpris'd at your going two leagues in five hours: a'n't it prodigious quick, to go down such a terrible descent? The inscription you mention is very pretty Latin. I see already you like Italy better than France and all its works. When shall you be at Rome? Middleton, I think, says, you find there every thing you find every where else. I expect volume upon volume there. Do you never write folios as well as quartos? You know I am a heluo of every thing of that kind, and I am never so happy as when—*verbosa & grandis epistola venit*— We have strange news here in town, if it be but true: we hear of a sea-fight between six of our men of war and ten Spanish; and that we sunk one and took five. I should not forget that Mr. Pelham has lost two only children at a stroke: 'tis a terrible loss: they died of a sort of sore-throat. To muster up all sort of news: Glover has put out on this occasion a new poem, called London, or The progress of Commerce; wherein he very much extols a certain Dutch poet, called Janus Douza, and compares him to Sophocles: I suppose he does it to make interest upon 'Change. Plays we have none, or damned ones. Handel has had a concerto this winter. No opera, no nothing. All for war and admiral Haddock. Farewell and adieu!

Yours,

R. WEST.

Temple,
Dec. 13, 1739.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

From Bologna, 1739.

I DON'T know why I told Asheton I would send you an account of what I saw; don't believe it, I don't intend it. Only think what a vile employment 'tis, making catalogues! And then one should have that odious Curl get at one's letters, and publish them like Whitfield's Journal, or for a supplement to the Traveller's Pocket-companion. Dear West, I protest against having seen any thing but what all the world has seen; nay, I have not seen half that, not some of the most common things; not so much as a miracle. Well, but you don't expect it, do you? Except pictures and statues, we are not very fond of fights; don't go a-staring after crooked towers and conundrum stair-cases. Don't you hate too a jingling epitaph of one Procul and one Proculus¹ that is here? Now and then we drop in at a procession, or a high-mass, hear the music, enjoy a strange attire, and hate the foul monkhood. Last week was the feast of the Immaculate Conception. On the eve we went to the Franciscans' church to hear the academical exercises. There were moult and moult clergy, about two dozen dames, that treated one another with *illustrissima* and brown kisses, the vice-legate, the gonfalonier, and some senate. The vice-legate, whose conception was not quite so immaculate, is a young personable person, of about twenty, and had on a mighty pretty cardinal-kind of habit; 'twou'd make a delightful masquerade dress. We asked his name: Spinola. What, a nephew of the cardinal-legate? *Signor, no: ma credo che gli sia qualche cosa.* He sat on the right-hand with the gonfalonier in two purple fauteuils. Opposite was a throne of crimson damask, with the device of the Academy, the Gelati; and trimmings of gold. Here sat at a table, in black, the head of the academy, between the orator and the first poet. At two semicircular tables on either hand sat three poets and three; silent among many candles. The chief made a little introduction, the orator a long Italian vile harangue. Then the chief, the poet, the poets, who were a Franciscan, an Olivetan, an old abbé, and three lay, read their compositions; and to-day they are pasted up in all parts of the town. As we came out of the church, we found all the convent and neighbouring houses lighted all over with lanthorns of red and yellow paper, and two bonfires. But you are sick of this foolish ceremony;

¹ Si procul a Proculo Proculi campana fuisse,

Jam procul a Proculo Proculus ipse foret.

A. D. 1392.

Epitaph on the outside of the wall of the church of St. Proculo. E.

I'll carry you to no more: I will only mention, that we found the Dominicans' church here in mourning for the inquisitor; 'twas all hung with black cloth, furbelowed and festooned with yellow gauze. We have seen a furniture here in a much prettier taste; a gallery of count Caprara's: in the panels between the windows are pendent trophies of various arms taken by one of his ancestors from the Turks. They are whimsical, romantic, and have a pretty effect. I looked about, but could not perceive the portrait of the lady at whose feet they were indisputably offered. In coming out of Genoa we were more lucky; found the very spot where Horatio and Lothario were to have fought, "*west of the town a mile among the rocks.*"

My dear West, in return for your epigrams of Prior, I will transcribe some old verses too, but which I fancy I can show you in a sort of a new light. They are no newer than Virgil, and, what is more odd, are in the second Georgic. 'Tis, that I have observed that he not only excels when he is like himself, but even when he is very like inferior poets: you will say that they rather excel by being like him: but mind: they are all near one another:

Si non ingentem foribus domus alta superbis.
Mane salutantum totis vomit ædibus undam:

And the four next lines; are they not just like Martial? In the following he is as much Claudian;

Illum non populi fasces, non purpura regum
Flexit, & infidos agitans discordia fratres;
Aut conjurato descendens Dacus ab Istro.

Then who are these like?

—nec ferrea jura,
Infanumque forum, aut populi tabularia vidit.
Sollicitant alii remis freta cæca, ruuntque
In ferrum, penetrant aulas & limina regum.
Hic petit excidiis urbem miserisque Penates,
Ut gemmâ bibat, & Sarrano indormiat ostro.

Don't they seem to be Juvenal's?—There are some more, which to me resemble Horace; but perhaps I think so from his having some on a parallel subject. Tell me if I am mistaken; these are they:

Interea

Interea dulces pendent circum oscula nati:
 Casta pudicitiam servat domus——

inclusively to the end of these:

Hanc olim veteres vitam coluere Sabini;
 Hanc Remus & frater: sic fortis Etruria crevit,
 Scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma.

If the imagination is whimsical; why at least 'tis like me to have imagined it. Adieu, child! We leave Bologna to-morrow. You know 'tis the third city in Italy for pictures: knowing that, you know all. We shall be three days crossing the Apennine to Florence; would it were over!

My dear West, I am yours from St. Peter's to St. Paul's!

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XV.

Jan. 23, 1740.

IT thaws, it thaws, it thaws! A'n't you glad of it? I can assure you we are: we have been this four weeks a-freezing: our Thames has been in chains, our streets almost unpassable with snow, and dirt, and ice, and all our vegetables and animals in distress. Really, such a frost as ours has been is a melancholy thing. I don't wonder now that whole nations have worshipped the sun: I am almost inclined myself to be a Guebre: tell Orosmades¹. I believe you think I'm mad; but you would not if you knew what it was to want the sun as we do: 'tis a general frost delivery. Heaven grant the thaw may last! for 'tis a question.

Your last letter, my dear Walpole, is welcome. I thank you for its longitude, and all its parallel lines. You have rather transcribed too many lines out of Virgil: but your criticism I agree with, without any hesitation. Whimsical, quotha: 'tis just and new. You might have added Ovid——

and Statius: Quos rami fructus, quos ipsa——

At secura quies——

and what follows down to

Non absunt——

¹ Mr. Gray.

But what do you think? Your observations have set me a-translating, and Asheton has told me it was worth sending. Excuse it, 'tis a tramontane. I shall certainly publish your letters. But now I think on't, I won't: I should make Pope quite angry. Addio, mio caro, addio! Dove sei? Ritorna, ritorna, amato bene!

Yours from St. Paul's to St. Peter's!

R. WEST.

I believe you must send my translation to the academy of the Gelati.

My love to Gray, and pray tell him from me—

Ψυχος δὲ λεπτιω χρωτὶ πολυμιώτατον².

LETTER XVI.

DEAR WEST,

Florence, Jan. 24, 1740, N. S.

I DON'T know what volumes I may send you from Rome; from Florence I have little inclination to send you any. I see several things that please me calmly, but à force d'en avoir vû I have left off screaming, Lord! this! and Lord! that! To speak sincerely, Calais surpris'd me more than any thing I have seen since. I recollect the joy I us'd to propose if I could but once see the Great Duke's gallery; I walk into it now with as little emotion as I should into St. Paul's. The statues are a congregation of good sort of people, that I have a great deal of unruffled regard for. The farther I travel, the less I wonder at any thing: a few days reconcile one to a new spot, or an unseen custom; and men are so much the same every where, that one scarce perceives any change of situation. The same weaknesses, the same passions that in England plunge men into elections, drinking, whoring, exist here, and show themselves in the shapes of Jesuits, Cicisbeos, and Corydon ardebat Alexins. The most remarkable thing I have observed since I came abroad, is, that there are no people so obviously mad as the English. The French, the Italians, have great

¹ This translation does not appear.

² "Cold is extremely inimical to thin habits of body."

A fragment of Euripides quoted by Cicero. Vide let. 8, lib. 16, Epist. ad Fam. E.

follies, great faults; but then they are so national, that they cease to be striking. In England, tempers vary so excessively, that almost every one's faults are peculiar to himself. I take this diversity to proceed partly from our climate, partly from our government: the first is changeable, and makes us queer; the latter permits our queernesses to operate as they please. If one could avoid contracting this queerness, it must certainly be the most entertaining to live in England, where such a variety of incidents continually amuse. The incidents of a week in London would furnish all Italy with news for a twelvemonth. The only two circumstances of moment in the life of an Italian, that ever give occasion to their being mentioned, are, being married, and in a year after taking a cicisbeo. Ask the name, the husband, the wife or the cicisbeo of any person, & voilà qui est fini. Thus, child, 'tis dull dealing here! Methinks your Spanish war is little more lively. By the gravity of the proceedings, one would think both nations were Spaniard. Adieu! Do you remember my maxim, that you used to laugh at? *Every body does every thing, and nothing comes on't.* I am more convinced of it now than ever. I don't know whether S——'s was not still better, *Well, 'gad, there is nothing in nothing.* You see how I distill all my speculations and improvements, that they may lie in a small compass. Do you remember the story of the prince, that after travelling three years brought home nothing but a nut? They cracked it: in it was wrapped up a piece of silk, painted with all the kings, queens, kingdoms, and every thing in the world: after many unfoldings, out stepped a little dog, shook his ears, and fell to dancing a saraband. There is a fairy tale for you. If I had any thing as good as your old song, I would fend it too; but I can only thank you for it, and bid you good night.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. Upon reading my letter, I perceive still plainer the sameness that reigns here; for I find I have said the same things ten times over. I don't care; I have made out a letter, and that was all my affair.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

Florence, February 27, 1740, N. S.

WELL, West, I have found a little unmasqued moment to write to you ; but for this week past I have been so muffled up in my domino, that I have not had the command of my elbows. But what have you been doing all the mornings ? Could you not write then ? No, then I was masqued too ; I have done nothing but slip out of my domino into bed, and out of bed into my domino. The end of the Carnival is frantic, bacchanalian ; all the morn one makes parties in masque to the shops and coffee-houses, and all the evening to the operas and balls. *Then I have danced, good gods, how I have danced !* The Italians are fond to a degree of our country dances : *Cold and raw* they only know by the tune ; *Blowzy-bella* is almost Italian, and *Buttered peas* is *Pizelli al buro*. There are but three days more ; but the two last are to have balls all the morning at the fine unfinished palace of the Strozzi ; and the Tuesday night a masquerade after supper : they sup first, to eat gras, and not encroach upon Ash-wednesday. What makes masquerading more agreeable here than in England, is the great deference that is showed to the disguised. Here they do not catch at those little dirty opportunities of saying any ill-natured thing they know of you, do not abuse you because they may, or talk gross bawdy to a woman of quality. I found the other day by a play of Etheridge's, that we have had a sort of Carnival even since the Reformation ; 'tis in *She would if she could*, they talk of going a-mumming in Shrove-tide.—After talking so much of diversions, I fear you will attribute to them the fondness I own I contract for Florence ; but it has so many other charms, that I shall not want excuses for my taste. The freedom of the Carnival has given me opportunities to make several acquaintances ; and if I have not found them refined, learned, polished, like some other cities, yet they are civil, good-natured, and fond of the English. Their little partiality for themselves, opposed to the violent vanity of the French, makes them very amiable in my eyes. I can give you a comical instance of their great prejudice about nobility ; it happened yesterday. While we were at dinner at Mr. Mann's, word was brought by his secretary, that a cavalier demanded audience of him upon an affair of honour. Gray and I flew behind the curtain of the door. An elderly gentleman, whose attire was not certainly correspondent to the greatness of his birth,

birth, entered, and informed the British minister that one Martin an English painter had left a challenge for him at his house, for having said Martin was no gentleman. He would by no means have spoke of the duel before the transaction of it, but that his honour, his blood, his &c. would never permit him to fight with one who was no cavalier; which was what he came to enquire of his excellency. We laughed loud laughs, but unheard: his fright or his nobility had closed his ears. But mark the sequel; the instant he was gone, my very English curiosity hurried me out of the gate St. Gallo; 'twas the place and hour appointed. We had not been driving about above ten minutes, but out popped a little figure, pale but cross, with beard unshaved and hair uncombed, a slouched hat, and a considerable red cloak, in which was wrapped, under his arm, the fatal sword that was to revenge the highly injured Mr. Martin, painter and defendant. I darted my head out of the coach, just ready to say "Your servant, Mr. Martin," and talk about the architecture of the triumphal arch that was building there; but he would not know me, and walked off. We left him to wait for an hour, to grow very cold and very valiant the more it grew past the hour of appointment. We were figuring all the poor creature's huddle of thoughts, and confused hopes of victory, or fame, of his unfinished pictures, or his situation upon bouncing into the next world. You will think us strange creatures; but 'twas a pleasant fight, as we knew the poor painter was safe. I have thought of it since, and am inclined to believe that nothing but two English could have been capable of such a jaunt. I remember, 'twas reported in London that the plague was at a house in the city, and all the town went to see it.

I have this instant received your letter. Lord! I am glad I thought of those parallel passages, since it made you translate them. 'Tis excessively near the original; and yet, I don't know, 'tis very easy too.—It snows here a little to-night, but it never lies but on the mountains.

Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P.S. What is the history of the theatres this winter?

LETTER XVIII.

DEAR WEST,

Siena, March 22d, 1740, N. S.

PROBABLY now you will hear something of the Conclave; we have left Florence, and are got hither on the way to a pope. In three hours time we have seen all the good contents of this city: 'tis old, and very smug, with very few inhabitants. You must not believe Mr. Addison about the wonderful Gothic nicety of the dome: the materials are richer, but the workmanship and taste not near so good as in several I have seen. We saw a college of the Jesuits, where there are taught to draw above fifty boys: they are disposed in long chambers in the manner of Eton, but cleaner. N. B. We were not *bolstered*¹, so we wished you with us. Our Cicerone, who has less classic knowledge and more superstition than a collegier, upon showing us the she-wolf, the arms of Siena, told us that Romulus and Remus were nursed by a wolf, *per la volonta di Dio, si può dire*; and that one might see by the arms, that the same founders built Rome and Siena. Another dab of Romish superstition, not unworthy of presbyterian divinity, we met with in a book of drawings: 'twas the Virgin standing on a tripod composed of Adam, Eve and the Devil, to express her immaculate conception.

You can't imagine how pretty the country is between this and Florence; millions of little hills planted with trees, and tipped with villas or convents. We left unseen the Great Duke's villas and several palaces in Florence till our return from Rome: the weather has been so cold, how could one go to them? In Italy they seem to have found out how hot their climate is, but not how cold; for there are scarce any chimneys, and most of the apartments painted in fresco; so that one has the additional horror of freezing with imaginary marble. The men hang little earthen pans of coals upon their wrists, and the women have portable stoves under their petticoats to warm their nakedness, and carry silver shovels in their pockets, with which their Cicisbeos stir them—Hush! by them, I mean their stoves. I have nothing more to tell you; I'll carry my letter to Rome and finish it there.

¹ An Eton phrase.

Rè di Cossano, March 23, where lived one of the three kings.

THE king of Cossano carried presents of myrrh, gold, and frankincense: I don't know where the devil he found them, for in all his dominions we have not seen the value of a shrub. We have the honour of lodging under his roof to-night. Lord! such a place, such an extent of ugliness! A lone inn upon a black mountain, by the side of an old fortrefs! no curtains or windows, only shutters! no testers to the beds! no earthly thing to eat but some eggs and a few little fishes! This lovely spot is now known by the name of Radicofani. Coming down a steep hill with two miserable hackneys, one fell under the chaise; and while we were disengaging him, a chaise came by with a person in a red cloak, a white handkerchief on its head, and black hat: we thought it a fat old woman; but it spoke in a shrill little pipe, and proved itself to be Senesini.

I forgot to tell you an inscription I copied from the portal of the dome of Siena:

Annus centenus Romæ semper est jubilenus;
Crimina laxantur si pœnitet ista donantur;
Sic ordinavit Bonifacius et roboravit.

Rome, March 26.

WE are this instant arrived, tired and hungry! O! the charming city—I believe it is—for I have not seen a syllable yet, only the Pons Milvius and an obelisk. The Cassian and Flaminian ways were terrible disappointments; not one Rome tomb left; their very ruins ruined. The English are numberless. My dear West, I know at Rome you will not have a grain of pity for one; but indeed 'tis dreadful, dealing with school-boys just broke loose, or old fools that are come abroad at forty to see the world, like sir Wilful Witwou'd. I don't know whether you will receive this, or any other: I write; but though I shall write often, you and Atheton must not wonder if none come to you; for, though I am harmless in my nature, my name has some mystery in it. Good-night! I have no more time or paper. Atheton, child, I'll write to you next post. Write us no treasons, be sure!

He means the name of Walpole at Rome, where the Pretender and many of his adherents then resided. E.

LETTER XIX.

Rome, April 16, 1740, N.S.

I'LL tell you, West, because one is amongst new things, you think one can always write new things. When I first came abroad, every thing struck me, and I wrote its history; but now I am grown so used to be surpris'd, that I don't perceive any flutter in myself when I meet with any novelties; curiosity and astonishment wear off, and the next thing is, to fancy that other people know as much of places as one's self; or, at least, one does not remember that they do not. It appears to me as odd to write to you of St. Peter's, as it would do to you to write of Westminster-abbey. Besides, as one looks at churches, &c. with a book of travels in one's hand, and sees every thing particularized there, it would appear transcribing, to write upon the same subjects. I know you will hate me for this declaration; I remember how ill I used to take it when any body served me so that was travelling.—Well, I will tell you something, if you will love me: You have seen prints of the ruins of the temple of Minerva Medica; you shall only hear its situation, and then figure what a villa might be laid out there. 'Tis in the middle of a garden: at a little distance are two subterraneous grottos, which were the burial-places of the liberti of Augustus. There are all the niches and covers of the urns with the inscriptions remaining; and in one, very considerable remains of an ancient stucco ceiling with paintings in grottesque. Some of the walks would terminate upon the Castellum Aquæ Martiæ, St. John Lateran, and St. Maria Maggiore, besides other churches; the walls of the garden would be two aqueducts, and the entrance through one of the old gates of Rome. This glorious spot is neglected, and only serves for a small vineyard and kitchen-garden.

I am very glad that I see Rome while it yet exists: before a great number of years are elapsed, I question whether it will be worth seeing. Between the ignorance and poverty of the present Romans, every thing is neglected and falling to decay; the villas are entirely out of repair, and the palaces so ill kept, that half the pictures are spoiled by damp. At the villa Ludovisi is a large oracular head of red marble, colossal, and with vast foramina for the eyes and mouth:—the man that showed the palace said it was *un ritratto della famiglia*. The cardinal Corsini has so thoroughly pushed on the misery of Rome by impoverishing it, that there is no money but paper to be seen. He is
reckoned

reckoned to have amassed three millions of crowns. You may judge of the affluence the nobility live in, when I assure you, that what the chief princes allow for their own eating is a testoon a day; eighteen pence: there are some extend their expence to five pauls, or half a crown: cardinal Albani is called extravagant for laying out ten pauls for his dinner and supper. You may imagine they never have any entertainments: so far from it, they never have any company. The princeesses and duchesses particularly lead the dismallest of lives. Being the posterity of popes, though of worse families than the ancient nobility, they expect greater respect than my ladies the countesses and marquises will pay them; consequently they consort not, but mope in a vast palace with two miserable tapers, and two or three monsignori, whom they are forced to court and humour, that they may not be entirely deserted. Sundays they do issue forth in a vast unwieldy coach to the Corso.

In short, child, after sunset one passes one's time here very ill; and if I did not wish for you in the mornings, it would be no compliment to tell you that I do in the evening. Lord! how many English I could change for you, and yet buy you wondrous cheap! And then French and Germans I could fling into the bargain by dozens. Nations swarm here. You will have a great fat French cardinal garnished with thirty abbés roll into the area of St. Peter's, gape, turn short, and talk of the chapel of Versailles. I heard one of them say t'other day, he had been at the *Capitale*. One asked of course how he liked it—*Ab! il y a assez de belles choses.*

Tell Asheton I have received his letter, and will write next post; but I am in a violent hurry and have no more time; so Gray finishes this delicately—

NOT so delicate; nor indeed would his conscience suffer him to write to you, till he received de vos nouvelles, if he had not the tail of another person's letter to use by way of evasion. I sha'n't describe, as being in the only place in the world that deserves it; which may seem an odd reason—but they say as how it's fulsome, and every body does it (and I suppose every body says the same thing); else I should tell you a vast deal about the Coliseum, and the Conclave, and the Capitol, and these matters. A-propos du Colisée, if you don't know what it is, the prince Borghese will be very capable of giving you some account of it, who told an Englishman that asked what it was built for: "They say 'twas for Christians to fight with tigers in." We are just come from adoring a great piece of the true cross, St. Longinus's spear, and St. Veronica's handkerchief; all which have been this evening exposed to view in St. Peter's.

In

In the same place, and on the same occasion last night, Walpole saw a poor creature naked to the waist discipline himself with a scourge filled with iron prickles, till he had made himself a raw doublet, that he took for red satin torn, and showing the skin through. I should tell you, that he fainted away three times at the sight, and I twice and a half at the repetition of it. All this is performed by the light of a vast fiery cross, composed of hundreds of little crystal lamps, which appears through the great altar under the grand tribuna, as if hanging by itself in the air. All the confraternities of the city resort thither in solemn procession, habited in linen frocks, girt with a cord, and their heads covered with a cowl all over, that has only two holes before to see through. Some of these are all black, others parti-coloured and white: and with these masqueraders that vast church is filled, who are seen thumping their breast, and kissing the pavement with extreme devotion. But methinks I am describing:—'tis an ill habit; but this, like every thing else, will wear off. We have sent you our compliments by a friend of yours, and correspondent in a corner, who seems a very agreeable man; one Mr. Williams: I am sorry he staid so little a while in Rome. I forget Porto Bello all this while; pray let us know where it is, and whether you or Asheton had any hand in the taking of it. Duty to the admiral. Adieu!

Ever yours,

T. GRAY.

LETTER XX.

DEAR WEST,

Rome, May 7, 1740, N. S.

'TWOU'D be quite rude and unpardonable in one not to wish you joy upon the great conquests that you are all committing all over the world. We heard the news last night from Naples, that admiral Haddock had met the Spanish convoy going to Majorca, and taken it all, all; three thousand men, three colonels, and a Spanish grandee. We conclude it is true, for the Neapolitan majesty mentioned it at dinner. We are going thither in about a week to wish him joy of it too. 'Tis with some apprehensions we go too, of having a pope chosen in the interim: that would be cruel, you know. But, thank our stars, there is no great probability of it. Feuds and contentions run high among the Eminences. A notable one happened this week. Cardinal

dinal Zinzendorff and two more had given their votes for the general of the Capucins: he is of the Barberini family, not a cardinal, but a worthy man. Not effecting any thing, Zinzendorff voted for Coscia, and declared it publicly. Cardinal Petra reprov'd him; but the German replied, he thought Coscia as fit to be pope as any of them. It seems, his pique to the whole body is, their having denied a daily admission of a pig into the conclave for his eminence's use; who being much troubled with the gout, was ordered by his mother to bathe his leg in pig's blood every morning.

Who should have a vote t'other day but the *Cardinalino* of Toledo? Were he older, the queen of Spain might possibly procure more than one for him, though scarcely enough.

Well, but we won't talk politics; shall we talk antiquities? Gray and I discovered a considerable curiosity lately. In an unfrequented quarter of the Colonna garden lie two immense fragments of marble, formerly part of a frieze to some building; 'tis not known of what. They are of Parian marble; which may give one some idea of the magnificence of the rest of the building, for these pieces were at the very top. Upon enquiry, we were told they had been measured by an architect, who declared they were larger than any member of St. Peter's. The length of one of the pieces is above sixteen feet. They were formerly sold to a stone-cutter for five thousand crowns; but Clement XI. would not permit them to be sawed, annulled the bargain, and laid a penalty of twelve thousand crowns upon the family if they parted with them. I think it was a right judg'd thing. Is it not amazing that so vast a structure should not be known of, or that it should be so entirely destroyed? But indeed at Rome this is a common surprize; for, by the remains one sees of the Roman grandeur in their structures, 'tis evident that there must have been more pains taken to destroy those piles than to raise them. They are more demolished than any time or chance could have effected. I am persuaded that in an hundred years Rome will not be worth seeing; 'tis less so now than one would believe. All the public pictures are decayed or decaying; the few ruins cannot last long; and the statues and private collections must be sold, from the great poverty of the families. There are now selling no less than three of the principal collections, the Barberini, the Sacchetti, and Ottoboni: the latter belonged to the cardinal who died in the conclave. I must give you an instance of his generosity, or rather ostentation. When
lord

lord Carlisle was here last year, who is a great virtuoso, he asked leave to see the cardinal's collection of cameos and intaglios. Ottoboni gave leave, and ordered the person who showed them to observe which my lord admired most. My lord admired many: they were all sent him the next morning. He sent the cardinal back a fine gold repeater; who returned him an agate snuff-box, and more cameos of ten times the value. Voila qui est fini! Had my lord produced more golden repeaters, it would have been begging more cameos.

Adieu, my dear West! You see I write often and much, as you desired it. Do answer me now and then with any little job that is done in England. Good-night.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

L E T T E R X X I .

DEAR WEST,

Naples, June 14, 1740, N. S.

ONE hates writing descriptions that are to be found in every book of travels; but we have seen something to-day that I am sure you never read of, and perhaps never heard of. Have you ever heard of the subterraneous town? a whole Roman town with all its edifices remaining under ground? Don't fancy the inhabitants buried it there to save it from the Goths: they were buried with it themselves; which is a caution we are not told they ever took. You remember in Titus's time there were several cities destroyed by an eruption of Vesuvius, attended with an earthquake. Well, this was one of them, not very considerable, and then called Herculaneum. Above it has since been built Portici, about three miles from Naples, where the king has a villa. This under-ground city is perhaps one of the noblest curiosities that ever has been discovered. It was found out by chance about a year and half ago. They began digging, they found statues; they dug farther, they found more. Since that they have made a very considerable progress, and find continually. You may walk the compass of a mile; but by the misfortune of the modern town being overhead, they are obliged to proceed with great caution, lest they destroy both one and t'other. By this occasion the path is very narrow, just wide enough and high enough for one man to walk upright. They have
hollowed

hollowed as they found it easiest to work, and have carried their streets not exactly where were the ancient ones, but sometimes before houses, sometimes through them. You would imagine that all the fabrics were crushed together; on the contrary, except some columns, they have found all the edifices standing upright in their proper situation. There is one inside of a temple quite perfect, with the middle arch, two columns, and two pilasters. It is built of brick plastered over, and painted with architecture: almost all the insides of the houses are in the same manner; and what is very particular, the general ground of all the painting is red. Besides this temple, they make out very plainly an amphitheatre: the stairs, of white marble, and the seats are very perfect; the inside was painted in the same colour with the private houses, and great part cased with white marble. They have found among other things some fine statues, some human bones, some rice, medals, and a few paintings extremely fine. These latter are preferred to all the ancient paintings that have ever been discovered. We have not seen them yet, as they are kept in the king's apartment, whither all these curiosities are transplanted; and 'tis difficult to see them—but we shall. I forgot to tell you, that in several places the beams of the houses remain, but burnt to charcoal; so little damaged that they retain visibly the grain of the wood, but upon touching crumble to ashes. What is remarkable, there are no other marks or appearance of fire, but what are visible on these beams.

There might certainly be collected great light from this reservoir of antiquities, if a man of learning had the inspection of it; if he directed the working, and would make a journal of the discoveries. But I believe there is no judicious choice made of directors. There is nothing of the kind known in the world; I mean a Roman city entire of that age, and that has not been corrupted with modern repairs¹. Besides scrutinizing this very carefully, I should be inclined to search for the remains of the other towns that were partners with this in the general ruin. 'Tis certainly an advantage to the learned world, that this has been laid up so long. Most of the discoveries in Rome were made in a barbarous age, where they only ransacked the ruins in quest of treasure, and had no regard to the form and being of the building; or to any circumstances that might give light into its use and history. I shall finish this long account with a passage which Gray has observed in Statius, and which directly pictures out this latent city:

¹ Pompeia was not then discovered.

Hæc ego Chalcidicis ad te, Marcelle, fonabam
 Littoribus, fractas ubi Vestius egerit iras,
 Æmula Trinacriis volvens incendia flammis.
 Mira fides! credetne virûm ventura propago,
 Cum segetes iterum, cum jam hæc deferta virebunt,
 Infra urbes populosque premi?

SYLV. lib. iv. epist. 4.

Adieu, my dear West! and believe me

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

L E T T E R XXII.

DEAR WEST,

Florence, July 31, 1740, N. S.

I HAVE advised with the most notable antiquarians of this city on the meaning of *Thur gut Luetis*. I can get no satisfactory interpretation. In my own opinion 'tis Welsh. I don't love offering conjectures on a language in which I have hitherto made little proficiency, but I will trust you with my explication. You know the famous Aglaughlan, mother of Cadwallador, was renowned for her conjugal virtues, and grief on the death of her royal spouse. I conclude this medal was struck in her regency, by her express order, to the memory of her lord, and that the inscription *Thur gut Luetis* means no more than *her dear Llewel or Llewelin*.

In return for your coins I send you two or three of different kinds. The first is a money of one of the kings of Naples; the device a horse; the motto, *Equitas regni*. This curious pun is on a coin in the Great Duke's collection, and by great chance I have met with a second. Another is, a satirical medal struck on Lewis XIV.; 'tis a bomb, covered with flower-de-luces, bursting; the motto, *Se ipsissimo*. The last, and almost the only one I ever saw with a text well applied, is a German medal with a rebellious town besieged and blocked up; the inscription, *This kind is not expelled but by fasting*.

Now I mention medals, have they yet struck the intended one on the tak-
 ing

ing Porto Bello? Admiral Vernon will shine in our medallie history. We have just received the news of the bombarding Carthage, and the taking Chagre. We are in great expectation of some important victory obtained by the squadron under sir John Norris: we are told the Duke is to be of the expedition; is it true? All the letters too talk of France's suddenly declaring war; I hope they will defer it for a season, or one shall be obliged to return through Germany.

The Conclave still subsists, and the divisions still increase; it was very near separating last week, but by breaking into two popes; they were on the dawn of a schism. Aldovrandi had thirty-three voices for three days, but could not procure the requisite two more; the Camerlingo having engaged his faction to sign a protestation against him, and each party were inclined to elect. I don't know whether one should wish for a schism or not; it might probably rekindle the zeal for the church in the powers of Europe, which has been so far decaying.

On Wednesday we expect a third she-meteor. Those learned luminaries the ladies P— and W— are to be joined by the lady M— W— M—. You have not been witness to the rhapsody of mystic nonsense which these two fair ones debate incessantly, and consequently cannot figure what must be the issue of this triple alliance: we have some idea of it. Only figure the coalition of prudery, debauchery, sentiment, history, Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and metaphysics; all, except the second, understood by halves, by quarters, or not at all. You shall have the journals of this notable academy. Adieu, my dear West!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

Though far unworthy to enter into so learned and political a correspondence, I am employed pour barboniller une page de 7 pouces et demie en hauteur, et 5 en largeur; and to inform you that we are at Florence, a city of Italy; and the capital of Tuscany: the latitude I cannot justly tell, but it is governed by a prince called Great-duke; an excellent place to employ all one's animal sensations in, but utterly contrary to one's rational powers. I have struck a medal upon myself: the device is thus O, and the motto *Nihilissimo*, which

M m m 2

I take

I take in the most concise manner to contain a full account of my person, sentiments, occupations, and late glorious successes. If you choose to be annihilated too, you cannot do better than undertake this journey. Here you shall get up at twelve o'clock, breakfast till three, dine till five, sleep till six, drink cooling liquors till eight, go to the bridge till ten, sup till two, and so sleep till twelve again.

Labore fessi venimus ad larem nostrum,
 Desideratoque acquiescimus lecto :
 Hoc est, quod unum est, pro laboribus tantis.
 O quid solutis est beatius curis ?

We shall never come home again ; a universal war is just upon the point of breaking out ; all outlets will be shut up. I shall be secure in my nothingness, while you, that will be so absurd as to exist, will envy me. You don't tell me what proficiency you make in the noble science of defence. Don't you start still at the sound of a gun ? Have you learned to say Ha ! ha ! and is your neck clothed with thunder ? Are your whiskers of a tolerable length ? And have you got drunk yet with brandy and gunpowder ? Adieu, noble captain !

T. GRAY.

L E T T E R XXIII.

DEAR WEST,

Florence, Oct. 2, 1740, N. S.

T'OTHER night as we (you know who *we* are) were walking on the charming bridge, just before going to a wedding assembly, we said, " Lord, I wish, just as we are got into the room, they would call us out, and say, West is arrived ! We would make him dress instantly, and carry him back to the entertainment. How he would stare and wonder at a thousand things, that no longer strike us as odd !" Would not you ? One agreed that you should have come directly by sea from Dover, and be set down at Leghorn, without setting foot in any other foreign town, and so land at *Us*, in all your first full amaze ; for you are to know, that astonishment rubs off violently ; we did not cry out Lord ! half so much at Rome as at Calais, which to this hour I look upon as one of the most surprising cities in the universe. My dear child, what if you
 were

were to take this little sea-jaunt? One would recommend fir John Norris's convoy to you, but one should be laughed at now for supposing that he is ever to sail beyond Torbay. The Italians take Torbay for an English town in the hands of the Spaniards, after the fashion of Gibraltar, and imagine 'tis a wonderful strong place, by our fleet's having retired from before it so often, and so often returned.

We went to this wedding that I told you of; 'twas a charming feast: a large palace finely illuminated; there were all the beauties, all the jewels, and all the sugar-plums of Florence. Servants loaded with great chargers full of comfits heap the tables with them, the women fall on with both hands, and stuff their pockets and every creek and corner about them. You would be as much amazed at us as at any thing you saw: instead of being deep in the liberal arts, and being in the Gallery every morning, as I thought of course to be fure I would be, we are in all the idleneffes and amusements of the town. For me, I am grown so lazy, and so tired of seeing fights, that, though I have been at Florence six months, I have not seen Leghorn, Pisa, Lucca, or Pistoia; nay, not so much as one of the Great Duke's villas. I have contracted so great an aversion to inns and postchaises, and have so absolutely lost all curiosity, that, except the towns in the straight road to Great Britain, I shall scarce see a jot more of a foreign land; and trust me, when I return, I will not visit Welsh mountains, like Mr. Williams. After Mount Cenis, the Boccheto, the Giogo, Radicofani, and the Appian Way, one has mighty little hunger after travelling. I shall be mighty apt to set up my staff at Hyde-park-corner: the alehouse-man there at Hercules's Pillars¹ was certainly returned from his travels into foreign parts.

Now I'll answer your questions.

I have made no discoveries in ancient or modern arts. Mr. Addison travelled through the poets, and not through Italy; for all his ideas are borrowed from the descriptions, and not from the reality. He saw places as they were, not as they are. I am very well acquainted with doctor Cocchi; he is a good sort of man, rather than a great man; he is a plain honest creature with quiet

¹ The sign of the Hercules' Pillars remained part of the ground now occupied by the houses in Piccadilly till very lately. It was situated on of Mr. Drummond Smith and his brother. E.

knowledge,

knowledge, but I dare say all the English have told you, he has a very particular understanding: I really don't believe they meant to impose on you, for they thought so. As to Bondelmonti, he is much less; he is a low mimic; the brightest cast of his parts attains to the composition of a sonnet: he talks irreligion with English boys, sentiments with my sister¹, and bad French with any one that will hear him. I will transcribe you a little song that he made t'other day; 'tis pretty enough; Gray turned it into Latin, and I into English; you will honour him highly by putting it into French, and Asheton into Greek. Here 'tis:

Spesso amor sotto la forma
D'amistà ride, e s'asconde;
Poi si mischia, e si confonde
Con lo sdegno e col rancor.

In pietade ei si trasforma,
Par trastullo e par dispetto;
Ma nel suo diverso aspetto,
Sempre egli è l'istesso amor.

Risit amicitiae interdum velatus amictu,
Et bene composita veste fefellit amor:
Mox irae assumpsit cultus faciemque minantem,
Inque odium versus, versus & in lacrymas:
Sudentem fuge; nec lacrymanti aut crede furenti;
Idem est dissimili semper in ore deus.

Love often in the comely mien
Of friendship fancies to be seen;
Soon again he shifts his dress,
And wears disdain and rancour's face.

To gentle pity then he changes;
Thro' wantonness, thro' piques he ranges;
But in whatever shape he move,
He's still himself, and still is love.

¹ Margaret Rolle, wife of Robert Walpole, eldest son of Sir Robert Walpole, created Lord Walpole during the lifetime of his father. E.

See how we trifle! but one can't pass one's youth too amusingly; for one must grow old, and that in England; two most serious circumstances, either of which makes people grey in the twinkling of a bedstaff; for know you, there is not a country upon earth where there are so many old fools, and so few young ones.

Now I proceed in my answers.

I made but small collections, and have only bought some bronzes and medals, a few busts, and two or three pictures: one of my busts is to be mentioned; 'tis the famous Vespasian in touch-stone, reckoned the best in Rome except the Caracalla of the Farnese: I gave but twenty-two pounds for it at cardinal Ottoboni's sale. One of my medals is as great a curiosity: 'tis of Alexander Severus, with the amphitheatre in brass; this reverse is extant on medals of his, but mine is a *medagliuncino*, or small medallion, and the only one with this reverse known in the world: 'twas found by a peasant while I was in Rome, and sold by him for sixpence to an antiquarian, to whom I paid for it seven guineas and an half: but to virtuosi 'tis worth any sum.

As to Tartini's musical compositions, ask Gray: I know but little in music.

But for the Academy, I am not of it, but frequently in company with it: 'tis all disjointed. Madam —, who, though a learned lady, has not lost her modesty and character, is extremely scandalized with the other two dames, especially with Moll Worthless, who knows no bounds. She is at rivalry with lady W. for a certain Mr. —, whom perhaps you knew at Oxford. If you did not, I'll tell you: he is a grave young man by temper, and a rich one by constitution; a shallow creature by nature, but a wit by the grace of our women here, whom he deals with as of old with the Oxford toasts. He fell into sentiments with my lady W. and was happy to catch her at Platonic love: but as she seldom stops there, the poor man will be frightened out of his senses, when she shall break the matter to him; for he never dreamt that her purposes were so naught. Lady Mary is so far gone, that to get him from the mouth of her antagonist, she literally took him out to dance country dances last night at a formal ball, where there was no measure kept in laughing at her old, foul, tawdry, painted, plastered personage. She played at pharaoh two or three times at princess Craon's, where she cheats horse and
foot.

foot. She is really entertaining: I have been reading her works, which she lends out in manuscript, but they are too womanish; I like few of her performances. I forgot to tell you a good answer of lady P—— to Mr. ——, who asked her if she did not approve Platonic love? Lord, sir, says she, I am sure any one that knows me, never heard that I had any love but one, and there fit two proofs of it; pointing to her two daughters.

So I have given you a sketch of our employments, and answered your questions, and will with pleasure as many more as you have about you.

Adieu! Was ever such a long letter? But 'tis nothing to what I shall have to say to you. I shall scold you for never telling us any news, public or private, no deaths, marriages, or mishaps; no account of new books: Oh, you are abominable! I could find in my heart to hate you, if I did not love you so well; but we will quarrel now, that we may be the better friends when we meet: there is no danger of that, is there? Good night, whether friend or foe! I am most sincerely

Yours,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XXIV.

From Florence, Nov. 1740.

CHILD, I am going to let you see your shocking proceedings with us. On my conscience, I believe 'tis three months since you wrote to either Gray or me. If you had been ill, Asheton would have said so; and if you had been dead, the gazettes would have said it. If you had been angry,—but that's impossible; how can one quarrel with folks three thousand miles off? We are neither divines nor commentators, and consequently have not hated you on paper. 'Tis to show that my charity for you cannot be interrupted at this distance, that I write to you; though I have nothing to say, for 'tis a bad time for small news; and when emperors and czarinas are dying all up and down Europe, one can't pretend to tell you of any thing that happens within our sphere. Not but that we have our accidents too. If you have had a great wind in England, we have had a great water at Florence. We have been trying to fet

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out

out every day, and pop upon you¹ ***** It is fortunate that we staid, for I don't know what had become of us! Yesterday, with violent rains, there came flouncing down from the mountains such a flood, that it floated the whole city. The jewellers on the Old Bridge removed their commodities, and in two hours after the bridge was cracked. The torrent broke down the quays, and drowned several coach-horses, which are kept here in stables under ground. We were moated into our house all day, which is near the Arno, and had the miserable spectacles of the ruins that were washed along with the hurricane. There was a cart with two oxen not quite dead, and four men in it drowned: but what was ridiculous, there came tiding along a fat hay-cock, with a hen and her eggs, and a cat. The torrent is considerably abated; but we expect terrible news from the country, especially from Pisa, which stands so much lower and nearer the sea. There is a stone here, which when the water overflows, Pisa is entirely flooded. The water rose two ells yesterday above that stone. Judge!

For this last month we have passed our time but dully; all diversions silenced on the emperor's death, and every body out of town. I have seen nothing but cards and dull pairs of cicisbeos. I have literally seen so much love and pharaoh since being here, that I believe I shall never love either again as long as I live. Then I am got into a horrid lazy way of a morning. I don't believe I should know seven o'clock in the morning again, if I was to see it. But I am returning to England, and shall grow very solemn and wise! Are you wise? Dear West, have pity on one, who have done nothing of gravity for these two years, and do laugh sometimes. We do nothing else, and have contracted such formidable ideas of the good people of England, that we are already nourishing great black eye-brows, and great black beards, and tearing our countenances into wrinkles. Then for the common talk of the times we are quite at a loss, and for the dress. You would oblige us extremely by forwarding to us the votes of the houses, the king's speech, and the magazines; or if you had any such thing as a little book called the Foreigner's Guide through the city of London and the liberties of Westminster; or a Letter to a Freeholder; or the Political Companion: then 'twould be an infinite obligation if you would neatly bandbox-up a baby dressed after the newest Temple fashion now in use at both play-houses. Alack-a-day! We shall just arrive in the tempest of elections!

As our departure depends entirely upon the weather, we cannot tell you to

¹ A line of the manuscript is here torn away. E.

a day when we shall say, Dear West, how glad I am to see you! and all the many questions and answers that we shall give and take. Would the day were come! Do but figure to yourself the journey we are to pass through first! But you can't conceive Alps, Apennines, Italian inns and postchaises. I tremble at the thoughts. They were just sufferable while new and unknown, and as we met them by the way in coming to Florence, Rome, and Naples; but they are passed, and the mountains remain! Well, write to one in the interim; direct to me addressed to monsieur Selwyn, *chez monsieur Alexandre, rue St. Apolline à Paris*. If Mr. Alexandre is not there, the street is, and I believe that will be sufficient. Adieu, my dear child!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

L E T T E R XXV.

DEAR WEST,

Reggio, May 10, 1741, N.S.

I HAVE received the end of your first act¹, and now will tell you sincerely what I think of it. If I was not so pleased with the beginning as I usually am with your compositions, believe me the part of Pausanias has charmed me. There is all imaginable art joined with all requisite simplicity; and a simplicity, I think, much preferable to that in the scenes of Cleodora and Argilius.

¹ The first act of a tragedy called Pausanias, begun by Mr. West. We see the fate of this first act, all that was probably ever written, in a subsequent letter. Of the transcript he sent to Mr. Walpole, as only the latter part is to be found, it was judged not expedient to print what could only be considered as the fragment of a fragment, and which beside is certainly liable to all the criticisms of his friend, while it seems hardly to deserve the praise his partiality bestows upon it. It was accompanied by a letter from Mr. West, in which he thus expresses himself on the subject of his tragedy: E.

My dear Walpole, March 29, 1740.

SINCE I had finished the first act, I send you now the rest of it. Whether I shall go on with

it is to me a doubt. I find you all make the same objections to my style: but change my manner now I can't, for it would not be all of a piece, and to begin afresh goes against my stomach; so I believe I must even break it off and bequeath it to my grand-children to be finished with other old pieces of family work. I have another objection to it, and that is, the unlucky affair of an impeachment in the play. For, supposing the thing public, which it was never intended to be, every blockhead of the faction would swear Pausanias was Greek for sir Robert, though it may as well stand for Bolingbroke. But the truth is, the Greek word signifies neither one nor t'other, as you may find in Scapula, Suidas, and other lexicographers.

Forgive me, if I say they do not talk laconic but low English; in her, who is Persian too, there would admit more heroic. But for the whole part of Pausanias, 'tis great and well worked up, and the art that is seen seems to proceed from his head, not from the author's. As I am very desirous you should continue, so I own I wish you would improve or change the beginning: those who know you not so well as I do, would not wait with so much patience for the entrance of Pausanias. You see I am frank; and if I tell you I do not approve the first part, you may believe me as sincere when I tell you I admire the latter extremely.

My letter has an odd date. You would not expect I should be writing in such a dirty little place as Reggio: but the fair is charming; and here come all the nobility of Lombardy, and all the broken dialects of Genoa, Milan, Venice, Bologna, &c. You never heard such a ridiculous confusion of tongues. All the morning one goes to the fair undressed, as to the walks at Tunbridge: 'tis just in that manner, with lotteries, raffles, &c. After dinner all the company return in their coaches, and make a kind of corso, with the ducal family, who go to shops, where you talk to 'em, from thence to the opera, in mask if you will, and afterwards to the ridotto. This five nights in the week. Fridays there are masquerades, and Tuesdays balls at the Rivalta, a villa of the duke's. In short, one diverts oneself. I pass most part of the opera in the duchess's box, who is extremely civil to me and extremely agreeable. A daughter of the regent's*, that could please him, must be so. She is not young, though still handsome, but fat; but has given up her gallantries cheerfully, and in time, and lives easily with a dull husband, two dull sisters of his, and a dull court. These two princesses are wofully ugly, old maids and rich. They might have been married often; but the old duke was whimsical and proud, and never would consent to any match for them, but left them much money, and pensions of three thousand pounds a year apiece. There was a design to have given the eldest to this king of Spain, and the duke was to have had the Parmesan princess; so that now he would have had Parma and Placentia, joined to Modena, Reggio, Mirandola, and Massa. But there being a prince of Asturias, the old duke Rinaldo broke off the match, and said his daughter's children should not be younger brothers: and so they mope old virgins.

* Philip duke of Orleans.

I am going from hence to Venice, in a fright lest there be a war with France, and then I must drag myself through Germany. We have had an imperfect account of a sea-fight in America; but we are so out of the way, that one can't be sure of it. Which way soever I return, I shall be soon in England, and there you will find me again

As much as ever yours,

H. W.

LETTER XXVI.

DEAR WALPOLE,

I HAVE received your letter from Reggio, of the 10th of May, and have heard since that you fell ill there, and are now recovered and returning to England through France. I heard the bad and good news both together; and so was afflicted and comforted both in a breath. My joy now has got the better, and I live in hopes of seeing you here again. The author of the first act of Pausanias desires his love to you; and, in return for your criticism, which seems so severe to him in some parts, and so prodigious favourable in others, that if he were not acquainted with your unprejudiced way of thinking, he should not know what to say to it, has ordered me to acquaint you with an accident that happened to him lately, on a little journey he made. It seems, he had put all his writings, whether in prose or rhyme, into a little box, and carried them with him. Now, somebody imagining there was more in the box than there really was, has run away with them; and, though strict inquiry has been made, the said author has learnt nothing yet, either concerning the person suspected, or the box. Since I am engaged in talking of this author, and as I know you have some little value for him, I beg leave to acquaint you with some particulars relating to him, which perhaps you will not be so averse to hear.

You must know then, that from his cradle upwards he was designed for the law, for two reasons: first, as it was the profession which his father followed, and succeeded in, and consequently there was a likelihood of his gaining many friends in it: and secondly, upon account of his fortune, which was

so inconsiderable, that it was impossible for him to support himself without following some profession or other. Nevertheless, like a rattle as he is, he has hitherto fixed on no profession; and for the law in particular, upon trial he has found in himself a natural aversion to it: in the mean while, he has lost a great deal of time, to the great diminution of his narrow fortune, and to the no little scandal of his friends and relations. At length, upon serious consideration, he has resolved that something was to be done, for that poetry and Pausanias would never be sufficient to maintain him. And what do you think he has resolved upon? Why, apprehending that a general war in Europe was approaching, and, therefore, that there might be some opportunity given, either of distinguishing himself, or being knock'd of the head; being convinced besides, that there was little in life to make one over fond of it; he has chosen the army; and being told that it was a much cheaper way to procure a commission by the means of a friend, than to buy one, to do which he must strip himself of what fortune he has left, he desired me to use what little interest I had with my friends, to procure him what he wanted.

At first I objected to him the weakness of his constitution, which might render him incapable of military service, and several other things; but all to no purpose. He told me, he was neither knave nor fool enough to run in debt; and that he must either abscond from mankind, or do something to enable him to live as he would upon a decent rank, and with dignity; and that what he chose was this¹.

I perceived there was nothing to reply; so I submitted: and as I have some sort of regard for the man, I promised him I would use what interest I had, and frankly told him, I would venture to ask for him what I should hardly ask for myself.

Excuse my freedom, dear Walpole; and whether I succeed or not, assure yourself, that I shall always be

Yours most affectionately,

R. WEST.

LONDON,
June 22, 1741.

¹ The answer to this letter does not appear; but Mr. West's increasing bad health must probably have obliged him to drop all thought of going into the army. E.

L E T T E R XXVII.

DEAR WEST,

London, May 4, 1742.

YOUR letter made me quite melancholy¹, till I came to the postscript of fine weather. Your so suddenly finding the benefit of it, makes me trust you will entirely recover your health and spirits with the warm season: nobody wishes it more than I: nobody has more reason, as few have known you so long.

Don't be afraid of your letters being dull. I don't deserve to be called your friend, if I were impatient at hearing your complaints. I do not desire you to suppress them till their causes cease; nor should I expect you to write cheerfully while you are ill. I never design to write any man's life as a stoic, and consequently should not desire him to furnish me with opportunities of assuring posterity what pains he took not to show any pain.

If you did amuse yourself with writing any thing in poetry, you know how pleased I should be to see it; but for encouraging you to it, d'ye see, 'tis an age most unpoetical! 'Tis even a test of wit, to dislike poetry; and though Pope has half a dozen old friends that he has preserved from the taste of last century, yet I assure you, the generality of readers are more diverted with any paltry prose answer to old Marlborough's Secret history of queen Mary's robes. I do not think an author would be universally commended for any production in verse, unless it were an ode to the secret committee, with rhymes of liberty and property, nation and administration.

Wit itself is monopolized by politics; no laugh but would be ridiculous if it were not on one side or t'other. Thus Sandys thinks he has spoken an epigram, when he crinkles up his nose, and lays a smart accent on *ways and means*.

We may indeed hope a little better now to the declining arts. The reconciliation between the royalties is finished, and 50,000*l.* a year more added to the heir apparent's revenue. He will have money now to tune up Glover, and Thomson, and Doddsley again.

¹ This letter from Mr. West does not appear.

Et spes et ratio studiorum in Cæsare tantum.

Asheton is much yours. He has preached twice at Somerset-chapel with the greatest applause. I do not mind his pleasing the generality, for you know they ran as much after Whitfield as they could after Tillotson; and I do not doubt but St. Jude converted as many honourable women as St. Paul. But I am sure you would approve his compositions, and admire them still more when you heard him deliver them. He will write to you himself next post, but is not mad enough with his fame to write you a sermon. Adieu, dear child! Write me the progress of your recovery^{*}, and believe it will give me a sincere pleasure; for I am

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

* Mr. West died in less than a month from the date of this letter, in the 26th year of his age. E.

Et spes et ratio finium in Cetero tantum.

Admonition is much yours. He has preached twice at Somerset-chapel with the
greatest applause. I do not mind his pleasing the gentry, for you know
they run as much after Whitfield as they could after Tillotson; and I do not
doubt but St. Jude converted as many honourable women as St. Paul. But I
am sure you would approve his conduct, and advise them still more
when you heard him deliver them. He will write to your friends next post,
but is not mad enough with his fame to write you a sermon. Adieu, dear
child. Write me the progress of your recovery, and believe it will give me
a sincere pleasure; for I am

Your ever

HOR. WALTON

Mr. West is to be a month from the date of this letter, in the 25th year of his age.

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