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# **The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl Of Orford**

In Five Volumes

**Walpole, Horace**

**London, 1798**

Letters form the Hon. Horace Walpole to John Chute, Esq. of the Vine in  
Hampshire, from the Year 1753 to the Year 1771

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L E T T E R S

FROM

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

TO

J O H N C H U T E, E S Q.

OF THE VINE IN HAMPSHIRE,

From the Year 1753 to the Year 1771.

*John Chute*







# LETTERS

FROM

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

TO

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OF THE VINE IN HAMPSHIRE,

From the Year 1753 to the Year 1771.

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## LETTER I.

To MR. CHUTE.

Stowe, Aug. 4, 1753.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOU would deserve to be scolded, if you had not lost almost as much pleasure as you have disappointed me of<sup>1</sup>. Whether George Montagu will be so content with your commuting punishments, I don't know: I should think not: he *cried and roared all night*<sup>2</sup> when I delivered your excuse. He is extremely well-housed, after having roamed like a Tartar about the country with his whole personal estate at his heels. There is an extensive view, which is called pretty: but Northamptonshire is no county to please me. What entertained me was, that he who in London was grown an absolute recluse, is over head and ears in neighbours, and as

<sup>1</sup> In not accompanying Mr. Walpole on a visit to Mr. George Montagu at Greatworth.

<sup>2</sup> A phrase of Mr. Montagu's.

popular



popular as if he intended to stand for the county, instead of having given up the town. The very first morning after my arrival, as we were getting into the chaise to go to Wroxton, they notified a fir — —, a young squire, booted and spurred, and buckskin-breeched. "Will you drink any chocolate?"—"No; a little wine and water, if you please."—I suspected nothing but that he had rode till he was dry. "Nicolò, get some wine and water." He desired the water might be warm—I began to stare—Montagu understood the dialect, and ordered a negus.—I had great difficulty to keep my countenance, and still more when I saw the baronet finish a very large jug indeed. To be sure, he wondered as much at me who did not finish a jug; and I could not help reflecting, that living always in the world makes one as unfit for living out of it, as always living out of it does for living in it. Knightley, the knight of the shire, has been entertaining all the parishes round with a turtle-feast, which, so far from succeeding, has almost made him suspected for a *feru*, as the country parsons have not yet learned to wade into green fat.

The roads are very bad to Greatworth, and such numbers of gates, that if one loved punning one should call it the *Gate-house*. The proprietor had a wonderful invention: the chimneys, which are of stone, have niches and benches in them, where the man used to sit and smoke. I had twenty disasters, according to custom; lost my way, and had my French boy almost killed by a fall with his horse: but I have been much pleased. When I was at Park-place I went to see sir H. Englefield's<sup>1</sup>, which Mr. C—— and lady M—— prefer, but I think very undeservedly, to Mr. Southcote's. It is not above a quarter as extensive, and wants the river. There is a pretty view of Reading seen under a rude arch, and the water is well disposed. The buildings are very insignificant, and the house far from good. The town of Henley has been extremely disturbed with an engagement between the ghosts of miss Blandy and her father, which continued so violent, that some bold persons, to prevent farther bloodshed, broke in, and found it was two jackasses which had got into the kitchen.

I felt strangely tempted to stay at Oxford and survey it at my leisure; but, as I was alone, I had not courage. I passed by sir James Dashwood's<sup>2</sup>, a vast new house, situated so high that it seems to stand for the county as well as himself. I did look over lord Jersey's<sup>3</sup>, which was built for a hunting-

<sup>1</sup> Whiteknights.<sup>2</sup> At High Wycombe.<sup>3</sup> Middleton.



box, and is still little better. But now I am going to tell you how delightful a day I passed at Wroxton. Lord Guildford has made George Montagu so absolutely viceroy over it, that we saw it more agreeably than you can conceive; roamed over the whole house, found every door open, saw not a creature, had an extreme good dinner, wine, fruit, coffee and tea in the library, were served by fairies, tumbled over the books, said one or two talismanic words, and the cascade played, and went home loaded with pineapples and flowers.—You will take me for monsieur de Coulanges, I describe eatables so feelingly; but the manner in which we were served made the whole delicious. The house was built by a lord Downe in the reign of James the first; and though there is a fine hall and a vast dining-room below, and as large a drawing-room above, it is neither good nor agreeable; one end of the front was never finished, and might have a good apartment. The library is added by this lord, and is a pleasant chamber. Except loads of old portraits, there is no tolerable furniture. A whole length of the first earl of Downe is in the bath-ropes, and has a coif under the hat and feather. There is a charming picture of prince Henry about twelve years old, drawing his sword to kill a stag, with a lord Harrington; a good portrait of sir Owen Hopton, 1590; your *pious* grandmother my lady Dacre, which I think like you; some good Cornelius Johnsons; a lord North by Riley, good; and an extreme fine portrait by him of the lord keeper: I have never seen but few of the hand, but most of them have been equal to Lely and the best of sir Godfrey. There is too a curious portrait of sir Thomas Pope, the founder of Trinity-college, Oxford, said to be by Holbein. The chapel is new, but in a pretty Gothic taste, with a very long window of painted glass, very tolerable. The frieze is pendent, just in the manner I propose for the eating-room at Strawberry-hill. Except one scene, which is indeed noble, I cannot much commend the without-doors. This scene consists of a beautiful lake entirely shut in with wood: the head falls into a fine cascade, and that into a serpentine river, over which is a little Gothic seat like a round temple, lifted up by a shaggy mount. On an eminence in the park is an obelisk erected to the honour and at the expence of “*optimus and munificentissimus*” the late prince of Wales, “*in loci amoenitatem et memoriam adventus ejus.*” There are several paltry Chinese buildings and bridges, which have the merit or demerit of being the progenitors of a very numerous race all over the kingdom: at least they were of the very first. In the church is a beautiful tomb of an earl and countess of Downe, and the tower is in a



good plain Gothic style, and was once, they tell you, still more beautiful; but Mr. Miller, who designed it, unluckily once in his life happened to think rather of beauty than of the water-tables, and so it fell down the first winter.

On Wednesday morning we went to see a sweet little chapel at Steane, built in 1620 by sir T. Crewe, speaker in the time of the first James and Charles. Here are remains of the mansion-house, but quite in ruins: the chapel is kept up by my lady Arran, the last of the race. There are seven or eight monuments. On one is this epitaph, which I thought pretty enough:

Conjux casta, parens felix, matrona pudica,  
Sara viro, mundo Martha, Maria Deo.

On another is the most affected inscription I ever saw, written by two brothers on their sister; they say, *This agreeable mortal translated her into immortality such a-day*: but I could not help laughing at one quaint expression, to which time has given a droll sense: *She was a constant lover of the best.*

I have been here these two days, extremely amused and charmed indeed. Wherever you stand you see an Albano landscape. Half as many buildings I believe would be too many, but such a profusion gives inexpressible richness. You may imagine I have some private reflections entertaining enough, not very communicable to the company: The temple of Friendship, in which, among twenty memorandums of quarrels, is the bust of Mr. Pitt: Mr. James Grenville is now in the house, whom his uncle disinherited for his attachment to that very Pylades Mr. Pitt. He broke with Mr. Pope, who is deified in the Elysian fields, before the inscription for his head was finished. That of sir J. Barnard, which was bespoke by the name of a bust of my lord mayor, was by a mistake of the sculptor done for alderman Perry. The statue of the king, and that "honor, laudi, virtuti divæ Carolinæ," make one smile, when one sees the ceiling where Britannia rejects and hides the reign of king—But I have no patience at building and planting a satire! Such is the temple of modern virtue in ruins! The Grecian temple is glorious; this I openly worship: in the heretical corner of my heart I adore the Gothic building, which by some unusual inspiration Gibbs has made pure and beautiful and venerable. The style has a propensity to the Venetian or mosque-gothic, and the great column near it makes the whole put one in



mind of the place of St. Mark. The windows are throughout consecrated with painted glass; most of it from the priory at Warwick, a present from that foolish ———, who quarrelled with me (because his father was a gardener) for asking him if lord Brook had planted much. — A-propos of painted glass. I forgot to tell you of a sweet house which Mr. Montagu carried me to see, belonging to a Mr. Holman, a catholic, and called Warkworth. The situation is pretty, the front charming, composed of two round and two square towers. The court within is incomplete on one side; but above stairs is a vast gallery with four bow-windows and twelve other large ones, all filled with the arms of the old peers of England with all their quarterings entire. You don't deserve, after deserting me, that I should tempt you to such a sight; but this alone is worth while to carry you to Greatworth.

Adieu, my dear sir! I return to Strawberry to-morrow, and forgive you enough not to deprive myself of the satisfaction of seeing you there whenever you have nothing else to do.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER II.

Arlington-street, April 30, 1754.

MY God! Farinelli, what has this nation done to the king of Spain, that the moment we have any thing dear and precious, he should tear it from us? — This is not the beginning of my letter to you, nor does it allude to *Mr. Bentley*: much less is it relative to the captivity of the ten tribes; nor does *the king* signify Benhadad, or Tiglath-pileser; nor Spain, Assyria, as doctor Pocock or Warburton, misled by dissimilitude of names, or by the Septuagint, may for very good reasons imagine — but it is literally the commencement of my lady Rich's<sup>1</sup> epistle to Farinelli, on the recall of general Wall, as she relates it herself. It serves extremely well for my own lamen-

<sup>1</sup> One of the daughters and coheiresses of the lord Mohun killed in a duel with duke Hamilton. E.



tation, when I sit down by the waters of Strawberry, and think of ye, O Chute and Bentley!

I have seen *Creusa*, and more than agree with you: it is the only new tragedy that I ever saw, and really liked. The plot is most interesting, and, though so complicated, quite clear and natural. The circumstance of so much distress being brought on by characters, every one good, yet acting consistently with their principles towards the misfortunes of the drama, is quite new and pleasing. Nothing offended me but that lisping miss Haughton, whose every speech is inarticulately oracular.

I was last night at a little ball at lady Anne Furnese's for the new lords, Dartmouth and North; but nothing passed worth relating: indeed the only event since you left London was the tragi-comedy that was acted last Saturday at the opera. One of the dramatic guards fell flat on his face and motionless in an apoplectic fit. The princess<sup>3</sup> and her children were there. Miss Chudleigh, who *apparentment* had never seen a man fall on his face before, went into the most theatric fit of kicking and shrieking that ever was seen. Several other women, who were preparing their fits, were so distanced, that she had the whole house to herself, and indeed such a confusion for half an hour I never saw! The next day at my lady Townshend's old Charles Stanhope asked what these fits were called? Charles Townshend replied, "*The true convulsive fits, to be had only of the maker.*"

Adieu, my dear sir! To-day looks summerish, but we have no rain yet.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

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LETTER III.

Arlington-street, May 14, 1754.

MY DEAR SIR,

I WROTE to you the last day of last month: I only mention it, to show you that I am punctual to your desire. It is my only reason for writing

<sup>3</sup> The princess of Wales, mother to his present majesty.



to-day, for I have nothing new to tell you. The town is empty, duffy, and disagreeable; the country is cold and comfortless; consequently I daily run from one to t'other, as if both were so charming that I did not know which to prefer. I am at present employed in no very lively manner; in reading a treatise on commerce, which count Perron has lent me, of his own writing: this obliges me to go through with it, though the subject and the style of the French would not engage me much. It does not want sense.

T'other night a description was given me of the most extraordinary declaration of love that ever was made. Have you seen young Poniatowski? He is very handsome. You *have* seen the figure of the duchess of G——, who looks like a raw-boned Scotch metaphysician that has got a red face by drinking water. One day at the drawing-room, having never spoken to him, she sent one of the foreign ministers to invite Poniatowski to dinner with her for the next day. He bowed, and went. The moment the door opened, her two little sons, attired like Cupids with bows and arrows, shot at him, and one of them literally hit his hair, and was very near putting his eye out, and hindering his casting it to the couch.

Where she, another sea-born Venus, lay.

The only company besides this highland goddess were two Scotchmen, who could not speak a word of any language but their own Erse; and to complete his astonishment at this allegorical entertainment, with the dessert there entered a little horse, and galloped round the table; a hieroglyphic I cannot solve. Poniatowski accounts for this profusion of kindness by his great-grandmother being a G——; but I believe it is to be accounted for by \* \* \* \* \*

Adieu, my dear sir!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

Stanislaus, the late ill-fated king of Poland.

LETTER



## LETTER IV.

Strawberry-hill, July 12, 1757.

IT would be very easy to persuade me to a *Vine-voyage*<sup>2</sup>; without your being so indebted to me, if it were possible. I shall represent my impediments, and then you shall judge. I say nothing of the heat of this magnificent weather, with the glass yesterday up to three-quarters of sultry. In all English probability this will not be a hindrance long; though at present, so far from travelling, I have made the tour of my own garden but once these three days before eight at night, and then I thought I should have died of it. For how many years we shall have to talk of the summer of fifty-seven!—But hear: My lady A—— and miss Rich come hither on Thursday for two or three days; and on Monday next the *Officina Arbuteana* opens in form. The stationers' company, that is, Mr. Doddsley, Mr. Tonson, &c. are summoned to meet here on Sunday night. And with what do you think we open? Cedite, *Romani* Impressores—with nothing under *Graii Carmina*. I found him in town last week: he had brought his two Odes to be printed. I snatched them out of Doddsley's hands, and they are to be the first fruits of my press. An edition of Hentznerus, with a version by Mr. Bentley and a little preface of mine, were prepared, but are to wait—Now, my dear sir, can I stir?

Not ev'n thy virtues, tyrant, shall avail!

Is not it the plainest thing in the world that I cannot go to you yet, but that you must come to me?

I tell you no news, for I know none, think of none. Elzevir, Aldus and Stephens are the freshest personages in my memory. Unless I was appointed printer of the Gazette, I think nothing could at present make me read an article in it. Seriously, you must come to us, and shall be witness that the first holidays we have I will return with you. Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

<sup>2</sup> To visiting Mr. Chute at the Vine, his seat in Hampshire.

LETTER



LETTER V.

Strawberry-hill, July 26, 1757.

I LOVE to communicate my satisfactions to you. You will imagine that I have got an original portrait of John Guttenburg, the first inventor of printing, or that I have met with a little *boke* called *Eneydos*, which I am going to translate and print—No, no; far beyond any such thing! Old lady Sandwich<sup>1</sup> is dead at Paris, and my lord has given me her picture of Ninon L'Enclos; given it me in the prettiest manner in the world.—I beg, if he should ever meddle in any election in Hampshire, that you will serve him to the last drop of your shrievalty. If you reckon by the thermometer of my natural impatience, the picture would be here already, but I fear I must wait some time for it.

The press goes on as fast as if I printed myself. I hope in a very few days to send you a specimen, though I could wish you was at the birth of the first produce. Gray has been gone these five days. Mr. Bentley has been ill, and is not recovered of the sweating-sickness, which I now firmly believe was only a hot summer like this, and England, being so unused to it, took it for a malady. Mr. Müntz is not gone; but pray don't think that I keep him: he has absolutely done nothing this whole summer but paste two chimney-boards. In short, instead of Claud Lorrain, he is only one of Bromwich's men.

You never saw any thing so droll as Mrs. Clive's countenance, between the heat of the summer, the pride in her legacy<sup>2</sup>, and the efforts to appear concerned.

We have given ourselves for a day or two the air of an earthquake, but it proved an explosion of the powder-mills at Epsom. I asked Louis if it had done any mischief: he said, Only blown a man's head off; as if that was a part one could spare!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of the famous Wilmot earl of Rochester.

<sup>2</sup> A legacy of 50*l.* left her by John Robarts, the last earl of Radnor of that family.



P. S. I hope Dr. Warburton will not think I encroach either upon his commentatorship or private pretensions, if I assume these lines of Pope, thus altered, for myself:

Some have for wits and then for poets pass'd,  
Turn'd *printers* next, and prov'd plain fools at last.

## LETTER VI.

Strawberry-hill, June 29, 1758.

THE Tower-guns have sworn through thick and thin that prince Ferdinand has entirely demolished the French, and the city-bonfires all believe it. However, as no officer is yet come, nor confirmation, my crackers suspend their belief. Our great fleet is stepped ashore again near Cherbourg; I suppose, to finge half a yard more of the coast. This is all I know; less, as you may perceive, than any thing but the Gazette.

What is become of Mr. Montagu<sup>\*</sup>? Has he stolen to Southampton, and slipped away a-volunteering like Norborne Berkeley, to conquer France in a dirty shirt and a frock? He might gather forty load more of laurels in my wood. I wish I could flatter myself that you would come with him.

My lady Suffolk has at last entirely submitted her barn to our *ordination*. As yet it is only in *Deacon's orders*; but will very soon have our last imposition of hands. Adieu! Let me know a word of you.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. George Montagu.

LETTER



LETTER VII.

Paris, October 3, 1765.

I DON'T know where you are, nor when I am likely to hear of you. I write at random, and, as I talk, the first thing that comes into my pen.

I am, as you certainly conclude, much more amused than pleased. At a certain time of life, fights and new objects may entertain one, but new people cannot find any place in one's affection. New faces with some name or other belonging to them, catch my attention for a minute—I cannot say many preserve it. Five or six of the women that I have seen already, are very sensible. The men are in general much inferior, and not even agreeable. They sent us their best, I believe, at first, the duc de Nivernois. Their authors, who by the way are every where, are worse than their own writings, which I don't mean as a compliment to either. In general, the style of conversation is solemn, pedantic, and seldom animated, but by a dispute. I was expressing my aversion to disputes: Mr. Hume, who very gratefully admires the tone of Paris, having never known any other tone, said with great surprise, "Why, what do you like, if you hate both disputes and whik?"

What strikes me the most upon the whole is, the total difference of manners between them and us, from the greatest object to the least. There is not the smallest similitude in the twenty-four-hours. It is obvious in every trifle. Servants carry their lady's train, and put her into her coach with their hat on. They walk about the streets in the rain with umbrellas to avoid putting on their hats; driving themselves in open chaises in the country without hats, in the rain too, and yet often wear them in a chariot in Paris when it does not rain. The very footmen are powdered from the break of day, and yet wait behind their master, as I saw the duc of Praslin's do, with a red pocket handkerchief about their necks. Versailles, like every thing else, is a mixture of parade and poverty, and in every instance exhibits something most dissonant from our manners. In the colonnades, upon the staircases, nay in the anti-chambers of the royal family, there are people selling all sorts of wares. While we were waiting in the dauphin's sumptuous

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ous bed-chamber, till his dressing-room door should be opened, two fellows were sweeping it, and dancing about in sabots to rub the floor.

You perceive that I have been presented. The queen took great notice of me; none of the rest said a syllable. You are let into the king's bed-chamber just as he has put on his shirt; he dresses and talks good-humouredly to a few, glares at strangers, goes to mass, to dinner, and a-hunting. The good old queen, who is like lady Primrose in the face, and queen Caroline in the immensity of her cap, is at her dressing-table, attended by two or three old ladies, who are languishing to be in Abraham's bosom, as the only man's bosom to whom they can hope for admittance. Thence you go to the dauphin, for all is done in an hour. He scarce stays a minute; indeed, poor creature, he is a ghost, and cannot possibly last three months. The dauphiness is in her bed-chamber, but dressed and standing; looks cross, is not civil, and has the true Westphalian grace and accents. The four mesdames, who are clumsy plump old wenches, with a bad likeness to their father, stand in a bed-chamber in a row, with black cloaks and knotting bags, looking good-humoured, not knowing what to say, and wriggling as if they wanted to make water. This ceremony too is very short: then you are carried to the dauphin's three boys, who you may be sure only bow and stare. The duke of Berry looks weak and weak-eyed; the count de Provence is a fine boy; the count d'Artois well enough. The whole concludes with seeing the dauphin's little girl dine, who is as round and fat as a pudding.

In the queen's anti-chamber we foreigners and the foreign ministers were shown the famous beast of the Gevaudan, just arrived, and covered with a cloth, which two chasseurs lifted up. It is an absolute wolf, but uncommonly large, and the expression of agony and fierceness remains strongly imprinted on its dead jaws.

I dined at the duc of Praslin's with four-and-twenty ambassadors and envoys, who never go but on Tuesdays to court. He does the honours sadly, and I believe nothing else well, looking important and empty. The duc de Choiseul's face, which is quite the reverse of gravity, does not promise much more. His wife is gentle, pretty, and very agreeable. The duchess of Praslin, jolly, red-faced, looking very vulgar, and being very attentive and civil. I saw the duc de Richelieu in waiting, who is pale,

except



except his nose, which is red, much wrinkled, and exactly a remnant of that age which produced general Churchill, Wilkes the player, the duke of Argyle, &c.—Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER VIII.

Bath, October 10, 1766.

I AM impatient to hear that your charity to me has not ended in the gout to yourself—all my comfort is, if you have it, that you have good lady Brown to nurse you.

My health advances faster than my amusement. However, I have been at one opera, Mr. Wesley's. They have boys and girls with charming voices, that sing hymns, in parts, to Scotch ballad tunes; but indeed so long, that one would think they were already in eternity, and knew how much time they had before them. The chapel is very neat, with true Gothic windows (yet I am not converted); but I was glad to see that luxury is creeping in upon them before persecution: they have very neat mahogany stands for branches, and brackets of the same in taste. At the upper end is a broad *hautpas* of four steps, advancing in the middle; at each end of the broadest part are two of *my eagles* with red cushions for the parson and clerk. Behind them rise three more steps, in the midst of which is a third eagle for pulpit. Scarlet armed chairs to all three. On either hand a balcony for elect ladies. The rest of the congregation sit on forms. Behind the pit, in a dark niche, is a plain table within rails; so you see the throne is for the apostle. Wesley is a lean elderly man, fresh-coloured, his hair smoothly combed, but with a *fonçon* of curl at the ends. Wondrous clean, but as evidently an actor as Garrick. He spoke his sermon, but so fast and with so little accent, that I am sure he has often uttered it, for it was like a lesson. There were parts and eloquence in it; but towards the end he exalted his voice, and acted very vulgar enthusiasm; decried learning, and told stories, like Latimer, of the fool of his college, who said, I *thanks* God for every thing. Except a few from curiosity, and *some honourable women*, the congregation was very mean. There was a Scotch countess of B—,

\* He means eagles in the same attitude as that in marble at Strawberry-hill. E.



who is carrying a pure rosy vulgar face to heaven, and who asked miss Rich, if that was *the author of the poets*. I believe she meant me and the Noble Authors.

The Bedfords came last night. Lord Chatham was with me yesterday two hours; looks and walks well, and is in excellent political spirits.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER IX.

Paris, January 1765.

IT is in vain, I know, my dear sir, to scold you, though I have such a mind to it—nay, I must. Yes, you that will not lie a night at Strawberry in autumn for fear of the gout, to stay in the country till this time, and till you caught it! I know you will tell me, it did not come till you had been two days in town. Do, and I shall have no more pity for you, than if I was your wife, and had wanted to come to town two months ago.

I am perfectly well, though to be sure Lapland is the torrid zone in comparison of Paris. We have had such a frost for this fortnight, that I went nine miles to dine in the country to-day, in a villa exactly like a greenhouse, except that there was no fire but in one room. We were four in a coach, and all our chairs stopped with furs, and yet all the glasses were frozen. We dined in a paved hall painted in fresco, with a fountain at one end; for in this country they live in a perpetual opera, and persist in being young when they are old, and hot when they are frozen. At the end of the hall sat shivering three glorious maccaws, a vast cockatoo, and two poor perroquets, who squalled like the children in the wood after their nursery-fire! I am come home, and blowing my billets between every paragraph, yet can scarce move my fingers. However, I must be dressed presently, and go to the comtesse de la Marche, who has appointed nine at night for my audience. It seems a little odd to us to be presented to a princess of the blood

at



at that hour—but I told you, there is not a tittle in which our manners resemble one another. I was presented to her father-in-law the prince of Conti last Friday. In the middle of the levée entered a young woman, too plain I thought to be any thing but his near relation. I was confirmed in my opinion, by seeing her, after he had talked to her, go round the circle and do the honours of it. I asked a gentleman near me if that was the comtesse de la Marche? He burst into a violent laughter, and then told me, it was mademoiselle Auguste, a dancer!—Now, who was in the wrong?

I give you these as samples of many scenes that have amused me, and which will be charming food at Strawberry. At the same time that I see all their ridicules, there is a *douceur* in the society of the women of fashion that captivates me. I like the way of life, though not lively; though the men are posits and apt to be arrogant, and though there are twenty ingredients wanting to make the style perfect. I have totally washed my hands of their scavants and philosophers, and do not even envy you Rousseau, who has all the charlatanerie of count St. Germain to make himself singular and talked of. I suppose Mrs. ———, my lord ———, and a certain lady friend of mine will be in raptures with him, especially as conducted by Mr. Hume. But however I admire his parts, neither he nor any *Genius* I have known has had common sense enough to balance the impertinence of their pretensions. They hate priests, but love dearly to have an altar at their feet; for which reason it is much pleasanter to read them than to know them. Adieu, my dear sir!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

January 15.

THIS has been writ this week, and waiting for a conveyance, and as yet has got none. Favre tells me you are recovered, but you don't tell me so yourself. I inclose a trifle that I wrote lately<sup>1</sup>, which got about and has made enormous noise in a city where they run and cackle after an event, like a parcel of hens after an accidental husk of a grape. It has made me the fashion, and made madame de Boufflers and the prince of Conti very angry with me; the former intending to be rapt to the temple of Fame by clinging to Rousseau's Armenian robe. I am peevish that with his parts he

<sup>1</sup> The letter from the king of Prussia to Rousseau.

should



should be such a mountebank: but what made me more peevish was, that after receiving Wilkes with the greatest civilities, he paid court to Mr. Hume by complaining of Wilkes's visit and intrusion.

Upon the whole, I would not but have come hither; for, since I am doomed to live in England, it is some comfort to have seen that the French are ten times more contemptible than we are. I am a little ungrateful; but I cannot help seeing with my eyes, though I find other people make nothing of seeing without theirs. I have endless histories to amuse you with when we meet, which shall be at the end of March. It is much more tiresome to be fashionable than unpopular; I am used to the latter, and know how to behave under it: but I cannot stand for member of parliament of Paris. Adieu!

## LETTER X.

Paris, August 30, 1769.

I HAVE been so hurried with paying and receiving visits, that I have not had a moment's worth of time to write. My passage was very tedious, and lasted near nine hours for want of wind—But I need not talk of my journey; for Mr. Morrice, whom I met on the road, will have told you that I was safe on terra firma.

Judge of my surprize at hearing four days ago that my lord D—— and my lady were arrived here. They are lodged within a few doors of me. He is come to consult a doctor Pomme, who has proscribed wine, and lord D—— already complains of the violence of his appetite. If you and I had *pommed* him to eternity, he would not have believed us. A man across the sea tells him the plainest thing in the world; that man happens to be called a doctor; and happening for novelty to talk common sense, is believed, as if he had talked nonsense! and what is more extraordinary, lord D—— thinks himself better, *though* he is so.

My dear old woman<sup>s</sup> is in better health than when I left her, and her

<sup>s</sup> Madame du Desfand,



Spirits so increased, that I tell her she will go mad with age. When they ask her how old she is, she answers, J'ai soixante & mille ans. She and I went to the Boulevard last night after supper, and drove about there till two in the morning. We are going to sup in the country this evening, and are to go to-morrow night at eleven to the puppet-show. A protégé of hers has written a piece for that theatre. I have not yet seen madame du Barri, nor can get to see her picture at the exposition at the Louvre, the crowds are so enormous that go thither for that purpose. As royal curiosities are the least part of my virtù, I wait with patience. Whenever I have an opportunity I visit gardens, chiefly with a view to Rosette's<sup>\*</sup> having a walk. She goes no where else, because there is a distemper among the dogs.

There is going to be represented a translation of Hamlet; who, when his hair is cut, and he is curled and powdered, I suppose will be exactly *monsieur le prince Oreste*. T'other night I was at Merope. The Duménil was as divine as Mrs. Porter; they said her familiar tones were those of a *poissonniere*. In the last act, when one expected the catastrophe, Narcissus, more interested than any body to see the event, remained coolly on the stage to hear the story. The queen's maid of honour entered without her handkerchief, and with her hair most artfully undressed, and reeling as if she was maudlin, sobbed out a long narrative, that did not prove true; while Narcissus, with all the good breeding in the world, was more attentive to her fright than to what had happened. So much for propriety. Now for probability. Voltaire has published a tragedy, called *Les Guebres*. Two Roman colonels open the piece: they are brothers, and relate to one another, how they lately in company destroyed, by the emperor's mandate, a city of the Guebres, in which were their own wives and children, and they recollect that they want prodigiously to know whether both their families did not perish in the flames. The son of the one and the daughter of the other are taken up for heretics, and, thinking themselves brother and sister, insist upon being married, and upon being executed for their religion. The son stabs his father, who is half a Guebre too. The high priest rants and roars. The emperor arrives, blames the pontiff for being a persecutor, and forgives the son for assassinating his father (who does not die) because—I don't know why, but that he may marry his cousin.—The grave-dig-

\* A favourite dog of Mr. Walpole's.



gers in Hamlet have no chance, when such a piece as the Guebres is written agreeably to all rules and unities. Adieu, my dear sir! I hope to find you quite well at my return.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

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L E T T E R. XI.

Amiens, Tuesday evening, July 9, 1771.

I AM got no farther yet, as I travel leisurely, and do not venture to fatigue myself. My voyage was but of four hours. I was sick only by choice and precaution, and find myself in perfect health. The enemy, I hope, has not returned to pinch you again, and that you defy the foul fiend. The weather is but lukewarm, and I should choose to have all the windows shut, if my smelling was not much more summerly than my feeling; but the frowns of obsolete tapestry and needle-work is insupportable. Here are old fleas and bugs talking of Louis quatorze like tattered refugees in the Park, and they make poor Rosette attend to them whether she will or not. This is a woful account of an evening in July, and which monsieur de St. Lambert has omitted in his Seasons, though more natural than any thing he has placed there. If the Grecian religion had gone into the folly of self-mortification, I suppose the devotees of Flora would have shut themselves up in a nasty inn, and have punished their noses for the sensuality of having smelt to a rose or a honey-suckle. This is all I have yet to say; for I have had no adventure, no accident, nor seen a soul but my cousin R—— W——, whom I met on the road and spoke to in his chaise. To-morrow I shall lie at Chantilly, and be at Paris early on Thursday. The C—— are there already. Good night—and a *sweet* one to you!

Paris, Wednesday night, July 10.

I WAS so suffocated with my inn last night, that I mustered all my resolution, rose with the alouette, and was in my chaise by five o'clock this morning. I got hither by eight this evening, tired, but rejoiced, have had a comfortable dish of tea, and am going to bed in clean sheets. I sink myself even to my dear old woman and my sister; for it is impossible to sit  
down.



down and be made charming at this time of night after fifteen posts, and after having been here twenty times before.

At Chantilly I crossed on the countess of W——, who lies there to-night on her way to England. But I concluded she had no curiosity about me—and I could not brag of more about her—and so we had no intercourse.

I am woe-begone to find my lord F—— in the same hotel. He is starched as an old-fashioned plaited neckcloth, and come to suck wisdom from this curious school of philosophy. He reveres me because I was acquainted with his father; and that does not at all increase my partiality to the son.

Luckily, the post departs early to-morrow morning. I thought you would like to hear I was arrived well. I should be happy to hear you are so; but do not torment yourself too soon, nor will I torment you. I have fixed the 26th of August for setting out on my return. These jaunts are too juvenile. I am ashamed to look back and remember in what year of Methuselah I was here first. Rosette sends her blessing to her daughter. Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XII.

Paris, August 5, 1771.

IT is a great satisfaction to me to find by your letter of the 30th that you have had no return of your gout. I have been assured here that the best remedy is to cut one's nails in hot water.—It is, I fear, as certain as any other remedy! It would at least be so here, if their bodies were of a piece with their understandings; or if both were as curable, as they are the contrary. Your prophecy, I doubt, is not better founded than the prescription. I may be lame; but I shall never be a duck, nor deal in the garbage of the alley.

I envy your *Strawberry tide*, and need not say how much I wish I was there to receive you. Methinks I should be as glad of a little grass, as a



seaman after a long voyage. Yet English gardening gains ground here prodigiously—not much at a time indeed—I have literally seen one that is exactly like a taylor's paper of patterns. There is a monsieur Boutin, who has tacked a piece of what he calls an English garden to a set of stone-terrasses with steps of turf. There are three or four very high hills, almost as high as, and exactly in the shape of, a tanfy-pudding. You squeeze between these and a river, that is conducted at obtuse angles in a stone-channel, and supplied by a pump; and when walnuts come in, I suppose it will be navigable. In a corner enclosed by a chalk wall are the samples I mentioned: there is a stripe of grass, another of corn, and a third *en friche*, exactly in the order of beds in a nursery. They have translated Mr. Whately's book, and the lord knows what barbarism is going to be laid at our door. This new Anglomanie will literally be *mad English*.

New arrêts, new retrenchments, new misery, stalk forth every day. The parliament of Besançon is dissolved; so are the *grenadiers de France*. The king's tradesmen are all bankrupt, no pensions are paid, and every body is reforming their suppers and equipages. Despotism makes converts faster than ever christianity did. Louis quinze is the true Rex christianissimus, and has ten times more success than his dragooning great grandfather. Adieu, my dear sir!

Yours most faithfully,

HOR. WALPOLE.

Friday 9th.

THIS was to have gone by a private hand, but cannot depart till Monday; so I may be continuing my letter till I bring it myself. I have been again at the Chartreuse; and though it was the sixth time, I am more enchanted with those paintings\* than ever. If it is not the first work in the world, and must yield to the Vatican, yet in simplicity and harmony it beats Raphael himself. There is a vapour over all the pictures that makes them more natural than any representation of objects—I cannot conceive how it is effected! you see them through the shine of a south-east wind. These poor folks do not know the inestimable treasure they possess—but they are perishing these pictures, and one gazes at them as at a setting sun. There is the purity of Racine in them, but they give me more pleasure—and I should much sooner be tired of the poet than of the painter.

\* The life of St. Bruno, painted by Le. Sœur, in the cloister of the Chartreuse at Paris. E.

It.



It is very singular that I have not half the satisfaction in going into churches and convents that I used to have. The consciousness that the vision is dispelled, the want of fervour so obvious in the religious, the solitude that one knows proceeds from contempt, not from contemplation, make those places appear like abandoned theatres destined to destruction. The monks trot about as if they had not long to stay there; and what used to be holy gloom is now but dirt and darkness. There is no more deception, than in a tragedy acted by candle-snuffers. One is sorry to think that an empire of common sense would not be very picturesque; for, as there is nothing but taste that can compensate for the imagination of madness, I doubt there will never be twenty men of taste for twenty thousand madmen. The world will no more see Athens, Rome, and the Medici again, than a succession of five good emperors, like Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, and the two Antonines.

August 13.

Mr. Edmondson has called on me; and as he sets out to-morrow, I can safely trust my letter to him.

I have, I own, been much shocked at reading Gray's death in the papers. 'Tis an hour that makes one forget any subjects of complaint, especially towards one with whom I lived in friendship from thirteen years old. As self lies so rooted in self, no doubt the nearness of our ages made the stroke recoil to my own breast; and having so little expected his death, it is plain how little I expect my own. Yet to you, who of all men living are the most forgiving, I need not excuse the concern I feel. I fear, most men ought to apologize for their want of feeling, instead of palliating that sensation when they have it. I thought that what I had seen of the world had hardened my heart; but I find it had formed my language, not extinguished my tenderness. In short, I am really shocked—nay, I am hurt at my own weakness, as I perceive that when I love any body, it is for my life; and I have had too much reason not to wish that such a disposition may very seldom be put to the trial. You at least are the only person to whom I would venture to make such a confession.

Adieu, my dear sir!—Let me know when I arrive, which will be about the



last day of the month, when I am likely to see you. I have much to say to you. Of being here I am most heartily tired, and nothing but this dear old woman should keep me here an hour—I am weary of them to death—but that is not new!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.