



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl Of Orford

In Five Volumes

Walpole, Horace

London, 1798

Letters from the Hon. Horace Walpole to Caroline Campbell, Countess
Dowager of Ailesbury, from the Year 1760 to the Year 1779

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-59895](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-59895)

LETTERS

FROM

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

TO

CAROLINE CAMPBELL,

COUNTESS DOWAGER OF AILESBUURY,

From the Year 1760 to the Year 1779.

4 A 2

L E T T E R S

L E T T E R S

1834

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

TO

CAROLINE CAMPBELL,

COUNTY OF ALBANY,

FROM THE YEAR 1780 TO THE YEAR 1834.

LETTERS

FROM

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

TO

CAROLINE CAMPBELL,

COUNTESS DOWAGER OF AILESBUURY,

From the Year 1760 to the Year 1779.

LETTER I.

TO CAROLINE CAMPBELL, COUNTESS DOWAGER OF AILESBUURY.

Whichnovre, August 23, 1760.

WELL, madam, if I had known whither I was coming, I would not have come alone! Mr. Conway and your ladyship should have come too. Do you know, this is the individual manor-house,¹ where married ladies may have a fitch of bacon upon the easiest terms in the world? I should have expected that the owners would be ruined in satisfying the conditions of the obligation, and that the park would be stocked with hogs instead of deer.—On the contrary, it is thirty years since the fitch was claimed, and Mr. Offley was never so *near* losing one as when you and Mr. Conway were at Ragley. He so little expects the demand, that the fitch is only hung in effigie over the hall chimney, carved in wood. Are not you ashamed, madam, never to have put in your claim? It is above a year and a day that you have been married, and I never once heard either of you

¹ Of Whichnovre near Litchfield.

mention

mention a journey to Whichnovre. If you quarrelled at loo every night, you could not quit your pretensions with more indifference. I had a great mind to take my oath, as one of your witnesses, that you neither of you would, if you were at liberty, prefer any body else, *ne fairer ne fouler*, and I could easily get twenty persons to swear the same. Therefore, unless you will let the world be convinced, that all your apparent harmony is counterfeit, you must set out immediately for Mr. Offley's, or at least send me a letter of attorney to claim the fitch in your names; and I will send it up by the coach, to be left at the *Blue Boar*, or wherever you will have it delivered. But you had better come in person; you will see one of the prettiest spots in the world; it is a little paradise, and the more like the antique one, as, by all I have said, the married couple seems to be driven out of it. The house is very indifferent: behind is a pretty park; the situation, a brow of a hill, commanding sweet meadows, through which the Trent serpentine in numberless windings and branches. The spires of the cathedral of Litchfield are in front at a distance, with variety of other steeples, seats, and farms, and the horizon bounded by rich hills covered with blue woods. If you love a prospect, or bacon, you will certainly come hither.

Wentworth-castle, Sunday night.

I HAD writ thus far yesterday, but had no opportunity of sending my letter. I arrived here last night, and found only the duke of Devonshire, who went to Hardwicke this morning: they were down at the menagerie, and there was a clean little pullet, with which I thought his grace looked as if he should be glad to eat a slice of Whichnovre bacon. We follow him to Chatworth to-morrow, and make our entry to the public dinner, to the disagreeableness of which I fear even lady M——'s company will not reconcile me.

My Gothic building, which my lord Strafford has executed in the menagerie, has a charming effect. There are two bridges built besides; but the new front is very little advanced. Adieu, madam!

Your most affectionate evidence,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER

LETTER II.

Strawberry-hill, June 13th, 1761.

I NEVER ate such good snuff, nor smelt such delightful bonbons, as your ladyship has sent me. Every time you rob the duke's dessert, does it cost you a pretty snuff-box? Do the pastors at the Hague¹ enjoin such expensive retributions? If a man steals a kiss there, I suppose he does penance in a sheet of Brussels lace. The comical part is, that you own the theft, and send it me, but say nothing of the vehicle of your repentance. In short, madam, the box is the prettiest thing I ever saw, and I give you a thousand thanks for it.

When you comfort yourself about the operas, you don't know what you have lost; nay, nor I neither; for I was here, concluding that a serenata for a birth-day would be as dull and as vulgar as those festivities generally are: but I hear of nothing but the enchantment of it. There was a second orchestra in the footman's gallery, disguised by clouds, and filled with the music of the king's chapel. The choristers behaved like angels, and the harmony between the two bands was in the most exact time. Elisi piqued himself, and beat both heaven and earth. The joys of the year do not end there. The under-actors open at Drury-lane to-night with a new comedy by Murphy, called *All in the Wrong*. At Ranelagh all is fireworks and sky-rockets. The birth-day exceeded the splendour of Haroun Alraschid, and the Arabian Nights, when people had nothing to do but to scour a lantern, and send a genie for a hamper of diamonds and rubies. Do you remember one of those stories, where a prince has eight statues of diamonds, which he overlooks, because he fancies he wants a ninth; and to his great surprize the ninth proves to be pure flesh and blood, which he never thought of? Some how or other, lady — is the ninth statue; and, you will allow, has better white and red than if she was made of pearls and rubies. Oh! I forgot, I was telling you of the birth-day: my lord P—— had drunk the king's health so often at dinner, that at the ball he took Mrs. —— for a beautiful woman, and, as she says, *made an improper use of his hands*. The proper use of hers, she thought, was to give him a box on the ear, though within the verge of the court. He returned it by a push, and she tumbled off the end

¹ Lady Ailesbury remained at the Hague while Mr. Conway was with the army during the campaign of 1761. E.

of the bench ; which his majesty has accepted as sufficient punishment, and she is not to lose her right hand¹.

I enclose the list your ladyship desired : you will see that the *plurality of Worlds* are Moore's, and of some I do not know the authors. There is a late edition with these names to them.

My duchess was to set out this morning. I saw her for the last time the day before yesterday at lady Kildare's : never was a journey less a party of pleasure. She was so melancholy, that all mifs ——'s oddness and my spirits could scarce make her smile. Towards the end of the night, and that was three in the morning, I did divert her a little. I slipped Pam into her lap, and then taxed her with having it there. She was quite confounded ; but, taking it up, saw he had a telescope in his hand, which I had drawn, and that the card, which was split, and just waxed together, contained these lines :

Ye simple astronomers, lay by your glasses ;
The transit of Venus has proved you all asses :
Your telescopes signify nothing to scan it ;
'Tis not meant in the clouds, 'tis not meant of a planet :
The seer who foretold it mistook or deceives us,
For Venus's transit is when Grafton leaves us.

I don't send your ladyship these verses as good, but to show you that all gallantry does not centre at the Hague.

I wish I could tell you that Stanley and Bussy, by crossing over and figuring in, had forwarded the peace. It is no more made than Belleisle is taken. However, I flatter myself that you will not stay abroad till you return for the coronation, which is ordered for the beginning of October. I don't care to tell you how lovely the season is ; how my acacias are powdered with flowers, and my hay just in its picturesque moment. Do they ever make any other hay in Holland than bullrushes in ditches ? My new buildings rise so swiftly, that I shall not have a shilling left, so far from giving commissions on Amsterdam. When I have made my house so big that I

¹ The old punishment for giving a blow in the king's presence. E.

don't

don't know what to do with it, and am entirely undone, I propose, like king Pyrrhus, who took such a roundabout way to a bowl of punch, to sit down and enjoy myself; but with this difference, that it is better to ruin one's self than all the world. I am sure you would think as I do, though Pyrrhus were king of Prussia. I long to have you bring back the only hero that ever I could endure. Adieu, madam! I sent you just such another piece of tittle-tattle as this by general Waldegrave: you are very partial to me, or very fond of knowing every thing that passes in your own country, if you can be amused so. If you can, 'tis surely my duty to divert you, though at the expence of my character; for I own I am ashamed when I look back and see four sides of paper scribbled over with nothings.

Your ladyship's most faithful servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER III.

Strawberry-hill, July 20th, 1761.

I BLUSH, dear madam, on observing that half my letters to your ladyship are prefaced with thanks for presents:—don't mistake; I am not ashamed of thanking you, but of having so many occasions for it. Monsieur Hop has sent me the piece of china: I admire it as much as possible, and intend to like him as much as ever I can; but hitherto I have not seen him, not having been in town since he arrived.

Could I have believed that the Hague would so easily compensate for England? nay, for Park-place! Adieu, all our agreeable suppers! Instead of lady Cecilia's¹ French songs, we shall have madame Welderen quavering a confusion of d's and t's, b's and p's—*Bourquoi sçais du blaire*?²—Worse than that, I expect to meet all my — relations at your house, and sir Samson Gideon instead of Charles Townshend. You will laugh like Mrs. Tipkin³ when a Dutch Jew tells you that he bought at two and a half per cent. and sold at four. Come back, if you have any taste left: you had better be

¹ Lady Cecilia West, daughter of John earl of Delawar, afterwards married to general James Johnston.

² The first words of a favourite French air.

³ A character in the *Tender Husband*, or the *Accomplished Fools*.

here talking robes, ermine and tiffue, jewels and tresses, as all the world does, than own you are so corrupted. Did you receive my notification of the new queen? Her mother is dead, and she will not be here before the end of August.

My mind is much more at peace about Mr. Conway than it was. Nobody thinks there will be a battle, as the French did not attack them when both armies shifted camps; and since that, Soubise has entrenched himself up to the whiskers:—whiskers I think he has, I have been so afraid of him! Yet our hopes of meeting are still very distant: the peace does not advance; and if Europe has a *fliver* left in its pockets, the war will continue; though happily all parties have been so scratched, that they only sit and look anger at one another, like a dog and cat that don't care to begin again.

We are in danger of losing our sociable box at the opera. The new queen is very musical, and, if Mr. deputy Hodges and the city don't exert their veto, will probably go to the Haymarket. * * * * * G—— P——, in imitation of the Adonises in Tanzai's retinue, has asked to be her majesty's grand harper. *Dieu sçait quelle raclerie il y aura!* All the guitars are untuned; and if miss Conway¹ has a mind to be in fashion at her return, she must take some David or other to teach her the new twing twang, twing twang. As I am still desirous of being in fashion with your ladyship, and am, over and above, very grateful, I keep no company but my lady Denbigh and lady Blandford, and learn every evening, for two hours, to mash my English. Already I am tolerably fluent in saying *she* for *he*².

Good night, madam! I have no news to send you: one cannot announce a royal wedding and a coronation every post.

Your most faithful and obliged servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. Pray, madam, do the gnats bite your legs? Mine are swelled as big as *one*, which is saying a great deal for me.

¹ The honourable Anne Damer.

² A mistake which these ladies, who were both Dutch women, constantly made. E.

July 22.

I HAD writ this, and was not time enough for the mail, when I receive your charming note, and this magnificent victory! Oh! my dear madam, how I thank you, how I congratulate you, how I feel for you, how I have felt for you and for myself!—But I bought it by two terrible hours to-day—I heard of the battle two hours before I could learn a word of Mr. Conway—I sent all round the world, and went half round it myself. I have cried and laughed, trembled and danced, as you bid me. If you had sent me as much old china as king Augustus gave two regiments for, I should not be half so much obliged to you as for your note. How could you think of me, when you had so much reason to think of nothing but yourself?—And then they say virtue is not rewarded in this world. I will preach at Paul's Cross, and quote you and Mr. Conway; no two persons were ever so good and so happy. In short, I am serious in the height of all my joy. God is very good to you, my dear madam; I thank him for you; I thank him for myself: it is very unallayed pleasure we taste at this moment!—Good night! My heart is so expanded, I could write to the last scrap of my paper; but I won't.

Yours most entirely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER IV.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 27, 1761.

YOU are a mean mercenary woman. If you did not want histories of weddings and coronations, and had not jobs to be executed about muffins and a bit of china and counterband goods, one should never hear of you. When you don't want a body, you can frisk about with Greffiers and Burgomasters, and be as merry in a dyke as my lady Frog herself. The moment your curiosity is agog, or your cambric seized, you recollect a good cousin in England, and, as folks said two hundred years ago, begin to write *upon the knees of your heart*. Well! I am a sweet-tempered creature, I forgive you. I have already writ to a little friend in the custom-house, and will try what can be done; though, by Mr. Amyand's report to the duchess of Richmond, I fear

? Of Kirckdenckirk.

4 B 2

your

your case is desperate.—For the genealogies, I have turned over all my books to no purpose; I can meet with no lady Howard that married a Carey, nor a lady Seymour that married a Caufield. Lettice Caufield, who married Francis Staunton, was daughter of Dr. James (not George) Caufield, younger brother of the first lord Charlemont. This is all I can ascertain. For the other pedigree; I can inform your friend that there was a sir Nicholas Throckmorton, who married an Anne Carew, daughter of sir Nicholas Carew, knight of the garter, not Carey—But this sir Nicholas Carew married Joan Courtney—not a Howard; and besides, the Careys and Throckmortons you wot of were just the reverse: your Carey was the cock, and Throckmorton the hen—mine are vice versa:—otherwise, let me tell your friend, Carews and Courtneys are worth Howards any day of the week, and of ancients blood:—so, if descent is all he wants, I advise him to take up with the pedigree as I have refuted it. However, I will cast a figure once more, and try if I can conjure up the dames Howard and Seymour that he wants.

My heraldry was much more offended at the coronation with the ladies that did walk, than with those that walked out of their place; yet I was not so *perilously* angry as my lady Cowper, who refused to set a foot with my lady M—; and when she was at last obliged to associate with her, set out on a round trot, as if she designed to prove the antiquity of her family by marching as lustily as a maid of honour of queen Gwiniver. It was in truth a brave fight. The sea of heads in Palace-yard, the guards horse and foot, the scaffolds, balconies and procession, exceeded imagination. The hall, when once illuminated, was noble; but they suffered the whole parade to return into it in the dark, that his majesty might be surpris'd with the quickness with which the sconces caught fire. The Champion acted well; the other Paladins had neither the grace nor alertness of Rinaldo. Lord Effingham and the duke of Bedford were but untoward knights errant; and lord Talbot had not much more dignity than the figure of general Monke in the abbey. The habit of the peers is unbecoming to the last degree; but the peeresses made amends for all defects. Your daughter Richmond, lady Kildare, and lady Pembroke were as handsome as the Graces. Lady Rochford, lady Holderness, and lady Lyttelton looked exceedingly well in that their day; and for those of the day before, the duchess of Queensberry, lady Westmorland, and lady Albemarle were surpris'ing. Lady Harrington was noble at a distance, and so covered with diamonds, that you would have thought she had bid

somebody or other, like Falstaff, *rob me the exchequer*. Lady Northampton was very magnificent too, and looked prettier than I have seen her of late. Lady Spencer and lady Bolingbroke were not the worst figures there. The duchess of Ancafter marched alone after the queen with much majesty; and there were two new Scotch peeresses that pleased every body, lady Sutherland and lady Dunmore. Per contra, were lady P—, who had put a wig on, and old E—, who had scratched hers off; lady S—, the dowager E—, and a lady S— with her tresses coal black, and her hair coal white. Well! it was all delightful, but not half so charming as its being over—The gabble one heard about it for six weeks before, and the fatigue of the day, could not well be compensated by a mere puppet-show; for puppet-show it was, though it cost a million. The queen is so gay that we shall not want fights; she has been at the Opera, the Beggar's Opera and the Rehearsal, and two nights ago carried the king to Ranelagh. In short, I am so miserable with losing my duchess*, and you and Mr. Conway, that I believe, if you should be another six weeks without writing to me, I should come to the Hague and scold you in person—for, alas! my dear lady, I have no hopes of seeing you here. Stanley is recalled, is expected every hour—Buffy goes to-morrow; and Mr. Pitt is so impatient to conquer Mexico, that I don't believe he will stay till my lord Bristol can be ordered to leave Madrid. I tremble lest Mr. Conway should not get leave to come—nay, are we sure he would like to ask it? He was so impatient to get to the army, that I should not be surpris'd if he staid there till every futler and woman that follows the camp was come away. You ask me if we are not in admiration of prince Ferdinand—In truth, we have thought very little of him. He may outwit Broglio ten times, and not be half so much talked of, as lord Talbot's backing his horse down Westminster-hall. The generality are not struck with any thing under a complete victory. If you have a mind to be well with the mob of England, you must be knocked on the head like Wolfe, or bring home as many diamonds as Clive. We live in a country where so many follies or novelties start forth every day, that we have not time to try a general's capacity by the rules of Polybius.

I have hardly left room for my obligations—to your ladyship, for my com-

* The duchess of Grafton, who was abroad.

miffions

missions at Amsterdam; to Mrs. Sally¹, for her tea-pots, which are likely to stay so long at the Hague, that I fear they will have begot a whole set of china; and to miss Conway and lady George, for thinking of me. Pray assure them of my *re-thinking*. Adieu, dear madam! Don't you think we had better write oftener and shorter?

Yours most faithfully,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER V.

Strawberry-hill, Oct. 10, 1761.

I DON'T know what business I had, madam, to be an economist: it was out of character. I wished for a thousand more drawings in that sale at Amsterdam, but concluded they would be very dear; and not having seen them, I thought it too rash to trouble your ladyship with a large commission.

I wish I could give you as good an account of your commission; but it is absolutely impracticable. I employed one of the most sensible and experienced men in the custom-house; and all the result was, he could only recommend me to Mr. Amyand as the newest and consequently the most polite of the commissioners—but the duchess of Richmond had tried him before—to no purpose. There is no way of recovering any of your goods, but purchasing them again at the sale.

What am I doing, to be talking to you of drawings and chintzes, when the world is all turned topsy turvy? Peace, as the poets would say, is not only returned to heaven, but has carried her sister Virtue along with her—Oh! no, Peace will keep no such company—Virtue is an errant strumpet, and loves diamonds as well as my lady——, and is as fond of a coronet as my lord Melcombe. Worse! worse! She will set men to cutting throats, and pick their pockets at the same time. I am in such a passion, I cannot tell you what I am angry about—Why, about Virtue and Mr. Pitt; two errant cheats, gipsies! I believe he was a comrade of Elizabeth Canning, when he lived at Enfield-wash. In short, the council were for making peace;

¹ Lady Ailesbury's woman.

But

But he, as loving his own pride and purposes,
Evades them with a bombast circumstance,
Horribly stuff'd with epithets of war,
And in conclusion—nonfuits my mediators.

He insisted on a war with Spain, was resisted, and last Monday resigned. The city breathed vengeance on his opposers, the council quaked, and the Lord knows what would have happened; but yesterday, which was only Friday, as this giant was stalking to seize the Tower of London, he stumbled over a silver penny, picked it up, carried it home to lady Esther, and they are now as quiet, good sort of people, as my lord and lady Bath who lived in the vinegar-bottle. In fact, madam, this immaculate man has accepted the barony of Chatham for his wife, with a pension of three thousand pounds a year for three lives; and though he has not quitted the house of commons, I think my lord A—— would now be as formidable there. The pension he has left us, is a war for three thousand lives! perhaps, for twenty times three thousand lives!—But—

Does this become a soldier? *this* become
Whom armies follow'd; and a people lov'd?

What! to sneak out of the scrape, prevent peace, and avoid the war! blast one's character, and all for the comfort of a paltry annuity, a long-necked peeress, and a couple of Grenvilles! The city looks mighty foolish, I believe, and possibly even Beckford may blush. Lord Temple resigned yesterday; I suppose his virtue pants for a dukedom. Lord Egremont has the seals; lord Hardwicke, I fancy, the privy seal; and George Grenville, no longer speaker, is to be the cabinet minister in the house of commons. Oh! madam, I am glad you are inconstant to Mr. Conway, though it is only with a Barbette! If you piqued yourself on your virtue, I should expect you would sell it to the master of a Trechfoot.

I told you a lie about the king's going to Ranelagh—No matter; there is no such thing as truth. Garrick exhibits the coronation, and, opening the end of the stage, discovers a real bonfire and real mob: the houses in Drury-lane let their windows at three-pence a head. Rich is going to produce a finer coronation, nay, than the real one; for there is to be a dinner for the

knights of the bath and the barons of the cinque ports, which lord Talbot refused them.

I put your Caufields and Stauntons into the hands of one of the first heralds upon earth, and who has the entire pedigree of the Careys; but he cannot find a drop of Howard or Seymour blood in the least artery about them. Good night, madam!

Yours most faithfully,

HOR. WALPOLE.

L E T T E R VI.

DEAR MADAM,

Arlington-street, Nov. 28, 1761.

YOU are so bad and so good, that I don't know how to treat you. You give me every mark of kindness but letting me hear from you. You send me charming drawings the moment I trouble you with a commission, and you give lady Cecilia¹ commissions for trifles of my writing, in the most obliging manner. I have taken the latter off her hands. The Fugitive Pieces, and the Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors shall be conveyed to you directly. Lady Cecilia and I agree how we lament the charming suppers there, every time we pass the corner of Warwick-street! We have a little comfort for your sake and our own, in believing that the campaign is at an end, at least for this year—but they tell us, it is to recommence here or in Ireland. You have nothing to do with that. Our politics, I think, will soon be as warm as our war. Charles Townshend is to be lieutenant-general to Mr. Pitt. The duke of Bedford is privy-seal; lord Thomond, cofferer; lord George Cavendish, comptroller.

Diversions, you know, madam, are never at highwater-mark before Christmas: yet operas flourish pretty well: those on Tuesdays are removed to Mondays, because the queen likes the burlettas, and the king cannot go on Tuesdays, his post-days. On those nights we have the middle front box, railed in, where lady Mary² and I sit in triste state like a lord mayor and lady mayorefs. The night before last there was a private ball at court, which

¹ Lady Cecilia Johnston.

² Lady Mary Coke.

began

began at half an hour after six, lasted till one, and finished without a supper. The king danced the whole time with the queen, lady Augusta with her four younger brothers. The other performers were: the two duchesses of Ancafter and Hamilton, who danced little; lady Effingham and lady Egremont, who danced much; the six maids of honour; lady Susan Stewart, as attending lady Augusta; and lady Caroline Ruffel, and lady Jane Stewart, the only women not of the family. Lady Northumberland is at Bath; lady Weymouth lies in; lady Bolingbroke was there in waiting, but in black gloves, so did not dance. The men, besides the royals, were lords March and Eglintoun, of the bed-chamber; lord Cantelupe, vice-chamberlain; lord Huntingdon; and four strangers, lord Mandeville, lord Northampton, lord Suffolk, and lord Grey. No fitters-by, but the princess, the duchess of Bedford, and lady Bute.

If it had not been for this ball, I don't know how I should have furnished a decent letter. Pamphlets on Mr. Pitt are the whole conversation, and none of them worth sending cross the water: at least I, who am said to write some of them, think so; by which you may perceive I am not much flattered with the imputation. There must be new personages at least, before I write on any side—Mr. Pitt and the duke of Newcastle! I should as soon think of informing the world that miss Chudleigh is no vestal. You will like better to see some words which Mr. Gray has writ, at miss Speed's request, to an old air of Geminiani: the thought is from the French.

I.

Thyrsis, when we parted, swore
 Ere the spring he would return.
 Ah! what means yon violet flow'r,
 And the buds that deck the thorn?
 'Twas the lark that upward sprung,
 'Twas the nightingale that sung.

II.

Idle notes! untimely green!
 Why this unavailing haste?
 Western gales and skies serene
 Speak not always winter past:
 Cease my doubts, my fears to move;
 Spare the honour of my love.

Adieu, madam!

Your most faithful servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER VII.

MADAM,

Strawberry-hill, March 5, 1762.

ONE of your slaves, a fine young officer, brought me two days ago a very pretty medal from your ladyship. Amidst all your triumphs you do not, I see, forget your English friends, and it makes me extremely happy. He pleased me still more, by assuring me that you return to England when the campaign opens. I can pay this news by none so good as by telling you that we talk of nothing but peace. We are equally ready to give law to the world, or peace. Martinico has not made us intractable. We and the new Czar are the best sort of people upon earth: I am sure, madam, you must adore him; he is willing to resign all his conquests, that you and Mr. Conway may be settled again at Park-place. My lord Chesterfield, with the despondence of an old man and the wit of a young one, thinks the French and Spaniards must make some attempt upon these islands, and is frightened lest we should not be so well prepared to repel invasions as to make them: he says, "*What will it avail us if we gain the whole world, and lose our own soul?*"

I am here alone, madam, and know nothing to tell you. I came from town on Saturday for the worst cold I ever had in my life, and, what I care less to own even to myself, a cough. I hope lord Chesterfield will not speak more truth in what I have quoted, than in his assertion, that one need not cough if one did not please. It has pulled me extremely, and you may believe I do not look very plump, when I am more emaciated than usual. However, I have taken James's powder for four nights, and have found great benefit from it; and if miss Conway does not come back with *soixante et douze quartiers*, and the hauteur of a Landgravine, I think I shall still be able to run down the precipices at Park-place with her—This is to be understood, supposing that we have any summer. Yesterday was the first moment that did not feel like Thule: not a glimpse of spring or green, except a miserable almond-tree, half opening one bud, like my lord P——'s eye.

It will be warmer, I hope, by the king's birth-day, or the old ladies will catch their deaths. There is a court dress to be instituted—(to thin the drawing-rooms)—stiff-bodied gowns and bare shoulders. What dreadful discoveries will be made both on fat and lean! I recommend to you the idea of Mrs. C——, when half-stark; and I might fill the rest of my paper with such images, but your imagination will supply them; and you shall excuse me,

though

though I leave this a short letter: but I wrote merely to thank your ladyship for the medal, and, as you perceive, have very little to say, besides that known and lasting truth, how much I am Mr. Conway's and

Your ladyship's faithful humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER VIII.

MADAM,

Strawberry-hill, July 31, 1762.

MAGNANIMOUS as the fair soul of your ladyship is, and plaited with superabundance of Spartan fortitude, I felicitate my own good fortune who can circle this epistle with branches of the gentle olive, as well as crown it with victorious laurel. This pompous paragraph, madam, which in compliment to my lady Lyttelton I have penned in the style of her lord, means no more, than that I wish you joy of the castle of Waldeck¹, and more joy on the peace, which I find every body thinks is concluded. In truth, I have still my doubts; and yesterday came news, which, if my lord Bute does not make haste, may throw a little rub in the way. In short, the Czar is dethroned. Some give the honour to his wife; others, who add the little circumstance of his being murdered too, ascribe the revolution to the archbishop of Novogorod, who, like other priests, thinks assassination a less affront to heaven than three Lutheran churches. I hope the latter is the truth; because, in the honeymoonhood of lady C——'s tenderness, I don't know but she might miscarry at the thought of a wife preferring a crown, and scandal says a regiment of grenadiers, to her husband.

I have a little meaning in naming lady Lyttelton and lady C——, who I think are at Park-place. Was not there a promise that you all three would meet Mr. Churchill and lady Mary here in the beginning of August? Yes, indeed was there, and I put in my claim.—Not confining your heroic and musical ladyships to a day or a week; my time is at your command: and I wish the rain was at mine; for, if you or it do not come soon, I shall not have a leaf left. Strawberry is browner than lady B—— F——.

¹ At the taking of which Mr. Conway had assisted. E.

I was grieved, madam, to miss seeing you in town on Monday, particularly as I wished to settle this party. If you will let me know when it will be your pleasure, I will write to my sister.

I am your ladyship's

Most faithful servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

L E T T E R IX.

Arlington-street, Dec. 29, 1772.

INDEED, madam, I want you and Mr. Conway in town. Christmas has dispersed all my company, and left nothing but a loo-party or two. If all the fine days were not gone out of town too, I should take the air in a morning; but I am not yet nimble enough, like old Mrs. Nugent, to jump out of a post-chaise into an assembly.

You have a woful taste, my lady, not to like lord G——'s bon mot. I am almost too indignant to tell you of a most amusing book in six volumes, called *Histoire philosophique et politique du commerce des deux Indes*. It tells one every thing in the world—how to make conquests, invasions, blunders, settlements, bankruptcies, fortunes, &c. tells you the natural and historical history of all nations; talks commerce, navigation, tea, coffee, china, mines, salt, spices; of the Portuguese, English, French, Dutch, Danes, Spaniards, Arabs, Caravans, Persians, Indians, of Louis XIV, and the king of Prussia; of la Bourdonnois, Dupleix and admiral Saunders; of rice, and women that dance naked; of camels, gingams and muslin; of millions of millions of livres, pounds, rupees, and gouries; of iron, cables, and Circassian women; of law and the Mississippi; and against all governments and religions. This and every thing else is in the two first volumes. I cannot conceive what is left for the four others. And all is so mixed, that you learn forty new trades, and fifty new histories, in a single chapter. There is spirit, wit, and clearness—and if there were but less avoirdupois weight in it, it would be the richest book in the world in materials—but figures to me are so many cyphers, and only put me in mind of children that say, an hundred hundred hundred millions. However,

ever, it has made me learned enough to talk about Mr. Sykes and the secret committee¹, which is all that any body talks of at present; and yet mademoiselle Heinel is arrived. This is all I know, and a great deal too, considering I know nothing—and yet, were there either truth or lies, I should know them, for one hears every thing in a sick room. Good night both!

LETTER X.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 7, 1774.

I HAVE written such tomes to Mr. Conway², madam, and have so nothing new to write, that I might as well methinks begin and end like the lady to her husband: *Je vous écris parceque je n'ai rien à faire: je finis parceque je n'ai rien à vous dire.* Yes, I have two complaints to make, one of your ladyship, the other of myself. You tell me nothing of lady Harriet³: Have you no tongue, or the French no eyes? or are her eyes employed in nothing but seeing? What a vulgar employment for a fine woman's eyes after she is risen from her toilet! I declare I will ask no more questions—What is it to me, whether she is admired or not? I should know how charming she is, though all Europe were blind. I hope I am not to be told by any barbarous nation upon earth what beauty and grace are!

For myself, I am guilty of the gout in my elbow; the left—witness my handwriting. Whether I caught cold by the deluge in the night, or whether the bootikins like the water of Styx can only preserve the parts they surround, I doubt they have saved me but three weeks, for so long my reckoning has been out. However, as I feel nothing in my feet, I flatter myself that this Pindaric transition will not be a regular ode, but a fragment, the more valuable for being imperfect.

Now for my gazette.—Marriages—Nothing done. Intrigues—More in the political than civil way. Births—Under par since lady B—left off breeding. Gaming—Low water. Deaths—Lord Morton, lord Wentworth,

¹ Upon East Indian affairs.

³ Lady Harriet Stanhope, afterwards married

² Mr. Conway and lady Ailesbury were now to lord Foley.

at Paris together.

duchess

duchefs Douglas. Election stock—More buyers than sellers. Promotions—Mr. Wilkes as high as he can go—A-propos, he was told lord chancellor intended to signify to him that the king did not approve the city's choice: he replied, Then I shall signify to his lordship, that I am at least as fit to be lord mayor as he to be lord chancellor. This being more gospel than every thing Mr. Wilkes says, the formal approbation was given.

Mr. Burke has succeeded at Bristol, and sir James Peachey will miscarry in Suffex. But what care you, madam, about our parliament? You will see the *rentrée* of the old one, with songs and epigrams into the bargain. We do not shift our parliaments with so much gaiety. Money in one hand, and abuse in t'other—those are all the arts we know. *Wit and a gamut* I don't believe ever signified a parliament¹, whatever the glossaries may say; for they never produce pleasantry and harmony. Perhaps you may not taste this Saxon pun, but I know it will make the Antiquarian Society die with laughing.

Expectation hangs on America. The result of the general assembly is expected in four or five days. If one may believe the papers, which one should not believe, the other-side-of-the-waterists are not *doux comme des moutons*, and yet we do intend to eat them. I was in town on Monday; the duchefs of B—graced our loo, and made it as rantipole as a quaker's meeting. *Loois Quinze*², I believe, is arrived by this time, but I fear without *quinze louis*.

Your herb-snuff and the four glasses are lying in my warehouse, but I can hear of no ship going to Paris. You are now at Fontainebleau, but not thinking of Francis I. the queen of Sweden and Monaldeschi. It is terrible that one cannot go to courts that are gone! You have supped with the chevalier de Boufflers: Did he act every thing in the word, and sing every thing in the world, and laugh at every thing in the world? Has madame de Cambis sung to you *Sans depot, sans legereté*³? Has lord Cholmondeley delivered my paquet? I hear I have hopes of madame d'Olonne. Gout or no gout, I think I shall be little in town till after Christmas. My elbow makes me blefs

¹*Wetenagemet* was the name of the Saxon great council, the supposed origin of parliaments. E. was very fond of loo, and who had lost much money at that game. E.

²This was a cant name given to a lady who

³The first words of a favourite French air.

myself

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBUURY. 567

myself that I am not at Paris. Old age is no such uncomfortable thing, if one gives one's self up to it with a good grace, and don't drag it about

To midnight dances and the public show.

If one stays quietly in one's own house in the country, and cares for nothing but one's self, scolds one's servants, condemns every thing that is new, and recollects how charming a thousand things were formerly that were very disagreeable, one gets over the winters very well, and the summers get over themselves.

LETTER XL.

From t'other side of the water, August 17th, 1775.

INTERPRETING your ladyship's orders in the most personal sense, as respecting the dangers of the sea, I write the instant I am landed. I did not, in truth, set out till yesterday morning at eight o'clock; but finding the roads, horses, postillions, tides, winds, moons, and captain Factors in the pleasantest humour in the world, I embarked almost as soon as I arrived at Dover, and reached Calais before the sun was awake;—and here I am for the sixth time in my life, with only the trifling distance of seven-and-thirty years between my first voyage and the present. Well, I can only say in excuse, that I am got into the land of Strulbrugs, where one is never too old to be young, and where *la bequille du pere Barnabas* blossoms like Aaron's rod, or the Glastonbury thorn.

Now to be sure I shall be a little mortified, if your ladyship wanted a letter of news, and did not at all trouble your head about my navigation. However, you will not tell one so; and therefore I will persist in believing that this good news will be received with transport at Park-place, and that the bells of Henley will be set a-ringing. The rest of my adventures must be deferred till they have happened, which is not always the case of travels. I send you no compliments from Paris, because I have not got thither, nor delivered the bundle which Mr. Conway sent me. I did, as your ladyship commanded,
buy

buy three pretty little medallions in frames of filigraine, for our dear old friend¹. They will not ruin you, having cost not a guinea and half; but it was all I could find that was genteel and portable; and as she does not measure by guineas, but attentions, she will be as much pleased as if you had sent her a dozen acres of Park-place. As they are in bas-relief, too, they are feelable, and that is a material circumstance to her. Indeed I wish the Diomedé had even so much as a pair of Nankin!

Adieu, toute la chere famille! I think of October with much satisfaction; it will double the pleasure of my return.

L E T T E R XII.

Paris, August 20, 1775.

I HAVE been sea-sick to death; I have been poisoned by dirt and vermin; I have been stifled by heat, choked by dust, and starved for want of any thing I could touch: and yet, madam, here I am perfectly well, not in the least fatigued; and, thanks to the rivelled parchments, formerly faces, which I have seen by hundreds, I find myself almost as young as when I came hither first in the last century. In spite of my whims, and delicacy, and laziness, none of my grievances have been mortal: I have borne them as well as if I set up for a philosopher, like the sages of this town. Indeed I have found my dear old woman so well, and looking so much better than she did four years ago, that I am transported with pleasure, and thank your ladyship and Mr. Conway for driving me hither. Madame du Deffand came to me the instant I arrived, and sat by me whilst I stripped and dressed myself; for, as she said, since she cannot see, there was no harm in my being stark. She was charmed with your present, but was so kind as to be so much more charmed with my arrival, that she did not think of it a moment. I sat with her till half an hour after two in the morning, and had a letter from her before my eyes were open again. In short, her soul is immortal, and forces her body to bear it company.

¹ Madame du Deffand.

This

TO THE COUNTESS OF AILESBUURY. 569

This is the very eve of madame Clotilde's wedding; but monsieur Turgot, to the great grief of lady M——, will suffer no cost, but one banquet, one ball, and a play at Versailles. Count Virri gives a banquet, a *bal masqué*, and a firework. I think I shall see little but the last, from which I will send your ladyship a rocket in my next letter. Lady M——, I believe, has had a private audience of the embassador's leg^{ty}, but *en tout bien & bonneur*, and only to satisfy her ceremonious curiosity about any part of royal nudity. I am just going to her, as she is to Versailles; and I have not time to add a word more to the vows of your ladyship's

Most faithful

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER XIII.

Arlington-street, Dec. 12, 1775.

DID you hear that scream?—Don't be frightened, madam; it was only the duchess of Kingston last Sunday was sevennight at chapel: but it is better to be prepared; for she has sent word to the house of lords, that her nerves are so bad she intends to scream for these two months, and therefore they must put off her trial. They are to take her throes into consideration to-day; and, that there may be sufficient room for the length of her veil and train, and attendants, have a mind to treat her with Westminster-hall. I hope so, for I should like to see this comedie larmoyante; and besides, I conclude, it would bring your ladyship to town. You shall have timely notice.

There is another comedy infinitely worth seeing, monsieur le Teflier. He is Preville, and Caillaud, and Garrick, and Weston, and Mrs. Clive, all together; and as perfect in the most insignificant part as in the most difficult. To be sure, it is hard to give up loo in such fine weather, when one can play from morning till night. In London, Pam can scarce get a house till ten o'clock. If you happen to see the general your husband, make my compliments to him, madam: his friend the king of Prussia is going to the devil and Alexander the Great.

¹ He alludes to the ceremony of the marriages of princesses by proxy. E.

LETTER XIV.

Strawberry-hill, June 25, 1778.

I AM quite astonished, madam, at not hearing of Mr. Conway's being returned! What is he doing? Is he revolting and setting up for himself, like our nabobs in India? or is he forming Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, and Sark, into the united provinces in the compass of a silver penny? I should not wonder if this was to be the fate of our distracted empire, which we seem to have made so large, only that it might afford to split into separate kingdoms. I told Mr. C. I should not write any more, concluding he would not stay a twinkling; and your ladyship's last encouraged my expecting him. In truth, I had nothing to tell him if I had written.

I have been in town but one single night this age, as I could not bear to throw away this phoenix June. It has rained a good deal this morning, but only made it more delightful. The flowers are all Arabian. I have found but one inconvenience, which is the hoists of cuckoos: one would not think one was in Doctors Commons. It is very disagreeable, that the nightingales should sing but half a dozen songs, and the other beasts squall for two months together.

Poor Mrs. Clive has been robbed again in her own lane, as she was last year, and has got the jaundice, she thinks, with the fright. I don't make a visit without a blunderbus; so one might as well be invaded by the French. Though I live in the centre of ministers, I do not know a syllable of politics; and though within hearing of lady ——, who is but two miles off, I have not a word of news to send your ladyship. I live like Berecynthia, surrounded by nephews and nieces: big and little, I have fifteen near me: yet Park-place is full as much in my mind, and I beg for its history.

Your most faithful

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

Saturday night, July 10, 1779.

I COULD not thank your ladyship before the post went out to-day, as I was getting into my chaise to go and dine at Carshalton with my cousin T. Walpole when I received your kind enquiry about my eye. It is quite well again, and I hope the next attack of the gout will be any where rather than in that quarter.

I did not expect Mr. Conway would think of returning just now. As you have lost both Mrs. D—— and lady William Campbell, I do not see why your ladyship should not go to Goodwood.

The Baroness's increasing peevishness does not surprize me. When people will not weed their own minds, they are apt to be overrun with nettles. She knows nothing of politics, and no wonder talks nonsense about them. It is silly to wish three nations had but one neck; but it is ten times more absurd to act as if it was so, which the government has done;—aye, and forgetting, too, that it has not a scymitar large enough to sever that neck, which they have in effect made *one*. It is past the time, madam, of making conjectures. How can one guess whither France and Spain will direct a blow that is in their option? I am rather inclined to think that they will have patience to ruin us in detail. Hitherto France and America have carried their points by that manœuvre. Should there be an engagement at sea, and the French and Spanish fleets, by their great superiority, should have the advantage, one knows not what might happen. Yet, though there are such large preparations making on the French coast, I do not much expect a serious invasion, as they are sure they can do us more damage by a variety of other attacks, where we can make little resistance. Gibraltar and Jamaica can but be the immediate objects of Spain. Ireland is much worse guarded than this island:—nay, we must be undone by our expence, should the summer pass without any attempt. My cousin thinks they will try to destroy Portsmouth and Plymouth—but I have seen nothing in the present French ministry that looks like bold enterprise. We are much more adventurous, that set every thing to the hazard: but there are such numbers of *baronesses* that both talk and act with passion, that one would think the nation had lost its senses. Every thing has miscarried that has been undertaken, and the worse we succeed,

the more is risked;—yet the nation is not angry! How can one conjecture during such a delirium? I sometimes almost think I must be in the wrong to be of so contrary an opinion to most men:—yet, when every misfortune that has happened had been foretold by a few, why should I not think I have been in the right? Has not almost every single event that has been announced as prosperous proved a gross falsehood, and often a silly one? Are we not at this moment assured that Washington cannot possibly amass an army of above 8000 men! and yet Clinton, with 20,000 men, and with the hearts, as we are told, too, of three parts of the colonies, dares not show his teeth without the walls of New York!—Can I be in the wrong in not believing what is so contradictory to my senses? We could not conquer America when it stood alone; then France supported it, and we did not mend the matter. To make it still easier, we have driven Spain into the alliance. Is this wisdom? Would it be presumption, even if one were single, to think that we must have the worst in such a contest? Shall I be like the mob, and expect to conquer France and Spain, and then thunder upon America?—Nay, but the higher mob do not expect such success. They would not be so angry at the house of Bourbon, if not morally certain that those kings destroy all our passionate desire and expectation of conquering America. We bullied, and threatened, and begged, and nothing would do. Yet independence was still the word. Now we rail at the two monarchs—and when they have banged us, we shall sue to them as humbly as we did to the Congress. All this my senses, such as they are, tell me has been and will be the case. What is worse, all Europe is of the same opinion; and though forty thousand *baronesses* may be ever so angry, I venture to prophesy that we shall make but a very foolish figure whenever we are so lucky as to obtain a peace; and posterity, that may have prejudices of its own, will still take the liberty to pronounce that its ancestors were a woful set of politicians from the year 1774 to — I wish I knew when.

If I might advise, I would recommend Mr. B—— to command the fleet in the room of sir Charles Hardy. The fortune of the B——s is powerful enough to baffle calculation. Good night, madam!

P. S. I have not written to Mr. Conway since this day sevensnight, not having a teaspoonful of news to send him. I will beg your ladyship to tell him so.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

Strawberry-hill, Friday night, 1779.

I AM not at all surpris'd, my dear madam, at the intrepidity of Mrs. D—; she always was the heroic daughter of a hero. Her sense and coolness never forsake her. I, who am not so firm, shuddered at your ladyship's account. Now that she has stood fire for four hours, I hope she will give as clear proofs of her understanding, of which I have as high opinion as of her courage, and not return in any danger.

I am to dine at Ditton to-morrow, and will certainly talk on the subject you recommend—yet I am far, till I have heard more, from thinking with your ladyship, that more troops and artillery at Jersey would be desirable. Any considerable quantity of either, especially of the former, cannot be spared at this moment, when so big a cloud hangs over this island, nor would any number avail if the French should be masters at sea. A large garrison would but tempt the French thither, were it but to distress this country; and, what is worse, would encourage Mr. Conway to make an impracticable defence. If he is to remain in a situation so unworthy of him, I confess I had rather he was totally incapable of making any defence. I love him enough not to murmur at his exposing himself where his country and his honour demand him—but I would not have him measure himself in a place untenable against very superior force. My present comfort is, as to him, that France at this moment has a far vaster object. I have good reason to believe the government knows that a great army is ready to embark at St. Maloes, but will not stir till after a sea-fight, which we do not know but may be engaged at this moment. Our fleet is allowed to be the finest ever set forth by this country—but it is inferior in number by seventeen ships to the united squadron of the Bourbons. France, if successful, means to pour in a vast many thousands on us, and has threatened to burn the capital itself. Jersey, my dear madam, does not enter into a calculation of such magnitude. The moment is singularly awful—yet the vaunts of enemies are rarely executed successfully and ably. Have we trampled America under our foot?

¹ The packet in which she was crossing from Dover to Ostend was taken by a French frigate after a running fight of several hours. E.

You

You have too good sense, madam, to be imposed upon by my arguments, if they are insubstantial. You do know that I have had my terrors for Mr. Conway; but at present they are out of the question, from the insignificance of his island. Do not listen to rumours, nor believe a single one till it has been canvassed over and over. Fear, folly, fifty motives, will coin new reports every hour at such a conjuncture. When one is totally void of credit and power, patience is the only wisdom. I have seen dangers still more imminent. They were dispersed. Nothing happens in proportion to what is meditated. Fortune, whatever fortune is, is more constant than is the common notion. I do not give this as one of my solid arguments, but I have always encouraged myself in being superstitious on the favourable side. I never, like most superstitious people, believe auguries against my wishes. We have been fortunate in the escape of Mrs. D—, and in the defeat at Jersey even before Mr. Conway arrived; and thence I depend on the same future prosperity. From the authority of persons who do not reason on such airy hopes, I am seriously persuaded, that if the fleets engage, the enemy will not gain advantage without deep-felt loss, enough probably to dismay their invasion. Coolness may succeed, and then negotiation.—Surely, if we can weather the summer, we shall, obstinate as we are against conviction, be compelled by the want of money to relinquish our ridiculous pretensions, now proved to be utterly impracticable; for, with an inferior navy at home, can we assert sovereignty over America? It is a contradiction in terms and in fact. It may be hard of digestion to relinquish it, but it is impossible to pursue it. Adieu, my dear madam! I have not left room for a line more.

 L E T T E R XVII.

Strawberry-hill, Tuesday night, June 8, 1779.

YOU frightened me for a minute, my dear madam; but every letter since has given me pleasure, by telling me how rapidly you recovered, and how perfectly well you are again. Pray, however, do not give me any more such joys. I shall be quite content with your remaining immortal, without the foil of any alarm. You gave all your friends a panic, and may trust their attachment without renewing it. I received as many inquiries the next day as if an archbishop was in danger, and all the bench hoped he was going to heaven.

o

Mr.

Mr. Conway wonders I do not talk of Voltaire's Memoirs.—Lord blefs me! I faw it two months ago; the Lucans brought it from Paris and lent it to me: nay, and I have feen moft of it before; and I believe this an imperfect copy, for it ends no how at all. Befides, it was quite out of my head. Lord Melcombe's Diary put that and every thing elfe out of my mind. I wonder much more at Mr. Conway's not talking of this! It goffips about the living as familiarly as a modern newspaper. I long to hear what ——— fays about it. I wifh the newspapers were as accurate! They have been circumftantial about *lady Walfingham's* birth-day clothes, which to be fure one is glad to know, only unluckily there is no fuch perfon'. However, I dare to fay that her drefs was very becoming, and that fhe looked charmingly.

The month of June, according to cuftom immemorial, is as cold as Christmas. I had a fire laft night, and all my rofebuds, I believe, would have been very glad to fit by it. I have other grievances to boot; but as they are annuals too, videlicet,—people to fee my houfe,—I will not torment your ladyfhip with them: yet I know nothing elfe. None of my neighbours are come into the country yet: one would think all the dowagers were elected into the new parliament. Adieu, my dear madam!

' The title of Walfingham was not revived in the family of de Grey till the year 1780. E.

