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

In Five Volumes

**Walpole, Horace**

**London, 1798**

Letters from the Hon. Horace Walpole to Mrs. H. More, from the Year 1784  
to the Year 1796

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LETTERS

FROM

THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

TO

MRS. H. MORE,

From the Year 1784 to the Year 1796.

VOL. V.

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LETTER I.

TO MRS. H. MORE.

Strawberry-hill, November 13, 1784.

THANK you a thousand times, dear madam, for your obliging letter and the new *Bristol stones* you have sent me, which would pass on a more skilful lapidary than I am for having been brillianced by a professed artist, if you had not told me that they came shining out of a native mine, and had no foreign diamond-dust to polish them. Indeed can one doubt any longer that Bristol is as rich and warm a soil as India? I am convinced it has been so of late years, though I question its having been so luxuriant in alderman Canning's days; and I have MORE reasons for thinking so, than from the marvels of Chatterton.—But I will drop metaphors, lest some nabob should take me *au pié de la lettre*, fit out an expedition, plunder your city, and massacre you for weighing *too many* carats.

Seriously, madam, I am surpris'd—and chiefly at the kind of genius of this unhappy female<sup>1</sup>. Her ear, as you remark, is perfect—but that being a

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Yearley, the milkwoman of Bristol.



gift of nature, amazes me less. Her expressions are more exalted than poetic; and discover taste, as you say, rather than discover flights of fancy and wild ideas, as one should expect. I should therefore advise her quitting blank verse, which wants the highest colouring to distinguish it from prose; whereas her taste, and probably good sense, might give sufficient beauty to her rhymes.

Her not being learned is another reason against her writing in blank verse. Milton employed all his reading, nay all his geographic knowledge, to enrich his language—and succeeded. They who have imitated him in that particular, have been mere monkeys; and they who neglected it, flat and poor.

Were I not persuaded by the samples you have sent me, madam, that this woman has talents, I should not advise her encouraging her propensity, lest it should divert her from the care of her family, and, after the novelty is over, leave her worse than she was. When the late queen patronised Stephen Duck, who was only a wonder at first, and had not genius enough to support the character he had promised, twenty artificers and labourers turned poets, and starved. Your poets can scarce be more miserable than she is, and even the reputation of being an authoress may procure her customers: but as poetry is one of your least excellencies, madam (your virtues will forgive me), I am sure you will not only give her councils for her works, but for her conduct; and your gentleness will blend them so judiciously, that she will mind the friend as well as the mistress. She must remember that she is a Lactilla, not a Pastora; and is to tend real cows, not Arcadian sheep.

What! if I should go a step farther, dear madam, and take the liberty of reproving you for putting into this poor woman's hands such a frantic thing as the Castle of Otranto? It was fit for nothing but the age in which it was written; an age in which much was known; that required only to be amused, nor cared whether its amusements were conformable to truth and the models of good sense; that could not be spoiled; was in no danger of being too credulous; and rather wanted to be brought back to imagination, than to be led astray by it:—but you will have made a hurly-burly in this poor woman's head, which it cannot develop and digest.

I will not reprove, without suggesting something in my turn. Give her Dryden's



Dryden's Cock and Fox, the standard of good sense, poetry, nature, and ease. I would recommend others of his tales: but her imagination is already too gloomy, and should be enlivened; for which reason I do not name Mr. Gray's Eton Ode and Church-yard. Prior's Solomon (for I doubt his Alma, though far superior, is too learned for her limited reading) would be very proper. In truth, I think the cast of the age (I mean in its compositions) is too sombre. The flimsy giantry of Offian has introduced mountainous horrors. The exhibitions at Somerset-house are crowded with Brobdignag ghosts. Read and explain to her a charming poetic familiarity called the Blue-Stocking Club. If she has not your other pieces, might I take the liberty, madam, of begging you to buy them for her, and let me be in your debt? And that your lessons may win their way more easily, even though her heart be good, will you add a guinea or two, as you see proper?—And though I do not love to be named, yet, if it would encourage a subscription, I should have no scruple. It will be best to begin moderately; for, if she should take Hippocrene for Pætolus, we may hasten her ruin, not contribute to her fortune.

On recollection, you had better call me Mr. any-body, than name my name, which I fear is in bad odour at Bristol, on poor Chatterton's account; and it may be thought that I am atoning his ghost: though, if his friends would show my letters to him, you would find that I was as tender to him as to your milkwoman: but *that* they have never done, among other instances of their injustice. However, I beg you to say nothing on that subject, as I have declared I would not.

I have seen our excellent friend in Clarges-street<sup>1</sup>: she complains as usual of her deafness; but I assure you it is at least not worse, nor is her weakness. Indeed I think both her and Mr. Vesey better than last winter. When will you *blue-socking* yourself and come amongst us? Consider how many of us are veterans; and though we do not trudge on foot according to the institution, we may be out at heels—and the heel, you know, madam, has never been privileged. I am, with the sincerest regard, madam,

Your much obliged and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Vesey.

LETTER.



## LETTER II.

Berkeley-square, April 5th, 1785.

HAD I not heard part of your conversation with Mrs. Carter the other night, madam, I should certainly not have discovered the authorefs of the very ingenious anticipation of our future jargon. How should I? I am not fortunate enough to know all your talents;—nay, I question whether you yourself suspect all you possess. Your *Bas-bleus* is in a style very different from any of your other productions that I have seen; and this letter, which shows your intuition into the degeneracy of our language, has a vein of humour and satire that could not be calculated from your *Bas-bleus*, in which good-nature and good-humour had made a great deal of learning wear all the

This is an answer to the following anonymous letter sent to Mr. Walpole by Mrs. H. More, ridiculing the prevailing adoption of French idioms into the English language. The letter affects to anticipate that corrupt style of composition which the present bad taste may probably establish in another century. In this satirical epistle there is neither one French word nor one English idiom.

A specimen of the English language, as it will probably be written and spoken in the next century. In a letter from a lady to her friend in the reign of George the fifth.

A-la-mode-castle,

June 20, 1840.

Dear madam,

I no sooner found myself here than I visited my new apartment, which is composed of five pieces: the small room which gives upon the garden is practised through the great one, and there is no other issue. As I was quite exceeded with fatigue, I had no sooner made my toilette than I let myself fall on a bed of repose, where sleep came to surprize me.

My lord and I are in the intention to make good cheer, and a great expence, and this country is in possession to furnish wherewithal to amuse oneself. All that England has of illustrious, all that youth has of amiable, or beauty of ravishing, sees itself in this quarter. Render yourself here then, my friend, and you shall find assembled all that there is of best, whether for letters, whether for birth.

Yesterday I did my possible to give to eat: the dinner was of the last perfection, and the wines left nothing to desire. The repast was seasoned with a thousand rejoicing sallies, full of salt and agreement, and one more brilliant than another. Lady Frances charmed me as for the first time; she is made to paint; has a great air, and has infinitely of expression in her physiognomy: her manners have as much of natural, as her figure has of interesting.

I had prayed lady B—— to be of this dinner, as I had heard nothing but good of her: but I am now disapufed on her subject; she is past her first youth, has very little instruction, is inconsequent and subject to caution: but having evaded with one of her pretenders, her reputation has been committed by the bad faith of a friend, on whose fidelity she reposed herself. She is therefore fallen into devotion, goes no more to spectacles, and play is defended at her house. Though she affects a mortal seriousness, I observed that her eyes were of intelligence with those of sir James, near whom I had taken care to plant myself, though this is always a sacrifice which costs. Sir James is a great sayer of nothings; it is a spoilt mind; full of fatuity and pretension; his conversation is a tissue of impertinencies, and the bad tone which reigns at present has put the last hand to his defects. He makes but little case of his word; but as he lends himself to whatever is proposed of amusing, the women all throw themselves at his head.

Adieu.

case



ease of familiarity. I did wish you to write another Percy—but I beg now that you will first produce a specimen of *all* the various manners in which you can shine; for, since you are as modest as if your issue were illegitimate, I don't know but, like some females really in fault, you would stifle some of your pretty infants, rather than be detected and blush.

In the mean time, I beseech you not only to print *your specimen of the language that is to be in fashion*, but have it entered at Stationer's-hall; or depend upon it, if ever a copy falls into the hands of a fine gentleman yet unborn, who shall be able both to read and write, he will adopt your letter for his own, and the Galimatias will give the ton to the court, as Euphues' did near two hundred years ago; and then you will have corrupted our language instead of defending it:—and surely it is not *your* interest, madam, to have pure English grow obsolete.

If you do not promise to grant my request, I will show your letter every where to those that are worthy of seeing it;—that is, indeed, in very few places;—for you *shall* have the honour of it. It is one of those compositions that prove themselves standards, by begetting imitations; and if the genuine parent is unknown, it will be ascribed to every body that is supposed (in his own set) to have more wit than the rest of the world. I should be diverted, I own, to hear it faintly disavowed by some who would wish to pass for its authors:—but still there is more pleasure in doing justice to merit, than in drawing vain pretensions into a scrape; and therefore I think you and I had better be honest and acknowledge it, though to you (for I am out of the question, but as evidence) it will be painful; for though the proverb says, “Tell truth and shame the devil,” I believe he is never half so much confounded as a certain amiable young gentlewoman who is discovered to have more taste and abilities than she ever ventured to ascribe to herself even in the most private dialogues with her own heart; especially when that native friend is so pure as to have no occasion to make allowances even for self-love. For my part, I am most feriously obliged to you, madam, for so agreeable and kind a communication, and am, with sincere regard,

Your most grateful and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

<sup>1</sup> “Euphues and his England” was written by John Lilly, and published in quarto in 1580. Edward Blount, in the preface to Lilly's Comedies, published in 1632, says—“Our nation is in his debt for a *new English* which he taught them. *Euphues and his England* began first that language. All our ladies were then his scholars; and that beauty in court that could not parley *Euphuism* was as little regarded as she which now there speaks not French.” E.



## L E T T E R III.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 9, 1786.

IT is very cruel, my dear madam, when you send me such charming lines<sup>1</sup>, and say such kind and flattering things to me and of me, that I cannot even thank you with my own poor hand; and yet my hand is as much obliged to you as my eye and ear and understanding. My hand was in great pain when your present arrived. I opened it directly, and sat to reading, till your music and my own vanity composed a quieting draught that glided to the ends of my fingers, and lulled the throbs into the deliquium that attends opium when it does not put one absolutely to sleep. I don't believe that the deity who formerly practised both poetry and physic, when gods got their livelihood by more than one profession, ever gave a recipe in rhyme; and therefore, since Dr. Johnson has prohibited application to Pagan divinities, and Mr. Burke has not struck medicine and poetry out of the list of sinecures, I wish you may get a patent for life for exercising both faculties. It would be a comfortable event for me; for, since I cannot wait on you to thank you, nor dare ask you

—— to call your doves yourself,

and visit me in your Parnassian quality, I might send for you as my *physicians*. Yet why should not I ask you to come and see me? You are not such a prude as to

—— blush to show compassion,

though it should

—— not chance this year to be the fashion<sup>2</sup>.

And I can tell you, that powerful as your poetry is, and old as I am, I believe a visit from you would do me as much good almost as your verses.

In the mean time, I beg you to accept of an addition to your Strawberry editions; and believe me to be, with the greatest gratitude,

Your too much honoured

And most obliged humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

<sup>1</sup> The poem of Florio, dedicated to Mr. Walpole.

<sup>2</sup> Vide Florio.



## LETTER IV.

Berkeley-square, Jan. 1, 1787.

DO not imagine, dear madam, that I pretend in the most distant manner to pay you for charming poetry with insipid prose; much less that I acquit a debt of gratitude for flattering kindness and friendship, by a meagre tale that does not even aim at celebrating you. No; I have but two motives for offering you the accompanying trifle: the first, to prove that the moment I have finished any thing, *you* are of the earliest in my thoughts: the second, that, coming from my press, I wish it may be added to your Strawberry editions. It is so far from being designed for the public, that I have printed but forty copies; which I do not mention to raise its value, though it will with mere collectors, but lest you should lend it and lose it, when I may not be able to supply its place.

Christina, indeed, has some title to connection with you, both from her learning and her moral writings; as you are justly entitled to a lodging in her Cité des Dames, where I am sure her three patronesses would place you, as a favourite cleve of some of their still more amiable sisters, who must at this moment be condoling with their unfortunate sister Gratitude, whose vagabond foundling has so basely disgraced her and herself. You fancied that Mrs. Y—— was a spurious issue of a muse; and to be sure, with all their immortal virginity, the parish of Parnassus has been sadly charged with their bantlings: and as nobody knows the fathers, no wonder some of the misses have turned out woful reprobates!

I was very unlucky in not calling at Mrs. Vesey's the evening you was there for a moment; but I hope for better fortune soon, and will be much obliged to you if you will tell me when I may hope for that pleasure.

Your most grateful and faithful humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

<sup>1</sup> Christine de Pife.



## LETTER V.

Berkeley-square, February 23, 1787.

DEAR MADAM,

I NOT only send you la Cité des Dames, but Christina's Life of Charles V. which will entertain you more, and which, when I wrote my brief history of her, I did not know she had actually composed. Mr. Dutens told me of it very lately, and actually borrowed it for me—and but yesterday my French bookseller sent me three-and-twenty other volumes of those *Mémoires Historiques*, which I had ordered him to get for me, and which will keep my eyes to the oar for some time, whenever I have leisure to sail through such an ocean; and yet I shall embark with pleasure, late as it is for me to undertake such a hugeous voyage:—but a crew of old gossips are no improper company, and we shall sit in a warm cabin, and hear and tell old stories of past times.

Pray keep the volume as long as you please, and borrow as many more as you please, for each volume is a detached piece. Yet I do not suppose your friends will allow you much time for reading in town; and I hope I shall often be the better for their hindering you.

Yours most sincerely and most cordially,

HOR. WALPOLE.

## LETTER VI.

Strawberry-hill, October 14, 1787.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I AM shocked for human nature at the repeated malevolence of this woman!—The rank soil of riches we are accustomed to see overrun with weeds and thistles; but who could expect that the kindest seeds sown on poverty and dire misfortunes, should meet with nothing but a rock at bottom? Catherine de Medici, suckled by popes and transplanted to a throne, seems more excusable. Thank heaven, madam, for giving you so excellent

<sup>3</sup> *Collection des meilleurs ouvrages François composés par des femmes*, by mademoiselle Keralio.  
a heart



a heart—aye, and so good a head. You are not only benevolence itself, but, with fifty times the genius of ———, you are void of vanity. How strange that vanity should expel gratitude!—Does not the wretched woman owe her fame to you, as well as her affluence? I can testify your labours for both. Dame ——— reminds me of the Troubadours, those vagrants whom I used to admire till I knew their history; and who used to pour out trumpery verses, and flatter or abuse accordingly as they were housed and clothed, or dismissed to the next parish:—Yet you did not set this person in the stocks, after procuring an annuity for her!

I beg your pardon for renewing so disgusting a subject, and will never mention it again. You have better amusement; you love good works; a temper superior to revenge.

I have again seen our poor friend in Clarges-street: her faculties decay rapidly; and of course she suffers less. She has not an acquaintance in town; and yet told me the town was very full, and that she had had a good deal of company. Her health is re-established, and we must now be content that her mind is not restless. My pity now feels most for Mrs. Hancock<sup>1</sup>; whose patience is inexhaustible, though not insensible.

Mrs. Piozzi, I hear, has two volumes of Dr. Johnson's letters ready for publication. Bruce is printing his Travels; which I suppose will prove that his narratives were fabulous, as he will scarce repeat them by the press. These and two more volumes of Mr. Gibbon's History are all the literary news I know. France seems sunk indeed in all respects. What stuff are their theatrical goods, their Richards, Ninas and Tarares! But when their Figaro could run threescore nights, how despicable must their taste be grown<sup>2</sup>! I rejoice that their political intrigues are not more creditable. I

<sup>1</sup> A lady who lived with Mrs. Vesey.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Walpole had never seen Figaro acted, nor had he been at Paris for many years before it appeared: he was not therefore aware of the bold, witty and continued allusions of almost every scene and of almost every incident of that comedy to the most popular topics and the most distinguished characters of the day.—The freedom with which it treated arbitrary government and all its establishments, while they all yet continued in unwelcome force in France, and the

moral conduct of each individual of the piece exactly suiting the no-morality of the audience, joined to the admirable manner in which it was acted, certainly must be allowed to have given it its greatest vogue.—But even now, when most of these temporary advantages no longer exist, whoever was well acquainted with the manners, habits and anecdotes of Paris at the time of the first appearance of Figaro, will always admire in it a combination of keen and pointed satire, easy wit, and laughable incident. E.



do not dislike the French from the vulgar antipathy between neighbouring nations, but for their insolent and unfounded airs of superiority. In arms we have almost always outdone them: and till they have excelled Newton, and come near to Shakespeare, pre-eminence in genius must remain with us. I think they are most entitled to triumph over the Italians, as with the most meagre and inharmonious of all languages the French have made more of that poverty in tragedy and eloquence, than the Italians have done with the language the most capable of both—But I did not mean to send you a dissertation. I hope it will not be long before you remove to Hampton—Yet why should I wish that?—You will only be geographically nearer to London till February.—Cannot you now and then sleep at the Adelphi on a visit to poor Vesey and your friends, and let one know if you do?

Yours, my dear madam, most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

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LETTER VII.

Strawberry-hill, July 4, 1788.

I AM soundly rejoiced, my dear madam, that the present summer is more favourable to me than the last; and that, instead of not answering my letters in three months, you open the campaign first.—May not I flatter myself that it is a symptom of your being in better health? I wish however you had told me so in positive words, and that all your complaints have left you. Welcome as is your letter, it would have been ten times more welcome, bringing me that assurance; for don't think I forget how ill you was last winter. As letters, you say, now keep their coaches<sup>1</sup>, I hope those from Bristol will call often at my door. I promise you I will never be denied to them.

No botanist am I; nor wished to learn from *you*, of all the muses that *piping* has a new signification. I had rather that *you* handled an oaten pipe

<sup>1</sup> Meaning the establishment of the mail-coach.

than.



than a carnation one—yet setting layers, I own, is preferable to reading newspapers, one of the chronical maladies of this age.—Every body reads them, nay quotes them, though every body knows they are stuffed with lies or blunders.—How should it be otherwise? If any extraordinary event happens, who but must hear it before it descends through a coffee-house to the runner of a daily-paper? They who are always wanting news, are wanting to hear they don't know what. A lower species indeed is that of the scribes you mention, who every night compose a journal for the satisfaction of such *illiterati*, and feed them with all the vices and misfortunes of every private family—nay, they now call it a *duty* to publish all those calamities which decency to wretched relations used in compassion to suppress—I mean self-murder in particular. Mr. —'s was detailed at length; and to-day that of lord — and —. The pretence is, in terrorem, like the absurd stake and highway of our ancestors; as if there were a precautionary potion for madness, or the stigma of a newspaper were more dreadful than death. Daily journalists, to be sure, are most respectable magistrates! Yes, much like the cobblers that Cromwell made peers.

I do lament your not going to Mr. Conway's play<sup>1</sup>: both the author and actors deserved such an auditor as you, and you deserved to hear them.—However, I do not pity *good* people, who out of virtue lose or miss any pleasures. Those pastimes fleet as fast as those of the wicked; but when gone, you faints can sit down and feast on your self-denial, and drink bumpers of satisfaction to the health of your own merit—So truly I don't pity you.

You say you hear no news, yet you quote Mr. Topham; therefore why should I tell you that the king is going to Cheltenham? or that the Baccelli lately danced at the opera at Paris with a blue bandeau on her forehead inscribed, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*?—Now who can doubt but she is as pure as the countess of Salisbury<sup>2</sup>? Was not it ingenious? and was not the ambassador so to allow it?—No doubt he took it for a compliment to his own knee.

Well! would we committed nothing but follies! What do we not commit when the abolition of slavery hitches!

<sup>1</sup>False Appearances, translated from the French—whose garter has been attributed the foundation by Mr. Conway, and acted at Richmond-house. of the order of the Garter. E.

<sup>2</sup>The countess of Salisbury, to the fall of

Though



Though Cato died, though Tully spoke,  
 Though Brutus dealt the god-like stroke,  
 Yet perish'd fated Rome!—

You have written; and I fear that even if Mr. Sheridan speaks, trade, the modern religion, will predominate. Adieu, my dear madam!

Yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

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LETTER VIII.

Strawberry-hill, July 12, 1788.

WON'T you repent having opened the correspondence, my dear madam, when you find my letters come so thick upon you? In this instance, however, I am only to blame in part, for being too ready to take advice, for the sole reason for which advice ever is taken, because it fell in with my inclination.

You said in your last that you feared you took up time of mine to the prejudice of the public; implying, I imagine, that I might employ it in composing. Waving both your compliment and my own vanity, I will speak very seriously to you on that subject, and with exact truth. My simple writings have had better fortune than they had any reason to expect; and I fairly believe, in a great degree, because gentlemen-writers, who do not write for interest, are treated with some civility if they do not write absolute nonsense. I think so, because I have not unfrequently known much better works than mine much more neglected, if the name, fortune, and situation of the authors were below mine. I wrote early, from youth, spirits and vanity, and from both the last when the first no longer existed. I now shudder when I reflect on my own boldness; and with mortification, when I compare my own writings with those of any great authors. This is so true, that I question whether it would be possible for me to sum up courage to publish any thing I have written, if I could recall time past and should yet think as I think at present.—So much for what is over and out of my power. As to writing now, I have totally forsworn the profession,

for



for two solid reasons. One I have already told you, and it is, that I know my own writings are trifling and of no depth. The other is, that, light and futile as they were, I am sensible they are better than I could compose now. I am aware of the decay of the middling parts I had, and others may be still more sensible of it. How do I know but I am superannuated? Nobody will be so coarse as to tell me so—but if I published dotage, all the world would tell me so—And who but runs that risk who is an author after seventy? What happened to the greatest author of this age, and who certainly retained a very considerable portion of his abilities for ten years after my age? Voltaire, at 84 I think, went to Paris to receive the incense, in person, of his countrymen, and to be witness of their admiration of a tragedy he had written at that Methusalem-age. Incense he did receive till it choked him; and at the exhibition of his play he was actually crowned with laurel in the box where he sat—But what became of his poor play?—It died as soon as he did—was buried with him—and no mortal, I dare to say, has ever redde a line of it since, it was so bad.

As I am neither by a thousandth part so great, nor a quarter so little, I will herewith send you a fragment that an accidental rencounter set me upon writing, and which I found so flat, that I would not finish it. Don't believe that I am either begging praise by the stale artifice of hoping to be contradicted; or that I think there is any occasion to make you discover my caducity. No; but the fragment contains a curiosity—English verses written by a French prince of the blood', and which at first I had a mind to add to my Royal and Noble Authors; but as he was not a royal author of ours, and as I could not please myself with an account of him, I shall revert to my old resolution of not exposing my pen's grey hairs.

Of one passage I must take notice; it is a little indirect sneer at our crowd of authoresses. My choosing to send this to *you* is a proof that I think you an author, that is, a classic. But in truth I am nauseated by the madams —, &c. and the host of novel-writers in petticoats, who think they imitate what is inimitable. Evelina and Cecilia. Your candour I know will not agree with me, when I tell you I am not at all charmed with mis —

\*See Appendix to Royal and Noble Authors, page 564, vol. I. of this edition. E.

and



and Mr. —— piping to one another; but *you* I exhort, and would encourage to write; and flatter myself you will never be royally gagged and promoted to fold muslins, as has been lately wittily said on miss B——, in the list of 500 living authors. *Your* writings promote virtues; and their increasing editions prove their worth and utility.—If you question my sincerity, can you doubt my admiring you, when you have gratified my self-love so amply in your *Bas-bleu*? Still, as much as I love your writings, I respect yet more your heart and your goodness. You are so good, that I believe you would go to heaven, even though there were no Sunday, and only six *working* days in the week. Adieu, my best madam!

Yours most cordially,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. On recollection, I doubt I have before given you the same reasons for my lying fallow that I have in this letter. If so, why, it is like an old man to repeat himself—but at least I will not do so in print.

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LETTER IX.

Strawberry-hill, September 22, 1738.

I DON'T like to defraud you of your compassion, my good friend, profuse as you are of it. I really suffered scarce any pain at all from my last fit of gout. I have known several persons who think there is a dignity in complaining; and, if you ask how they do, reply, Why—I *am*—pretty well—to-day; but if you knew what I suffered *yesterday*!—Now methinks nobody has a right to tax another for pity on what is past; and besides, complaint of what is over can only make the hearer glad that you are in pain no longer. Yes, yes, my dear madam, you generally place your pity so profitably, that you shall not waste a drop upon me, who ought rather to be congratulated on being so well at my age.

Much less shall I allow you to make apologies for your admirable and proper



proper conduct towards your poor Protégée. And now you have told me the behaviour of a certain great dame, I will confess to you that I have known it some months by accident—nay, and tried to repair it. I prevailed on lady —, who as readily undertook the commission, and told the countess of her treatment of you—Alas! the answer was, “It is too late; I have no money.”—No! but she has, if she has a diamond left. I am indignant—yet, do you know, not at this duchess, or that countess, but at the invention of ranks, and titles, and pre-eminence. I used to hate that king and t’other prince—but, alas! on reflection I find the censure ought to fall on human nature in general. They are made of the same stuff as we, and dare we say what we should be in their situation? Poor creatures! think how they are educated, or rather, corrupted early, how flattered!—To be educated properly, they should be led through hovels, and hospitals, and prisons. Instead of being reprimanded (and perhaps immediately after, *sugar-plum’d*) for not learning their Latin or French grammar, they now and then should be kept fasting, and, if they cut their finger, should have no plaister till it festered. No part of a royal brat’s memory, which is good enough, should be burthened but with the remembrance of human sufferings. In short, I fear our nature is so liable to be corrupted and perverted by greatness, rank, power, and wealth, that I am inclined to think that virtue is the compensation to the poor for the want of riches—nay, I am disposed to believe, that the first footpad or highwayman had been a man of quality, or a prince, who could not bear having wasted his fortune, and was too lazy to work; for a beggar-born would think labour a more natural way of getting a livelihood than venturing his life. I have something a similar opinion about common women. No modest girl thinks of many men, till she has been in love with *one*, been ruined by him, and abandoned.—But to return to my theme—and it will fall heavy on yourself—Could the milk-woman have been so bad, if you had merely kept her from starving, instead of giving her opulence? The soil, I doubt, was bad; but it could not have produced the rank weed of ingratitude, if you had not dunged it with gold, which rises from rock, and seems to meet with a congenial bed when it falls on the human heart.

And so Dr. Warton imagines I am writing Walpoliana!—No, in truth, nor any thing else, nor shall—nor will I go out in a jest-book. Age has not only made me prudent, but, luckily, lazy—and without the latter extinguisher,



tinguisher, I do not know but that farthing candle my discretion would let my snuff of life flit to the last sparkle of folly, like what children call the parson and clerk in a bit of burnt paper. You see by my *writability* in pressing my letters on you, that my pen has still a colt's tooth left; but I never indulge the poor old child with more paper than this small-sized sheet—I do not give it enough to make a paper kite and fly abroad on wings of bookfellers. You ought to continue writing, for you do good by your writings, or at least mean it; and if a virtuous intention fails, it is a sort of coin, which, though thrown away, still makes the donor worth more than he was before he gave it away. I delight too in the temperature of your piety, and that you would not see the enthusiastic exorcist. How shocking to suppose that the Omnipotent Creator of worlds delegates his power to a momentary insect to eject supernatural spirits that he had permitted to infest another insect, and had permitted to vomit blasphemies against himself!—Pray do not call *that* enthusiasm, but delirium.—I pity real enthusiasts, but I would shave their heads and take away some blood. The exorcist's associates are in a worse predicament, I doubt, and hope to *make* enthusiasts. If such abominable impostors were not rather a subject of indignation, I could smile at the rivalry between them and the animal magnetists, who are inveigling fools into their different pales.—And alas! while folly has a shilling left, there will be enthusiasts and quack doctors, and there will be slaves while there are kings or sugar-planters. I have remarked, that though Jesuits, &c. travel to distant East and West to propagate their religion and traffic, I never heard of one that made a journey into Asia or Africa to preach the doctrines of liberty, though those regions are so deplorably oppressed. Nay, I much doubt whether ever any chaplain of the regiments we have sent to India has once whispered to a native of Bengal, that there are milder forms of government than those of his country—No; security of property is not a wholesome doctrine to be inculcated in a land where the soil produces diamonds and gold!—In short, if your Bristol exorcist believes he can cast out devils, why does he not go to Leadenhall-street? There is a company whose name is legion.

By your *gambols*, as you call them, after the most ungamboling peers in christendom, and by your jaunts, I conclude to my great satisfaction that you are quite well. Change of scene and air are good for your spirits; and September, like all our old ladies, has given itself May airs, and must have  
made



made your journey very pleasant—Yet you will be glad to get back to your Cowslip-green, though it may offer you nothing but Michaelmas daisies. When you do leave it, I wish you could persuade Mrs. Garrick to settle sooner in London. There is full as good hay to be made in town at Christmas as at Hampton, and some hay-makers that will wish for you, particularly

Your most sincere friend,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER X.

Berkeley-square, April 22, 1789.

DEAR MADAM,

AS perhaps you have not yet seen *the Botanic Garden* (which I believe I mentioned to you), I lend it you to read. The poetry, I think, you will allow most admirable; and difficult it was no doubt. If you are not a naturalist, as well as a poetess, perhaps you will lament that so powerful a talent has been wasted to so little purpose; for where is the use of describing in verse what nobody can understand without a long prosaic explanation of every article? It is still more unfortunate that there is not a symptom of plan in the whole poem. The lady flowers and their lovers enter in pairs or trios, or &c. as often as the couples in *Cassandra*, and you are not a whit more interested about one heroine and her swain than about another. The families are beautiful, fine and sometimes sublime: and thus the episodes will be better remembered than the mass of the poem itself, which one cannot call *the subject*; for could one call it a subject, if any body had composed a poem on the matches formerly made in the Fleet, where, as Waitwell says, in *The Way of the World*, they stood like couples in rows ready to begin a country dance?—Still, I flatter myself, you will agree with me that the author is a great poet, and could raise the passions, and possesses all the requisites of the art. I found but a single bad verse: in the last canto one line ends *e'er long*.

You will perhaps be surpris'd at meeting a Truffle converted into a nymph, and inhabiting a palace studded with emeralds and rubies like a saloon in the *Arabian Nights*!

4 G 2

I had



I had a more particular motive for sending this poem to *you*: you will find the bard espousing your poor Africans. There is besides, which will please you too, a handsome panegyric on *the apostle of humanity*, Mr. Howard.

Mrs. Garrick, whom I had the pleasure of meeting in her own box at Mr. Conway's play, gave me a much better account of your health, which delighted me. I am sure, my good friend, you partake of my joy at the great success of his comedy. The additional character of the abbé pleased much—It was added by the advice of the players to enliven it—that is, to stretch the jaws of the pit and galleries.—I sighed silently; for it was originally so genteel and of a piece, that I was sorry to have it tumbled by coarse applauses—But this is a secret.

I am going to Twickenham for two days on an assignation with the Spring, and to avoid the riotous devotion of to-morrow.

A gentleman essayist has printed what he calls some strictures on my Royal and Noble Authors, in revenge for my having spoken irreverently (on bishop Burnet's authority) of the earl of Anglesey, who had the honour, it seems, of being the gentleman's grandfather. He asks me, by the way, why it was more ridiculous in the duke of Newcastle to write his two comedies, than in the duke of Buckingham to write *The Rehearsal*?—Alas! I know but one reason; which is, that it is less ridiculous to write one excellent comedy, than two very bad ones. Peace be with such answerers! Adieu, my dear madam!

Yours most cordially,

HOR. WALPOLE.

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LETTER XI.

Strawberry-hill, June 23, 1789.

MADAM HANNAH,

YOU are an errant reprobate, and grow wickeder and wickeder every day. You deserve to be treated like a *negre*; and your favourite Sunday,



to which you are so partial that you treat the other poor six days of the week as if they had no souls to be saved, should, if I could have my will,

— shine no Sabbath-day for you.

Now, don't simper, and look as innocent as if virtue would not melt in your mouth—Can you deny the following charges?

I lent you The Botanic Garden, and you returned it without writing a syllable, or saying where you were or whither you was going—I suppose, for fear I should know how to direct to you.—Why, if I did send a letter after you, could not you keep it three months without an answer, as you did last year?

In the next place, you and your *nine* accomplices, who by the way are too good in keeping you company, have clubbed the prettiest poem imaginable, and communicated it to Mrs. Boscawen, with injunctions not to give a copy of it—I suppose, because you are ashamed of having written a panegyric.—Whenever you *do* compose a satire, you are ready enough to publish it—at least whenever you do, you will din one to death with it—But now, mind your perverseness: that very pretty novel poem, and I must own it is charming, have you gone and spoiled, flying in the faces of your best friends the muses, and keeping no *measures* with them.—I'll be shot if they dictated two of the best lines with two syllables too much in each—nay, you have weakened one of them—

*Ev'n Gardiner's mind*

is far more expressive than *steadfast* Gardiner's—and, as Mrs. Boscawen says, Whoever knows any thing of Gardiner, could not want that superfluous epithet—and whoever does not, would not be the wiser for your foolish insertion—Mrs. Boscawen did not call it foolish, but I do.

The second line, as mesdemoiselles the muses handed it to you, miss, was,

And all be free and sav'd—

Not, *All be free and all be saved*: the second *all be* is a most unnecessary tautology. The poem was perfect and faultless, if you could have let it alone. I wonder how your mischievous flippancy could help maiming that

\* Bonner's Ghost.

most



most new and beautiful expression, *sponge of sins*—I should not have been surpris'd, as you love verses too full of feet, if you had changed it to *that scrubbing-brush of sins*.

Well! I will say no more now: but if you do not order me a copy of Bonner's Ghost incontinently, never dare to look my printing-house in the face again—Or come, I'll tell you what; I will forgive all your enormities, if you will let me print your poem. I like to filch a little immortality out of others, and the Strawberry press could never have a better opportunity. I will not haggle for the public—I will be content with printing only two hundred copies, of which you shall have half, and I half. It shall cost you nothing but a Yes. I only propose this, in case you do not mean to print it yourself. Tell me sincerely which you like—But as to not printing it at all, charming and unexceptionable as it is, you cannot be so proposterous.

I by no means have a thought of detracting from your own share in your own poem; but as I do suspect that it caught some inspiration from your perusal of the Botanic Garden, so I hope you will discover that *my* style is much improved by having lately studied ——'s travels—There I dipped, and not in St. Giles's pound, where one would think this author had been educated. Adieu!

Your friend, or mortal foe, as you behave on the present occasion,

HOR. WALPOLE.

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L E T T E R XII.

Strawberry-hill, July 2, 1789.

I ALMOST think I shall never abuse you again—nay, I would not, did not it prove so extremely good for you. No walnut-tree is better for being threshed than you are; and though you have won my heart by your compliance, I don't know whether my conscience will not insist on my using you ill now and then; for is there any precedent for gratitude not giving way to every other duty? Gratitude, like an earl's eldest son, is but titular, and has no place upon *trials*—But I fear I am punning fillily, instead of thanking you seriously, as I do, for allowing me to print your lovely

verses.



verses<sup>1</sup>. My press can confer no honour; but, when I offer it, it is a certain mark of my sincerity and esteem. It has been dedicated to friendship, to charity—too often to worthless self-love; sometimes to the rarity of the pieces, and sometimes to the merit of them—Now it will unite the first motive and the last.

My fall, for which you so kindly concern yourself, was not worth mentioning; for, as I only bruised the muscles of my side, instead of breaking a rib, camphire infused in arquebuse took off the pain and all consequences in five or six days: and one has no right to draw on the compassion of others for what one *has* suffered and is past. Some love to be pitied on that score, but forget that they only excite, in the best-natured, joy on their deliverance. You commend me too for not complaining of my chronical evil—but, my dear madam, I should be blameable for the reverse. If I would live to seventy-two, ought I not to compound for the incumbrances of old age? And who has fewer? And who has more cause to be thankful to Providence for his lot? The gout, it is true, comes frequently, but the fits are short, and very tolerable; the intervals are full health. My eyes are perfect, my hearing but little impaired, chiefly to whispers, for which I certainly have little occasion: my spirits never fail; and though my hands and feet are crippled, I can use both, and do not wish to box, wrestle, or dance a hornpipe. In short, I am just infirm enough to enjoy all the prerogatives of old age, and to plead them against any thing that I have not a mind to do. Young men must conform to every folly in fashion, drink when they had rather be sober, fight a duel if somebody else is wrong-headed, marry to please their fathers, not themselves, and shiver in a white waistcoat, because ancient almanacs, copying the Arabian, placed the month of June after May; though, when the style was reformed, it ought to have been intercalated between December and January.—Indeed, I have been so childish as to cut my hay for the same reason, and am now weeping over it by the fireside.—But to come to business.

You must suffer me to print 200 copies; and if you approve it, I will send thirty to the bishop of London out of your quota—You may afterwards give him more, if you please.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Bonner's Ghost;

I do



I do not propose putting your name, unless you desire it, as I think it would swear with the air of ancients you have adopted in the signature and notes. The authors will be no secret—and as it will certainly get into magazines, why should not you deal privately before hand with some bookseller, and have a second edition ready to appear soon after mine is finished? The difficulty of getting my edition at first, from the paucity of the number and from being only given as presents, will make the second edition eagerly sought for; and I do not see why my anticipating the publication should deprive you of the profit.—Rather than do that, I would print a smaller number.—I wish to raise an additional appetite to that which every body has for your writings—I am sure I did not mean to injure you. Pray think of this; there is time enough: I cannot begin to print under a week: my press has lain fallow for some time, and my printer must prepare ink, balls, &c. and as I have but one man, he cannot be expeditious.

I seriously do advise you to have a second edition ready: why should covetous booksellers run away with *all* the advantages of your genius? They get enough by their ample share of the sale.

I will say no more, but to repeat my thanks for your consent, which truly obliges me; and I am happy to have been the instrument of preserving what your modesty would have sunk. My esteem could not increase; but one likes to be connected by favours to those one highly values. I am, dear madam,

Your most sincere admirer and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

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L E T T E R   X I I I .

Strawberry-hill, July 10, 1789.

THOUGH I am touchy enough with those I love, I did not think you dilatory, nor expect that answers to letters should be as quick as repartees. I do pity you for the accident that made you think yourself remis. I enjoy your patient's recovery; but almost smiled unawares at the idea of her  
being



being fopped, and coming out of the water bruffling up her feathers and ermines, and assuming the dignity of a Jupiter Pluvius.

I beseech you not to fancy yourself vain on my being your printer: would Sappho be proud, though Aldus or Elzevir were her typographer? My press has no rank but from its narrowness, that is, from the paucity of its editions, and from being a volunteer.—But a truce to compliments, and to reciprocal humility. Pray tell me how I shall convey your parcel to you: the impression is begun. I shall not dare, *à la sujet*, to send a copy to Mrs. ———; I do not know whether you will venture. Mrs. Boscawen shall have one, but it shall be in your name: so authorise me to present it, that neither of us may tell the whitest of fibs. Shall I deliver any others for you within my reach, to save you trouble?

I have no more corrections to make. I told you brutally at first of the only two faults I found, and you sacrificed them with the patience of a martyr; for I conclude that when a good poet knowingly sins against measure twice, he is persuaded that he makes amends by greater beauties: in such case docility deserves the palm-branch.

I do not applaud your declining a London edition—but you have been so tractable, that I will let you have your way in this, though you only make over profit to magazines. Being an honest printer myself, I have little charity for those banditti of my profession who pilfer from every body they find on the road. Adieu, my dear madam!

Yours most cordially and sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

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LETTER XIV.

Strawberry-hill, Monday night, July 20, 1789.

MY EXCELLENT FRIEND,

I NEVER shall be angry with your conscientiousness, though I will not promise never to scold it, as you know I think you sometimes carry it too far—and how pleasant to have a friend to scold on such grounds! I see all



your delicacy in what you call your *double treachery*, and your kind desire of connecting two of your friends. The seeds are sprung up already; and the bishop<sup>1</sup> has already condescended to make me the first, and indeed so unexpected a visit, that, had I in the least formid it, I should certainly, as became me, have prevented him.

One effect, however, I can tell you your pimping between us will have:—his lordship has, to please your partiality, flattered me so agreeably in the letter you *betrayed*, that I shall never write to you again without the dread of attempting the wit he is so liberal as to bestow on me; and then either way I must be dull or affected—though I hope to have the grace to prefer the former—and then you only will be the sufferer, as we both should by the latter.—But I will come to facts: they are plain bodies, can have nothing to do with wit, and yet are not dull to those who have any thing to do with them.

According to your order, I have delivered *Ghosts*<sup>2</sup> to Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Garrick, lady Juliana Penn, Mrs. Walsingham, and Mr. Pepys. Mr. Batt, I am told, leaves London to-day, so I shall reserve his to his return. This morning I carried his thirty to the bishop of London, who said modestly, he should not have expected above ten. I was delighted with the palace, with the venerable chapel, and its painted episcopalties in glass, and the brave hall, &c. &c. Though it rained, I would crawl to Bonner's chair.—In short, my satisfaction would have been complete, but for wanting the presence of that jesuitess, *the good old papist*<sup>3</sup>.

To-morrow departs for London, to be delivered to the Bristol coach at the White-horse-cellar in Piccadilly, a parcel containing sixty-four Ghosts—one of which is printed on brown for your own eating. There is but one more such, so you may preserve it like a relick. I know these two are not so good as the white: but, as rarities, a collector would give ten times more for them; and *uniquity* will make them valued more than the charming poetry.—I believe, if there was but one ugly woman in the world, she would occasion a longer war than Helen did.

You will find the bishop's letter in the parcel.—I did not breathe a hint

<sup>1</sup> The bishop of London.

<sup>2</sup> Bonner's Ghost.

<sup>3</sup> The signature to Bonner's Ghost.



of my having seen it, as I could not conjure up into my pale cheeks the blush I ought to exhibit on such flattery.

I pity you most sincerely for your almost drowned guest. Fortune seems to delight in throwing poor *Louisa* in your way, that you may exercise your unbounded charity and benevolence. Adieu! pray write—I need not write to you to pray—but I wish, when your knees have what the common people call a worky day, you would employ your hands the whole time.

Yours most cordially,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. I believe I have blundered, and that your knees would call a week-day, a holiday.

LETTER XV.

Strawberry-hill, Sept. 1739.

I KNOW whence you wrote last, but not where you are now; you gave me no hint. I believe you fly lest I should pursue, and as if you were angry that I have forced you to sprout into laurels. Yet you say you are vain of it, and that you are no philosopher.—Now, if you are vain, I am sure you are a philosopher; for it is a maxim of mine, and one of my own making, that there never was a philosopher that did not love *sweetmeats*.

You tell me too, that you like I should scold you—but since you have appeared as Bonner's ghost, I think I shall feel too much awe; for though (which I never expected would be in my power) I have made you stand in a white sheet, I doubt my respect is increased. I never did rate you for being too bad, but too good: and if, when you make up your week's account, you find but a fraction of vanity in the sum total, you will fall to repenting, and come forth on Monday as humble as —. Then, if I huff my heart out, you will only simper, and still wrap yourself up in your obstinate goodness.—Well! take your own way; I give you up to all your abominable virtues, and will go answer the rest of your letter.



I congratulate you on the demolition of the Bastile—I mean as you do, of its functions. For the poor soul itself, I had no ill will to it: on the contrary, it was a curious sample of ancient castellar dungeons, which the good folks the founders took for palaces:—yet I always hated to drive by it, knowing the miseries it contained. Of itself it did not gobble up prisoners to glut its maw, but received them by command. The destruction of it was filly, and agreeable to the ideas of a mob, who do not know stones and bars and bolts from a *lettre de cachet*. If the country remains free, the Bastile would be as tame as a ducking-stool, now that there is no such thing as a scold. If despotism recovers, the Bastile will rise from its ashes!—recover, I fear, it will. The *états* cannot remain a mob of kings, and will prefer a single one to a larger mob of kings and greater tyrants. The nobility, the clergy, and people of property will wait, till by address and money they can divide the people—or, whoever gets the larger or more victorious army into his hands, will be a Cromwell or a Monke. In short, a revolution procured by a national vertigo does not promise a crop of legislators. It is time that composes a good constitution: it formed ours. We were near losing it by the lax and unconditional restoration of Charles II. The revolution was temperate, and has lasted—and though it might have been improved, we know that with all its moderation it disgusted half the nation, who would have brought back the old fores.

I abominate the Inquisition as much as you do:—yet if the king of Spain receives no check like his cousin Louis, I fear he will not be disposed to relax any terrors. Every crowned head in Europe must ach at present; and the frantic and barbarous proceedings in France will not meliorate the stock of liberty, though for some time their majesties will be mighty tender of the rights of their subjects.

According to this hypothesis, I can administer some comfort to you about your poor negroes. I do not imagine that they will be emancipated at once—but their fate will be much alleviated, as the attempt will have alarmed their butchers enough to make them gentler, like the European monarchs, for fear of provoking the disinterested, who have no sugar plantations, to abolish the horrid traffic.

I do not understand the manœvre of sugar, and, perhaps, am going to  
talk



talk nonsense, as my idea may be impracticable—but I wish human wit, which is really very considerable in mechanics and merchantry, could devise some method of cultivating canes and making sugar without the manual labour of the human species. How many mills and inventions have there not been discovered to supply succedaneums to the work of the hands, and which before the discoveries would have been treated as visions! It is true, manual labour has sometimes taken it very ill to be excused, and has destroyed such mills—but the poor negroes would not rise and insist upon being worked to death. Pray talk to some ardent genius, but do not name me—not merely because I may have talked like an idiot, but because my ignorance might, *ipso facto*, stamp the idea with ridicule. People, I know, do not love to be put out of their old ways: no farmer listens at first to new inventions in agriculture; and I don't doubt but bread was originally deemed a new-fangled vagary by those who had seen their fathers live very comfortably upon acorns. Nor is there any harm in starting new game to invention: many excellent discoveries have been made by men who were *à la chasse* of something very different. I am not quite sure that the arts of making gold and of living for ever have been yet found out:—yet to how many noble discoveries has the pursuit of those nostrums given birth! Poor chymistry, had she not had such glorious objects in view!

If you are sitting under a cowslip at your cottage, these reveries may amuse you for half an hour, at least make you smile; and for the ease of your conscience, which is always in a panic, they require no answer.

I will not ask you about the new History of Bristol, because you are too good a citizen to say a word against your native place—but do pray cast your eye on the prints of the cathedral and castle, the chef-d'œuvres of Chatterton's ignorance, and of Mr. Barrett's too—and, on two letters pretended to have been sent to me, and which never were sent. If my incredulity had wavered, they would have fixed it. I wish the milk-woman would assert, that Boadicia's dairy-maid had invented Dutch tiles; it would be like Chatterton's origin of heraldry and painted glass, in those two letters.

I must, however, mention one word about myself. In the new fourth volume of the Biographia Britannica I am more candidly treated about that  
poor



poor lad than usual: yet the writer still affirms that, according to my own account, my reply was too much in the common-place style of court-replies. Now my own words, and the truth, as they stand in print in the very letter of mine which this author quotes, were, "*I wrote him a letter with as much kindness and tenderness as if I had been his guardian.*" Is this by my own account a court-reply?—Nor did I conceive, for I never was a courtier, that courtiers are wont to make *tender* replies to the poor.—I am glad to hear they do.

I have kept this letter some days in my writing-box, till I could meet with a stray member of parliament—for it is not worth making you pay for: but when you talk to me I cannot help answering incontinently:—besides, can one take up a letter at a long distance, and heat one's reply over again with the same interest that it occasioned at first? Adieu! I wish you may come to Hampton before I leave these purlieus!

Yours *More and More,*

HOR. WALPOLE.

L E T T E R X V I.

Strawberry-hill, Nov. 4, 1789.

I AM not surpris'd, my dear madam, that the notice of my illness should have stimulated your predominant quality, your sensibility. I cannot do less in return than relieve it immediately, by assuring you that I am in a manner recovered; and should have gone out before this time, if my mind were as much at ease as my poor limbs. I have pass'd five months most uncomfortably; the two last most unhappily. In June and September I had two bad falls by my own lameness and weakness, and was much bruised, while I was witness to the danger, and then to the death of my invaluable niece, lady Dyfart. She was angelic, and has left no children.—The unexpected death of lord Waldegrave, one of the most amiable of men, has not only deprived me of him, but has opened a dreadful scene of calamities! He and my niece were the happiest and most domestic of couples.

Your kind inquiries after me have drawn these details from me, for which I make no excuse: good nature never grudges its pity. I, who love to force



your gravity to smile, am seriously better pleased to indulge your benevolence with a subject of esteem, which, though moving your compassion, will be accompanied by no compunction. I will now answer your letter.

Your plea, that not composition, but business, has occasioned your silence, is no satisfaction to *me*. In my present anxious solitude I have again redde Bonner and Florio, and the Bas-bleu; and do you think I am pleased to learn that you have not been writing? Who is it says something like this line:—

Hannah will *not* write, and Lactilla *will*.

They who think her earl Goodwin will outgo Shakespeare, might be in the right if they specified in what way.—I believe she may write worse than he sometimes did, though that is not easy; but to excel him—Oh! I have not words adequate to my contempt for those who can suppose such a possibility!

I am sorry, very sorry for what you tell me of poor Barrett's fate. Though he did write worse than Shakespeare, it is great pity he was told so, as it killed him; and I rejoice that I did not publish a word in contradiction of the letters which he said Chatterton sent to me, as I was advised to do. I might have laughed at the poor man's folly, and then I should have been miserable to have added a grain to the poor man's mortification.

You rejoice *me*, not my vanity, by telling me my idea of a mechanic succedaneum to the labour of negroes is not visionary, but thought practicable. Oh! how I wish I understood sugar and ploughs, and could marry them!—Alas! I understand nothing useful. My head is as un-mechanic as it is un-arithmetic, un-geometric, un-metaphysic, un-commercial:—but will not some one of those superior heads to whom you have talked on my indigested hint reduce it to practicability? How a feasible scheme would stun those who call humanity romantic, and show from the books of the custom-house, that murder is a great improvement of the revenue! Even the present situation of France is favourable. Could not Mr. Wilberforce obtain to have the enfranchisement of the negroes started there? The  
Jews



Jews are claiming their natural rights there; and blacks are certainly not so great defaulters as the Hebrews, though they too have undergone ample persecutions. Methinks, as lord George Gordon is in correspondence with the *états*, he has been a little remiss in not signing the petition of those of his new communion.

The *états* are detestable and despicable; and, in fact, guilty of the outrages of the Parisian and provincial mobs. The mob of 1200—not legislators, but—dissolvers of all laws unchained the mastiffs that had been tied up, and were sure to worry all who fell in their way. To annihilate all laws, however bad, and to have none ready to replace them, was proclaiming anarchy. What should one think of a mad doctor, who should let loose a lunatic, suffer him to burn Bedlam, chop off the heads of the keepers, and then consult with some students in physic on the gentlest mode of treating delirium? By a late vote I see that the 1200 praters are reduced to 500—*Vive la reine Billingsgate!* the Thalestris who has succeeded Louis quatorze. A committee of those Amazons stopped the duke of Orleans, who, to use their style, I believe is not a *barrel better herring*.

Your reflections on Vertot's passion for revolutions are admirable, and yet it is natural for an historian to like to describe times of action. Halcyon days do not furnish matter for talents; they are like the virtuous couple in a comedy, a little insipid. Mr. Manly and lady Grace, Mellefont and Cynthia, do not interest one much. Indeed, in a tragedy where they are unhappy, they give the audience full satisfaction—and no envy.

The newspapers, no doubt, thought doctor —— could not do better than to espouse you. He certainly would be very judicious, could he obtain your consent—but, alas! you would soon squabble about Socinianism, or some of those *isms*. To tell you the truth, I hate all those Constantinopolitan jargons, that set people together by the ears about pedantic terms. When you apply scholastic phrases as happily and genteelly as you do in your Bas-bleu, they are delightful; but don't muddle your charming simplicity with controversial distinctions, that will sour your sweet piety. Sects are the bane of charity, and have deluged the world with blood.

I do



I do not mean, by what I am going to say, to extort another letter from you before I have the pleasure of seeing you at Hampton; but I really shall be much obliged to you for a single line soon, only to tell me if miss Williams is at Stoke with the duchess of Beaufort.

To a short note, cannot you add a short P. S. on the fate of earl Goodwin?

Lac mihi—novum non frigore deficit.

Adieu, my amiable friend!

Yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

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LETTER XVII.

Berkeley-square, Feb. 20, 1798.

IT is very provoking that people must always be hanging or drowning themselves, or going mad, that you forsooth, mistress, may have the diversion of exercising your pity, and good nature, and charity, and intercession, and all that beadroll of virtues that make you so troublesome and amiable, when you might be ten times more agreeable by writing things that would not cost one above half-a-crown at a time. You are an absolutely walking hospital, and travel about into lone and by places with your doors open to house stray casualties! I wish at least that you would have some children yourself, that you might not be plaguing one for all the pretty brats that are starving and friendless. I suppose it was some such Goody two or three thousand years ago that suggested the idea of an alma-mater suckling the three hundred and sixty-five bantlings of the countess of Hainault.—Well, as your newly-adopted pensioners have *two* babes, I insist on your accepting *two* guineas for them instead of one at present (that is, when you shall be present).—If you cannot circumscribe your own charities, you shall not stint mine, madam, who can afford it much better, and who must be dunned for alms, and do not scramble over hedges and ditches in searching for opportunities of flinging away my money on good works. I employ mine better at *auctions, and in buying pictures and baubles, and hoarding curiosities*, that in



truth I cannot keep long, but that will last *for ever* in my catalogue, and make me immortal!—Alas! will they cover a multitude of sins?—Adieu! I cannot jest after *that* sentence.

Yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

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L E T T E R XVIII.

Berkeley-square, Sept. 29, 1791.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE been very sorry, but not at all angry, at not hearing from you so long. With all your friendly and benevolent heart, I know by experience how little you love writing to your friends—and I know why: you think you lose moments which you could employ in doing more substantial good; and that your letters only pamper our minds, but do not feed or clothe our bodies: if they did, you would coin as much paper as the French do in assignats. Do not imagine now that you have committed a wicked thing by writing to me at last; comfort yourself, that your conscience, not temptation, forced you to write; and be assured I am as grateful as if you had written from choice, not from duty, your constant spiritual director.

I have been out of order the whole summer, but not very ill for above a fortnight. I caught a painful rheumatism by going into a very crowded church in a rainy day where all the windows were open, to hear our friend the bishop of London preach a charity sermon here at Twickenham. My gout would not resign to a new incumbent, but came too; and both together have so lamed my right arm, though I am now using it, that I cannot yet extend it entirely, nor lift it to the top of my head. However, I am free from pain; and as Providence, though it supplied us originally with so many bounties, took care we might shift with succedaneums on the loss of several of them, I am content with what remains of my stock; and since all my fingers are not useless, and that I have not six hairs left, I am not much grieved at not being able to comb my head. Nay, should not such a shadow as I have ever been, be thankful, that at the eve of seventy-five I am not yet passed away?

I am,



I am so little out of charity with the bishop for having been the innocent cause of the death of my shoulder, that I am heartily concerned for him and her on Mrs. Porteus's accident<sup>1</sup>. It may have marbled her complexion, but I am persuaded has not altered her lively, amiable, good-humoured countenance. As I know not where to direct to them, and as you cannot suppose it a sin for a sheep to write to its pastor on a week-day, I wish you would mark the interest I take in their accident and escape from worse mischief.

I thank you most cordially for your inquiry after *my wives*<sup>2</sup>. I am in the utmost perplexity of mind about them; torn between hopes and fears. I believe them set out from Florence on their return since yesterday se'night, and consequently feel all the joy and impatience of expecting them in five or six weeks:—but then, besides fears of roads, bad inns, accidents, heats and colds, and the sea to cross in November at last; all my satisfaction is dashed by the uncertainty whether they come through Germany or France. I have advised, begged, implored, that it may not be through those Iroquois, Lestryons, Anthropophagi, the Franks; and then, hearing passports were abolished, and the roads more secure, I half consented, as they wished it, and the road is much shorter; and then I repented, and have contradicted myself again—And now I know not which route they will take! nor shall enjoy any comfort from the thoughts of their return, till they are returned safe.

'Tis well I am doubly guarantied—or who knows, as I am as old almost as both her husbands together, but Mrs. B—— might have cast a longing eye towards me? How I laughed at hearing of her throwing a second muckender to a Methusalem! a fat red-faced veteran, with a portly hillock of flesh. I conclude all her grandfathers are dead; or, as there is no prohibition in the table of consanguinity against male ancestors, she would certainly have stepped backwards towards the deluge, and ransacked her pedigrees on both sides for some kinsman of the patriarchs. I could titter *à plusieurs reprises*; but I am too old to be improper, and you are too modest to be *impropered* to, and so I will drop the subject at the herald's office.

<sup>1</sup> An overturn in a carriage.

<sup>2</sup> The two miss Berrys, whom he thus called.



I am happy at and honour miss B——'s resolution in casting away golden, or rather gilt chains: others out of vanity would have worn them till they had eaten into the bone. On that charming young woman's chapter I agree with you perfectly—not a jot on *Deborah* ——, whom you admire: I have neither redde her verses nor will. As I have not your aspen conscience, I cannot forgive the heart of a woman that is party per pale blood and tenderness, that curses our clergy and feels for negroes. Can I forget the 14th of July, when they all contributed their faggot to the fires that her presbytyrants (as lord Melcombe called them) tried to light in every Smithfield in the island, and which, as P——e and P—— applauded in France, it would be folly to suppose they did not only wish but meant to kindle here? Were they ignorant of the atrocious barbarities, injustice, and violation of oaths committed in France? Did P—— not know that the clergy there had no option left but between starving and perjury? And what does he think of the poor man executed at Birmingham, who declared at his death he had been provoked by the infamous hand-bill?—I know not who wrote it.—No, my good friend: *Deborah* may cant rhymes of compassion, but she is a hypocrite; and you shall not make me read her, nor with all your sympathy and candour can you esteem her. *Your* compassion for the poor blacks is genuine, sincere from your soul, most amiable; hers, a measure of faction: her party supported the abolition, and regretted the disappointment as a blow to the good cause. I know this.—Do not let your piety lead you into the weakness of respecting the bad, only because they hoist the flag of religion, while they carry a stiletto in the flag-staff. Did not they, previous to the 14th of July, endeavour to corrupt the guards? What would have ensued, had they succeeded, you must tremble to think!

You tell me nothing of your own health—may I flatter myself it is good? I wish I knew so authentically! and I wish I could guess when I should see you, without your being staked to the fogs of the Thames at Christmas—I cannot desire that. Adieu, my very valuable friend! I am, though unworthy,

Yours most cordially,

HOR. WALPOLE.

LETTER



## LETTER XIX.

Berkeley-square, January 1, 1792.

MY MUCH-ESTEEMED FRIEND,

I HAVE not so long delayed answering your letter from the pitiful revenge of recollecting how long your pen is fetching breath before it replies to mine—Oh! no—You know I love to *heap coals of kindness* on your head, and to draw you into little sins, that you may forgive yourself, by knowing your time was employed on big virtues. On the contrary, you would be revenged; for here have you, according to *your* notions, inveigled me into the fracture of a commandment; for I am writing to you on a *Sunday*, being the first moment of leisure that I have had since I received your letter. It does not indeed clash with my religious ideas, as I hold paying one's debts as good a deed, as praying and reading sermons for a whole day in every week, when it is impossible to fix the attention to one course of thinking for so many hours for fifty-two days in every year.—Thus you see I can preach too—But seriously—and indeed I am little disposed to cheerfulness now—I am overwhelmed with troubles, and with business—and business that I do not understand—Law, and the management of a ruined estate, are subjects ill-suited to a head that never studied any thing that in wordly language is called useful. The tranquillity of my remnant of life will be lost, or so perpetually interrupted, that I expect little comfort—not that I am already intending to grow rich, but the moment one is supposed so, there are so many alert to turn one to their own account, that I have more letters to write to satisfy—or rather to dissatisfy them, than about my own affairs, though the latter are all confusion. I have such missives, on agriculture, pretensions to livings, offers of taking care of my game as I am incapable of it, self-recommendations of making my robes, and round hints of taking out my writ, that at least I may name a proxy, and give my dormant conscience to somebody or other! I trust you think better of my heart and understanding than to suppose that I have listened to any one of these new *friends*—Yet though I have negatived all, I have been forced to answer some of them before you; and that will convince you how cruelly ill I have passed my time lately, besides having been made ill with vexation and fatigue—But I am tolerably well again.

For



For the other empty metamorphosis that has happened to the outward man<sup>1</sup>, you do me justice in concluding that it can do nothing but tease me—it is being called names in one's old age. I had rather be my lord mayor, for then I should keep the nickname but a year, and mine I may retain a little longer—not that at seventy-five I reckon on becoming my lord Methusalem.

Vainer however I believe I am already become; for I have waisted almost two pages about myself, and said not a tittle about your health, which I most cordially rejoice to hear you are recovering, and as fervently hope you will entirely recover. I have the highest opinion of the element of water as a constant beverage, having so deep a conviction of the goodness and wisdom of Providence, that I am persuaded that when it indulged us in such a luxurious variety of eatables, and gave us but one drinkable, it intended that our sole liquid should be both wholesome and corrective.—Your system I know is different—You hold that mutton and water were the only cock and hen that were designed for our nourishment—but I am apt to doubt whether draughts of water for six weeks are capable of restoring health, though some are strongly impregnated with mineral and other particles—Yet you have staggered me: the Bath water, by your account, is like electricity compounded of contradictory qualities; the one attracts and repels; the other turns a shilling yellow, and whitens your jaundice. I shall hope to see you (when is that to be?) without alloy.

I must finish, wishing you three hundred and thirteen days of happiness for the new year that is arrived this morning: the fifty-two that you hold in commendam, I have no doubt will be rewarded as such good intentions deserve.

Adieu, my *too* good friend! My direction shall talk superciliously to the postman<sup>2</sup>; but do let me continue unchangeably

Your faithful and sincere

HOR. WALPOLE.

<sup>1</sup> His accession to his title.

<sup>2</sup> He means franking his letter by his newly acquired title of earl of Orford. E.



## LETTER XX.

Berkeley-square, February 9, 1793.

MY HOLY HANNAH,

WITH your innate and usual goodness and sense, you have done me justice by guessing exactly at the cause of my long silence. You have been apt to tell me that my letters diverted you—How then could I write, when it was impossible but to attrist you! when I could speak of nothing but unparalleled horrors! and but awaken your sensibility, if it slumbered for a moment! What mind could forget the tenth of August and the second of September—and that the black and bloody year 1792 has plunged its murderous dagger still deeper, and already made 1793 still more detestably memorable! though its victim has at last been rewarded for four years of torture by forcing from him every kind of proof of the most perfect character that ever sat on a throne. Were these, alas! themes for letters? Nay, am I not sure that *you* have been still more shocked by a crime that passes even the guilt of shedding the blood of poor Louis—to hear of atheism avowed, and the avowal tolerated by monsters calling themselves a National Assembly!—But I have no words that can reach the criminality of such *inferno-human* beings—but must compose a term that aims at conveying my idea of them—For the future it will be sufficient to call them *the French*—I hope no other nation will ever deserve to be confounded with them!

Indeed, my dear friend, I have another reason for wishing to burn my pen entirely: all my ideas are confounded and overturned—I do not know whether all I ever learnt in the seventy-first years of my seventy-five was not wrong and false: common sense, reasoning, calculation, conjecture from analogy and from history of past events, all, all have been baffled; nor am I sure that what used to be thought the result of experience and wisdom, was not a mass of mistakes—Have I not found, do I not find, that the invention of establishing metals as the *signs* of property was an useless discovery, or at least only useful till the art of making paper was found out? Nay, the latter is preferable to gold and silver. If the ores were adulterated and cried down, nobody would take them in exchange. Depreciate paper as much as you will, and it will still serve all the purposes of barter.



barter. Tradesmen still keep shops, stock them with goods, and deliver their commodities for those coined rags—Poor Reason, where art thou?

To show you that memory and argument are of no value, at least with me, I thought a year or two that this paper-mint would soon blow up, because I remembered that when Mr. C— F— and one or two more youths of brilliant genius first came to light, and into vast debts at play, they imparted to the world an important secret which they had discovered— It was, that nobody needed to want money, if they would pay enough for it. Accordingly they borrowed of Jews at vast usury: but as they had made but an incomplete calculation, the interest so soon exceeded the principal, that the system did not maintain its ground for above two or three years. Faro has proved a more substantial speculation.—But I miscarried in applying my remembrance to the assignats, which still maintain their ground against that long-decried, but as long-adored corruptor of virtue, gold—Alack! I do not hear that virtue has flourished more for the destruction of its old enemy!

Shall I add another truth? I have been so disgusted and fatigued by hearing of nothing but French massacres, &c. and found it so impossible to shift conversation to any other topic, that before I had been a month in town I wished miss G— would revive, that people might have at least one other subject to interest the ears and tongues of the public.—But no wonder universal attention is engrossed by the present portentous scene! It seems to draw to a question, whether Europe or France is to be depopulated; whether civilization can be recovered, or the republic of Chaos can be supported by assassination. We have heard of the golden, silver, and iron ages—the brazen one existed, while the French were only predominately insolent.—What the present age will be denominated, I cannot guess. Though the paper age would be characteristic, it is not emphatic enough, nor specifies the enormous sins of the fiends that are the agents. I think it may be styled the diabolic age.—The duke of Orleans has dethroned Satan, who since his fall has never instigated such crimes as Orleans has perpetrated.

Let me soften my tone a little, and harmonise your poor mind by sweeter accents. In this deluge of triumphant enormities, what traits of the sublime and beautiful may be gleaned! Did you hear of madame Elizabeth,



the king's sister? a faint like yourself. She doted on her brother, for she certainly knew his foul. In the tumult in July, hearing the populace and the poissardes had broken into the palace, she flew to the king, and by embracing him tried to shield his person. The populace took her for the queen, cried out, "*Voilà cette chienne, cette Autrichienne!*" and were proceeding to violence. Somebody, to save her, screamed, "*Ce n'est pas la reine, c'est—*" The princefs said, "*Ah! mon Dieu! ne les detrompez pas.*"—If that was not the most sublime instance of perfect innocence, ready prepared for death, I know not where to find one.

Sublime indeed too was the sentence of good father Edgeworth, the king's confessor, who thinking his royal penitent a little dismayed just before the fatal stroke, cried out, "*Montez, digne fils de St. Louis! Le ciel vous est ouvert.*"—The holy martyr's countenance brightened up, and he submitted at once. Such victims, such confessors as those, and monsieur de Maleherbes, repair some of the breaches in human nature made by Orleans, Condorcet, Santerre, and a legion of evil spirits.

The tide of horrors has hurried me much too far, before I have not vented a note of my most sincere concern for your bad account of your health. I feel for it heartily, and wish your frame were as sound as your soul and understanding. What can I recommend? I am no physician but for my own flimsy texture, which by studying, and by contradicting all advice, I have drawn to this great age. Patience, temperance, nay, abstinence, are already yours—in short, you want to be corrected of nothing but too much piety, too much rigour towards yourself, and too much sensibility for others. Is not it possible to serve mankind, without feeling too great pity?—Perhaps I am a little too much hardened—I am grown too little alarmed for the health of my friends, from being become far more indifferent to life—I look to the nearness of my end, as a delivery from spectacles of woe. We have even amongst us monsters, more criminal, in speculation at least, than the French—They had cause to wish for correction of a bad government, though, till *taught* to dislike it, three-fourths of the country, I maintain, adored theirs. We have the perfectest ever yet devised—but if to your numerous readings of little pamphlets you would add one more, called *Village-politics*, infinitely superior to any thing on the



## 618 LETTERS FROM THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

subject, clearer, better stated, and comprehending the whole mass of matter in the shortest compass, you will be more mistress of the subject than any man in England. I know who wrote it, but will not tell you, because you did not tell me.

Your most faithful humble servant and friend,

ORFORD.

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 LETTER XXI.

Berkeley-square, March 23, 1793.

I SHALL certainly not leave off taunting your virtues, my excellent friend, for I find it sometimes makes you correct them. I scolded you for your modesty in not acquainting me with your *Village-politics* even after they were published; and you have already conquered that unfriendly delicacy, and announced another piece of which you are in labour. Still I see there wanted your ghostly father, the bishop of London, to enjoin you to be *quite* shameless and avow your natural child. I do approve his doctrine: calling it by your own name will make its fortune. If, like Rousseau, you had left your babe among the enfans trouvés, it might never be heard of more than his poor issue have been; for I can but observe that the French patriots, who have made such a fuss with his ashes, have not taken the smallest pains to attempt to discover his real progeny, which might not have been impossible by collating dates and circumstances.

I am proud of having imitated you at a great distance, and been persuaded, much against my will and practice, to let my name be put to the second subscription for the poor French clergy, as it was thought it might tend to animate that consumptive contribution.

I am impatient for your pamphlet, not only as being yours, but hoping it will invigorate horror against French atheism, which I am grieved to say did not by any means make due impression. I did very early apply to *your confessor*,



*confessor*, to beg he would enjoin his clergy to denounce that shocking impiety—I could almost recommend to you to add a slight postscript on the massacre of that wretch *Manuel*. I do not love such insects, as we are, dispensing *judgments*—yet if the punishment of that just victim might startle such profane criminals, it might be charity to suggest the hint to them.

24th.

I WAS interrupted, and could not finish my letter in a breath, as I meant the moment I had received yours, from eagerness to thank you for the notice of your *publication*. I wish you had added the name of your man-midwife the printer; but I trust to seeing you stand in a black and white sheet, the newspaper. Mrs. Boscawen was so kind as to call on me the same day with the same information from your letter to her—but in hers were some words on the late bankruptcies, more than were in mine, that alarm us, and that, though not explicit, look as if you yourself have suffered by those failures. You have such a friendly and feeling heart, that it is impossible to discern whether any grief is not rather on account of others than on your own. Pray be confidential enough to tell me; for I have not such universal charity, as to lament the loss of others as I should yours.

I must modify the massacre of Manuel: he has been a good deal stabbed, but will, they say, recover. Perhaps it is better that some of those assassins should live to acknowledge, that “Do not to others what you would not have done to you” is not so silly a maxim, as most of the precepts of morality and justice have lately been deemed by *philosophers and legislators*—titles self-assumed by men, who have abolished all other titles; and who have disgraced and debased the former denomination, and under the latter have enjoined triple perjuries, and at last cannot fix on any code which should exact more forswearing. I own I am pleased that that ruffian pedant Condorcet’s new constitution was too clumsy and unwieldy to go down the throats of those who have swallowed every thing else. I did but just cast my eyes on the beginning and end, and was so lucky as to observe the hypocrite’s contradiction: he sets out with declaration of equality, and winds up with security of property. That is, we will plunder every body, and then entail the spoils on ourselves and our (*wrong*) heirs.

Well! that bloody chaos seems recoiling on themselves! It looks as if civil



war was bursting out in many provinces, and will precipitate approaching famine.—When, till *now*, could one make such a reflection without horror to one's self?—But, alas! have not the French brought it to the question, whether Europe or France should be laid desolate? Religion, morality, justice, have been stabbed, torn up by the roots: every right has been trampled under foot. Marriage has been profaned and undermined by law; and no wonder, that, amidst such excesses, the poor arts have shared in the common ruin!—And who have been the perpetrators of, or advocates for, such universal devastation? Philosophers, geometricians, astronomers—a Condorcet, a Baillie, a bishop of Autun, and a doctor——, and the last the worst. The French had seen grievances, crying grievances! yet not under the good late king. But what calamities or dangers threatened or had fallen on——, but want of papal power, like his predecessor Calvin? If you say his house was burnt—but did he intend the fire should blaze on that side of the street? *Your* charity may believe him innocent—but your understanding does not. Well! I am glad to hear he is going to—I hope he will not bring back scalping, even to that national assembly of which he was proud of being elected a member! I doubt if Cartouche would have thought it an honour.

It was stuck up in Lloyd's coffee-house lately, that the duke of Orleans was named *Chef de la republique*. I thought it should be *Chef de la Lie publique*.

For the best and most comfortable part of your letter I have not thanked you yet, my dear friend; I mean the prospect of seeing you next month, and thank the zodiac, next month is very near. I must now for my own sake, as well as yours, hope that your health will continue to improve, as it is the condition of the bond—A pleasant word, that *continue*; it implies you have been mending.

Your postscript said you had been telling me a lie—So have I; for, on reading your letter again, I find you had named your *accoucheur* Cadell. I do not wonder he has been slow. I was told lately, that he has said that the public is so totally engrossed by politics (and many pieces of that sort I conclude come from his press), that the receipts of his shop, which used to



TO MRS. H. MORE.

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be fifteen thousand a year, have this year decreased two-thirds.—So the French par bricole have destroyed *our* literature too.

Adieu! I long to see both you and your pamphlet, and am

Most cordially yours,

ORFORD.

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LETTER XXII.

April 27, 1794.

THIS is no plot to draw you into committing even a good deed on a Sunday, which I suppose the *literality* of your conscience would haggle about, as if the day of the week constitutes the sin, and not the nature of the crime. But you may defer your answer, till to-night is become to-morrow by the clock having struck one; and then you may do an innocent thing without any guilt, which a quarter of an hour sooner you would think abominable.—Nay, as an Irishman would say, you need not even *read* this note till the canonical hour is past.

In short, my dear madam, I gave your obliging message to lady W——, who will be happy to see you on Tuesday, at one o'clock. But as her staircase is very bad, as she is in a lodging, I have proposed that this meeting, for which I have been pining between two female fairs, may be held here in my house, as I had the utmost difficulty last night in climbing her *scala santa*, and I cannot undertake it again. But if you are so good as to send me a favourable answer to-morrow, I will take care you shall find her here at the time I mentioned, with your true admirer,

ORFORD.

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LETTER XXIII.

Berkeley-square, Saturday night, January 24, 1795.

MY BEST MADAM,

I WILL never more complain of your silence, for I am perfectly convinced that you have no idle, no unemployed moments. Your indefatigable benevolence



benevolence is incessantly occupied in good works; and your head and your heart make the utmost use of the excellent qualities of both. You have given proofs of the talents of one, and you certainly do not wrap the still more precious talent of the other in a napkin. Thank you a thousand times for your most ingenious plan<sup>1</sup>—may great success reward you!

I sent one instantly to the duchess of Gloucester, whose piety and zeal imitate yours at a distance; but she says she cannot afford to subscribe just at this severe moment, when the poor so much want her assistance—but she will on the thaw, and should have been flattered by receiving a plan from yourself. I sent another to lord H——, who, I trust, will show it to a much greater lady; and I repeated some of the facts you told me of the foul fiends, and their anti-*More* activity. I sent to Mr. White for half a dozen more of your plans, and will distribute them wherever I have hopes of their taking root and blossoming.—To-morrow I will send him my subscription<sup>2</sup>; and I flatter myself you will not think it a breach of Sunday, nor will I make this long, that I may not widen that fracture.—Good night! How calm and comfortable must your slumbers be on the pillow of every day's good deeds!

Monday.

Yesterday was dark as midnight.—Oh! that it may be the darkest day in all respects that we shall see!—But these are themes too voluminous and dismal for a letter, and which your zeal tells me you feel too intensely for me to increase, when you are doing all in your power to counteract them.

One of my grievances is, that the sanguinary inhumanity of the times has almost poisoned one's compassion, and makes one abhor so many thousands of our own species, and rejoice when they suffer for their crimes. I could feel no pity on reading the account of the death of Condorcet (if true, though I doubt it). He was one of the greatest monsters exhibited by history; and is said to have poisoned himself from famine and fear of the guillotine—and would be a new instance of what I suggested to you for a tract, to show, that though we must not assume a pretension to judging of divine judgments, yet we may believe that the œconomy of Providence has so disposed causes and

<sup>1</sup> The Cheap Repository for books, at this time set on foot. dispersion of the works sold at the Cheap Repository.

<sup>2</sup> To the fund for promoting the printing and

consequences,



consequences, that such villains as Danton, Robespierre, the duke of Orleans, &c. &c. do but dig pits for themselves.—I will check myself, or I shall wander into the sad events of the last five years—down to the rage of party that has sacrificed Holland! What a fund for reflection and prophetic apprehension! May we have as much wisdom and courage to stem our malevolent enemies, as it is plain, to our lasting honour, we have had charity to the French emigrants, and have bounty for the poor who are suffering in this dreadful season!

Adieu, thou excellent woman! thou reverse of that hyæna in petticoats, Mrs. ———, who to this day discharges her ink and gall on Marie Antoinette, whose unparalleled sufferings have not yet stanch'd that Alecto's blazing ferocity. Adieu! adieu!

Yours from my heart,

ORFORD.

P. S. I have subscribed five guineas at Mr. White's to your plan.

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L E T T E R XXIV.

Berkeley-square, February 13, 1795.

I RECEIVED your letter and packet of lays and virelays<sup>1</sup>, and heartily wish they may fall in bad ground, and produce a hundred thousand fold, as I doubt is necessary. How I admire the activity of your zeal and perseverance! Should a new church ever be built, I hope in a fide chapel there will be an altar dedicated to Saint Hannah, Virgin and Martyr; and that your pen, worn to the bone, will be inclosed in a golden reliquaire, and preserved on the shrine.

These few words I have been forced to dictate, having had the gout in my right hand above this fortnight; but I trust it is going off.

<sup>1</sup> Ballads, stories, tracts, &c. written by Mrs. H. More for the Cheap Repository:

The



## 624 LETTERS FROM THE HON. HORACE WALPOLE

The duchess<sup>a</sup> was much pleased with your writing to her, and ordered me to thank you. Your friend lady W—— is in town, and looks very well.

Adieu, best of women!

Yours most cordially,

ORFORD.

## L E T T E R XXV.

Strawberry-hill, August 29, 1796.

YOU are not only the most beneficent, but the most benevolent of human beings. Not content with being a perfect saint yourself, which (forgive me for saying) does not always imply prodigious compassion for others; not satisfied with being the most disinterested, nay, the reverse of all patriots, for you sacrifice your very slender fortune, not to improve it, but to keep the poor honest instead of corrupting them; and you write politics as simply, intelligibly and unartfully, not as cunningly as you can to mislead.—Well, with all these giant virtues, you can find room and time in your heart and occupations for harbouring and exercising what those monkeys of pretensions, the French, invented and called *les petites morales*, which were to supply society with filigree duties, in the room of all virtues, which they abolished on their road to the adoption of philosophy and atheism.—Yes, though for ever busied in exercising services and charities for individuals, or for whole bodies of people, you do not leave a cranny empty into which you can slip a kindness. Your enquiry after me to miss B—— is so friendly, that I cannot trust solely to her thanking you for your letter, as I am sure she will, having sent it to her as she is bathing in the sea at Bognor rocks; but I must with infinite gratitude give you a brief account of myself—a very poor one indeed must I give. Condemned as a cripple to my couch for the rest of my days I doubt I am. Though perfectly healed, and even without a scar, my leg is so weakened that I have not recovered the least use of it, nor can move cross my chamber unless lifted up and held by two servants. This constitutes me totally a prisoner.—But why should not I be so? What bu-

<sup>a</sup> Her royal highness the duchess of Gloucester.

ness



finest had I to live to the brink of seventy-nine? And why should one litter the world at that age? Then I thank God, I have vast blessings; I have preserved my eyes, ears and teeth; I have no pain left; and I would bet with any dormouse that it cannot outsleep me—And when one can afford to pay for every relief, comfort or assistance, that can be procured at fourscore, dares one complain? Must not one reflect on the thousands of old poor, who are suffering martyrdom, and have none of those alleviations?—O my good friend, I must consider myself as at my best; for, if I drag on a little longer, can I expect to remain even so tolerably?—Nay, does the world present a pleasing scene? Are not the devils escaped out of the swine, and overrunning the earth headlong? What a theme for meditation, that the excellent humane Louis seize should have been prevented from saving himself by that monster Drouet, and that that execrable wretch should be saved even by those, some of whom one may suppose he meditated to massacre; for at what does a Frenchman stop?—But I will quit this shocking subject, and for another reason too: I omitted one of my losses, almost the use of my fingers: they are so lame that I cannot write a dozen lines legibly, but am forced to have recourse to my secretary.—I will only reply by a word or two to a question you seem to ask; how I like ———? I do not care to say how little.—Alas! she has reversed experience, which I have long thought reverses its own utility by coming at the wrong end of our life when we do not want it. This author knew the world and penetrated characters before she had stepped over the threshold; and now she has seen so much of it she has little or no insight at all—perhaps she apprehended having seen too much—and kept the bags of foul air that she brought from the Cave of Tempests too closely tied.

Adieu, thou who mightest be one of the cleverest of women if thou didst not prefer being *one* of the best! And when I say *one* of the best, I have not engaged my vote for the second.

Yours most gratefully,

ORFORD.



And why should one live to the point of seventy-nine? And why should one live the world at that age? Thank God, I have not blighted; I have not blighted my eyes, ears and teeth; I have no pain left; and I would not pay for every relief, comfort or assistance that can be procured at fourscore. I must not one reflect on the thousands of old people who are suffering martyrdom, and have none of those alleviations. O my good friend, I must consider myself as at my best; for, if I stay on a little longer, can I expect to remain even tolerably? Nay, does the world present a pleasing scene? Are not the devils escaped out of the wine, and overrunning the earth hedging? What a theme for meditation, that the excellent human frame, which should have been preserved from being hurt by the elements, should be thus exposed to the elements, and that the excellent machine should be broken down by those elements, whom one may suppose to be intended to maintain it? What does a Frenchman say?—But I will quit this shocking subject, and for another reason too; I omitted one of my letters, should the misapprehensions; they are to blame that I cannot write a dozen lines together, but am forced to have recourse to my secretary. I will only reply by a word or two to a question you seem to ask; how I like— I do not care for the how matter. And the best-remembered experience, which I have had, though I never had any other, is my own; by coming at the wrong end of one, when we do not want it. This author knew the world and practiced the virtues before he had stepped over the threshold; and now he has seen much of it, he has faith or no insight at all; perhaps the apprehensions having been too much— and kept the page of his book that he brought from the Case of T. Temple; too short, such.

Adieu then who might be one of the clearest of women in their day, and yet being one of the best! And when I see of the best, I have not engaged my soul for the world.

Your most faithful

OLIVER

