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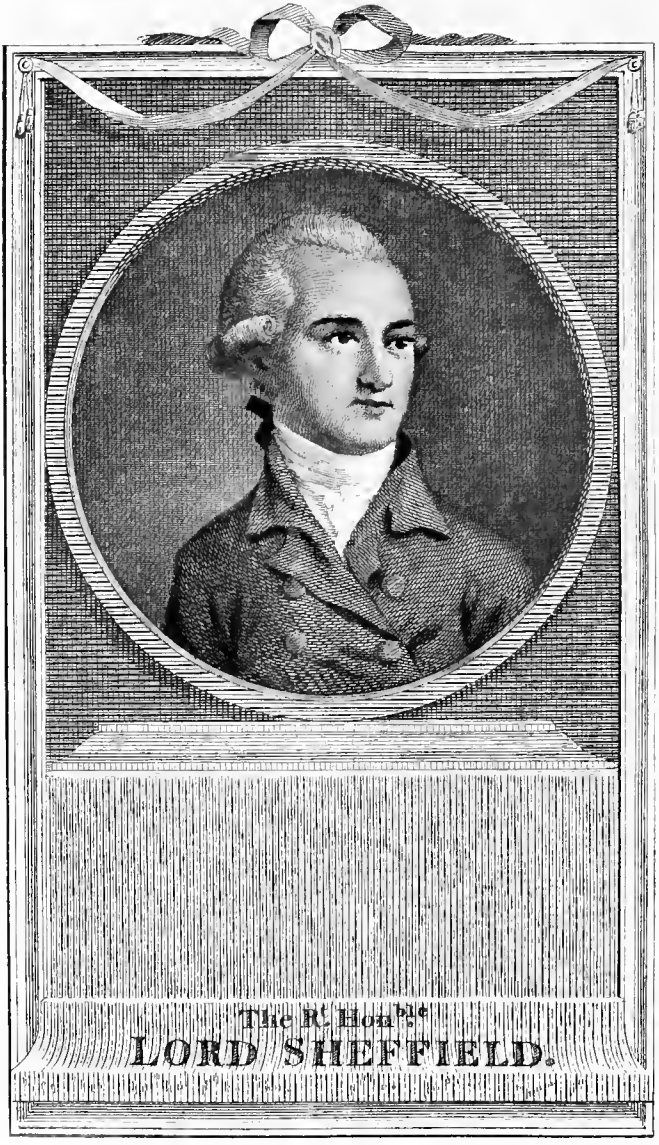
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No. 66

PRIVATE LETTERS OF EDWARD GIBBON



The Rt. Hon.ble
LORD SHEFFIELD.

THE WORKS OF EDWARD GIBBON

PRIVATE LETTERS



NEW YORK
FRED DEFAU & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

PRIVATE LETTERS

OF

EDWARD GIBBON

(1753–1794)

EDITED BY

ROWLAND E. PROTHERO

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THE PRIVATE LETTERS OF EDWARD GIBBON

On June 8, 1753, Edward Gibbon, then sixteen years of age, and an undergraduate of Magdalen College, Oxford, was received into the Roman Catholic Church by a Jesuit named Baker, one of the chaplains to the Sardinian Embassy. His change of religion led to his removal from the University, and decided his father to place him under the care of M. Pavilliard, a Calvinist minister at Lausanne. Escorted by M. Frey, a Swiss gentleman of Basle, Gibbon left England on June 19, 1753. His first letter announces his safe arrival.

TO HIS FATHER

[Lausanne], July 30th, 1753.

Dear Sir,

I must beg you to excuse my not having wrote till now, but knowing that Mr. Frey had given you an account of my safe arrival by the first post, I chose to stay some time, that I might be able to give you a more exact account of my present situation. After a pretty tiresome journey of eleven days, I got safe to Lausanne. Mr. Frey, when he had delivered me into Mr. Pavilliard's hands, left the place and went to Geneva. I have now been with him a month, and during the whole time have been treated by him with the greatest civility imaginable. I read French twice every day with him. I already understand almost all that is said, and can ask for any common things I want. With regard to other things, the people here are extremely civil to strangers, and endeavour to make this town as agreeable as possible. The English here are Mr. Townshend, nephew to the present Lord Townshend, Lord

Huntingtower, Mr. Crofts, and Mr. Umberstone. I have also been introduced to the Earl of Blessington, who resides here now with his family, as well as to Madame de Brissoné, to whom you gave me a letter of recommendation, and who is an extremely agreeable woman. This is the chief I have to say of the place. As to the climate, I have reason to think it will agree extremely well with me. When I was at Calais my books were seized and sent to Paris to be examined, but a friend there, whom Mr. Frey has wrote to, is to send them to Lausanne. I must beg my sincere compliments to Miss Ellison.

I am, dear Sir,
With the greatest respect and sincerity,
Your most obedient and most dutiful son,
EDWARD GIBBON.

TO HIS AUNT, MISS CATHERINE PORTEN [1]

February, 1755.

DEAR MADAM,

I have at length good news to tell you; I am now a good Protestant, and am extremely glad of it.[2] I have in all my letters taken notice of the different movements of my mind. Entirely Catholic when I came to Lausanne, wavering long time between the two systems, and at last fixed for the Protestant, when that conflict was over, I had still another difficulty. Brought up with all the ideas of the Church of

[1] Judith Porten, the mother of Edward Gibbon, was the third and youngest daughter of Mr. James Porten, a merchant of London. She died in December, 1747, leaving the maternal care of her son to her sister, Miss Catherine Porten, the "Aunt Kitty" of the later correspondence, to whom this letter is addressed. After her father's commercial ruin, Miss Catherine Porten opened a boarding-house for Westminster School, in College Street. Under her care Gibbon spent the two years which he passed at Westminster. He entered the school in January, 1748, and was placed in the second form.

[2] "M. Pavilliard has described to me the astonishment with which he gazed on Mr. Gibbon standing before him; a thin little figure, with a large head, disputing and urging, with the greatest ability, all the best arguments that had ever been used in favour of popery." [Lord Sheffield.]

England, I could scarce resolve to communion with Presbyterians, as all the people of this country are. I at last got over it in considering that, whatever difference there may be between their churches and ours in the government and discipline, they still regard us as brethren, and profess the same faith as us. Determined, then, in my design, I declared it to the ministers of the town assembled at Mr. Pavilliard's, who, having examined me, approved of it, and permitted me to receive the communion with them, which I did Christmas Day, from the hands of Mr. Pavilliard, who appeared extremely glad of it. I am so extremely myself, and do assure you feel a joy pure, and the more so as I know it to be not only innocent but laudable.

Could I leave off here I should be very glad, but I have another piece of news to acquaint you with. Mr. Pavilliard has already hinted it in the letter you have, I suppose, already received, and which I have translated into English. Let me tell you the whole fact as it is really past.

One evening I went to see Mr. Gee, one of the English now here. I found him in his room, playing at Pharaon with some other gentlemen. I would have retired, but he desiring me to stay, I took a chair and sat down by the fire. I continued to look at the gamesters about half an hour, till one of them going away, Gee desired me to take his place, and I refused; but on his assuring me that I might punt as low as I would, at last complied, and soon lost about half a guinea; this vexed me, and I continued upon my word. The play warmed, and about three o'clock the next morning I found I had lost only forty guineas. Guess my situation (which I did not dare communicate to any one); such a loss, and an utter impossibility of paying it. I took the worst party I could. I demanded my revenge; they gave it me, and the second meeting was still worse than the first. It cost me 1760 francs, or 110 guineas.

Never had I felt a despair equal to that I had then. I was a great while hesitating upon the most violent parties. At last

I resolved to go seek my money in England, not doubting to be able to raise that sum at London. I had not forgot that step would expose me to all the indignation of my father, but I shut my eyes on all those considerations, to reflect that it was my only resource to pay my debt and to disengage my word; in pursuance of this, I bought a horse, a watch, and some other things of Mr. Gee himself, payable with the rest in England, and set out proposing to sell those things to carry me on my journey. Was successful as far as Geneva, but there the difficulty I found to dispose of my horse having stopped me some days, Pavilliard, who had perceived my evasion, ran after me, and half entreaties, half force, brought me back to Lausanne with him.

I am here at present, not knowing what to do; the term given me almost out, and my creditors extremely pressing. What party can I take? Should I acquaint my father with it? What first-fruits of a conversion should I give him? I have then no other resource than you. Tell me not you are poor, that you have not enough for yourself. I do not address myself to you as the richest, but as the kindest of my relations; nor do I ask it you as a gift, but as a loan. If you could not furnish me the whole sum, let me have at least a part of it I know you have thoughts of doing something for me by your will; I beg you only to anticipate it. I shall make no use of any other prayers than this plain recite of my situation; if it produces no effect on you, nothing else would. Remember only that my term finished March 15. I tremble for your answer, but beg it may be speedy. I am too much agitated to go on. I will tell you something of myself in my next, *i.e.* very soon.

I am, dear Kitty,

Your unfortunate nephew,[1]

E. GIBBON.

[1] "Pray remember this letter was not addressed to his mother-in-law, but his aunt, an old cat as she was to refuse his request." This endorsement was written on the above letter, in his stepmother's hand.

P.S. — I have enclosed a *carte blanche* — write there a promise for what you send me; it may serve you with my father in case of my death.

P.S. — You may inquire for Grand and Wombwell, bankers, who will give you bills upon Mr. Grand, banker, at Lausanne for as much as you will.

TO HIS FATHER

March 1st, 1755.

DEAR SIR,

As Mr. Pavilliard writes to you at present, I will not let slip the occasion of sending my letter by the same post. Give me leave, sir, to demand of you, once more, and to demand of you with the last earnestness, the return of your paternal tenderness, which I have forfeited by the unhappy step I have made. I hope to merit that return by my behaviour. Give me leave, too, to repeat my former demands of some masters, as for the *manêge* for fencing and for dancing. With regard to the last, I own that Mr. Pavilliard, overcome by importunities, and imagining you would not disapprove of it, gave me leave to take it about three months ago, and I actually learn. My health still continues good, and I continue my studies in the same manner I have already described to you. The only news I have to tell you is that the famous Mr. de Voltaire [1] is come to spend, as he says, the rest of his days here. He has bought an estate near Geneva, where he proposes to spend the summer, and to pass the winter at a country house he has hired near Lausanne.

Give me now leave, dear Sir, to finish, repeating the demand of your former affection. If I could hope to hear from you I should think myself completely happy.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient and most dutiful son,

E. GIBBON.

[1] Voltaire lived from 1755 to 1758 at *les Délices* near Geneva, and within Genevan territory.

TO MISS CATHERINE PORTEN

September 20th, 1755.

DEAR MADAM,

In compliance with your request, I answer the very day I have received it. I own you had vexed me; not so much in refusing me the money I asked you, as by revealing the thing to my father. But what is done cannot be undone, and as my father has forgiven me, I think I may do as much for you. I consent, then, to the renewal of our correspondence with all my heart. I shall begin by the tail of your letter. My whole debt was not with Gee; a great part was with a person of this town, who has heard reason easily enough. He has consented to receive a note by which I own the debt, and promise to pay him when I can. Gee has not been so easy. After having obliged him to take back the watch and the mare, the debt was still at fifty guineas. I bought him for twenty another watch, paying (as I do still) two guineas a month to the watchmaker, and which Mons. Pavilliard and I contrive to retrench out of my other expenses. Gee left us about four months ago. Have you a mind to know his destiny? Yes. Hear it, then. His parents had ordered him forty guineas for his journey, but as they had allowed him to stay a fortnight at Paris, he was to take twenty more in that place. Gee quits Lausanne in this manner. Suppose him at Lyons. He goes immediately to the correspondent of his banker, for whom he had a letter of recommendation. "Sir," says he, in accosting him, "I have a letter for you from your correspondent, Mons. Grand of Lausanne. You will find in it that he desires you to pay me twenty-five guineas at sight." The banker puts on his spectacles, reads the letter, but finds nothing in it about money. Upon which he tells Gee that certainly there is some mistake, and he cannot give him a farthing before it is cleared up. Gee replies that he must be at Paris a certain

day, and that without money he cannot go. In a word, for I hate long stories, the banker gives him the money, but writes to his correspondent at Paris to stop Gee's twenty guineas. He, having some wind of the affair, runs post, day and night, arrives at Paris four hours before the letter, and draws the money. Gee's adventures at Paris would take up a volume, as he played a great deal. Once he had a hundred and fifty thousand livres, French money, in his pocket (£6700), but a week after he was 1500 guineas in debt, thanks to the famous Mr. Taff and some others of much the same stamp. The end was *that his mother, though extremely poor, paid all his debts*, and sent him into England, where he is now, having lost his commission, having hardly any other resource than his Majesty's highway. So much for Gee.

A tear to poor Nell; she really deserves it. Am glad Nemmy is well married. Would write to my aunt Hester,[1] but know not what to say to her. You tell me Snell and Milton are gone; where? Compliments to Bett Gilbert and to the Darrels since you are at Richmond. I hurry over; but, *à propos*, who directed your letter, for it is not your hand? I hurry over all these things to come to my father's marriage.

About a fortnight ago I received a vastly kind letter from my father of the 18th of August (inquire the day of his marriage). He forgave me in it all my past faults, promised never to speak of them again to me, provided only I kept the promises I had made him about my future behaviour; allows me to make a little tour about Switzerland, which I had asked him, and tells me that, after having completed my studies and my exercises, he would make me make that of

[1] Miss Hester Gibbon died unmarried in 1790, at the age of eighty-six, at King's Cliffe in Northamptonshire. William Law, author of the *Serious Call*, originally her brother's tutor at Putney, died at her house in 1761. Hester Gibbon is stated to have been the Miranda of the *Serious Call;* but her age at the date when the book was published (1728) makes this doubtful.

France and Italy. But not a syllable about his marriage.[1] Three days after I heard of it by the canal of a certain Mr. Hugonin, whose father is our neighbour in Hampshire, but without any particularities either of name or anything else. Guess my surprise; you know he had always protested that he never would marry again — at least, had he done it in the time he was angry with me, I should have been less struck; but now what can he mean by it? What frightens me most is what I remember you told me; if my father married again, by my grandfather's will the estate went to the children of the second bed, and that I had only 200 a year, provided the second wife had more fortune than my mother, who had only £1500. You may easily guess the anxiety that has put me in. I have wrote to a friend in England, who I think I can trust to get me a copy of that will out of Doctors' Commons; but though sure of his discretion, I do not know whether he will care to serve me. *Could you not do it YOURSELF?* and inquire whether my father has not taken care of me by his marriage contract.

You say that Mrs. Gibbon (Miss Patton) has set my father against the Mallets.[2] I do not know if 'tis so very good a sign. Since she was intimate with him when I was under Ward's hands, I should think you must have heard something of her. Do make some inquiries about her and send them me. I wonder what will become of my poor cousin. She will be sold at last. Since they are in France, and that the war is going to break out, what if they should come to Lausanne?

Now for myself. As my father has given me leave to make

[1] Gibbon's father married his second wife, Miss Dorothea Patton, in 1755.

[2] David Mallet, or Malloch, poet, playwright, and miscellaneous writer (1705–65), is best known for his ballad of *William and Margaret*, his unsubstantiated claim to the authorship of *Rule Britannia*, and his edition of Bolingbroke's works. Mallet was "a great declaimer in all the London coffee-houses against Christianity," and the obtrusion of his sceptical views made his household unpleasing to David Hume. To his house Gibbon was taken after his reception into the Church of Rome.

a journey round Switzerland, we set out to-morrow. Buy a map of Switzerland, 'twill cost you but a shilling, and follow me. I go by Iverdun, Neufchâtel, Bienne or Biel, Soleure or Solothurn, Bâle or Basil, Bade, Zurich, Lucerne, and Bern. The voyage will be of about four weeks; so that *I hope to find a letter from you waiting for me.* As my father had given me leave to learn what I had a mind, I have learned to ride, and learn actually to dance and draw. Besides that, I often give ten or twelve hours a day to my studies. I find a great many agreeable people here; see them sometimes, and can say upon the whole, without vanity, that, tho' I am the Englishman here who spends the least money, I am he who is the most generally liked. I told you that my father had promised to send me into France and Italy. I have thanked him for it. But if he would follow my plan, he won't do it yet a while. I never liked young travellers; they go too raw to make any great remarks, and they lose a time which is (in my opinion) the most precious part of a man's life. My scheme would be, to spend this winter at Lausanne — for tho' 'tis a very good place to acquire the air of good company and the French tongue, we have no good professors — to spend (I say) the winter at Lausanne; go into England to see my friends a couple of months, and after that, finish my studies, either at Cambridge (for after what's past one cannot think of Oxford), or at a university in Holland. If you liked the scheme, *could you propose it to my father by Metcalf, or somebody else who has a certain credit over him?* I forgot to ask you whether, in case my father writes to tell me his marriage, would you advise me to compliment my mother-in-law? I think so. My health is so very regular that I have nothing to say about it.

I have been the whole day writing you this letter; the preparations for our voyage gave me a thousand interruptions. Besides that, I was obliged to write in English. This last reason will seem a parradox, but I assure you the French is

much more familiar to me. *À propos*, do you know anything of my Lord Newnham? I heard he was in Germany.

I am, dear Kitty,

Your affectionate nephew

(*Not your grave, obedient, humble servant*),

E. GIBBON.

TO HIS FATHER

LAUSANNE, March 29th, 1758.

DEAR SIR,

It is with the greatest pleasure that I see the time approach in which I may hope to enjoy what I have so long desired, your presence and the view of my native country. With regard to the road, the war [1] renders all roads almost impracticable. However, after having consulted the persons most used to travelling, they all agree that that of France will be the least dangerous. I shall pass for a Swiss Officer in Holland. I shall have Dutch Regimentals, and a passeport from the Canton of Berne. I am pretty sure that my Tongue won't betray me. I think of setting out the 8th or 10th of next month, and if I stay a few days in Holland to look a little about me, I may be in London the 2nd or 3rd of May, where I hope to meet you. I return you beforehand my most hearty thanks for your condescendance in concurring with my impatience. Tho' you think I shall not relish Beriton, I can assure you that the prospect of passing the summer in yours & Mrs. Gibbon's compagny, dividing my time between successive study, exercise, and ease, is the most agreable one I can conceive. I shall punctually follow your directions about money, and shall not abuse of the confidence you have in me. Be so good as to assure Mrs. Gibbon of all the sentiments Esteem and duty can inspire.

[1] The Seven Years' War, 1756–63. — "A war," says Horace Walpole, "that reaches from Muscovy to Alsace and from Madras to California" (Horace Walpole to the Earl of Strafford, June 12, 1759).

As I run post I cannot bring her the Arquebuzade Water myself, but I shall remit to a waggoner, who will be at London almost as soon as I, several bottles of the very best I can find.

I am, Dear Sir, with the greatest respect and the truest affection,

Your most obedient humble Servant and Son,

E. GIBBON.

TO HIS FATHER

THE HAGUE, April the 29th, 1758.

DEAR SIR,

After a journey pretty tiresome, but in whitch I have not run the least risk, I am arrived safe at the Hague. Holland is certainly a country well worth the curiosity of a stranger, but as I have not the time to examine it as it deserves, I choose rather to put off that pleasure, than to enjoy it imperfectly. Perhaps my desire to see you soon deceives me, perhaps that desire is the only true source of my great haste. However it be, I intend to embark at Helvetsluys next Wednesday, and if the wind is good I may be in London Saturday or Sunday, where I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you and Mrs. Gibbon.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant and Son,

E. GIBBON.

TO HIS AUNT, MISS HESTER GIBBON

BERITON, July the 20th, 1758.

DEAR MADAM,

Tho' the public voice had long since accustomed me to think myself honoured in calling Mrs. Gibbon my aunt, yet I never enjoyed the happiness of living near her, and of instructing myself not less by her example than by her precepts. Your piety, Madam, has engaged you to prefer a retreat to

the world. Errors, justifiable only in their principle, forced my father to give me a foreign education. Fully disabused of the unhappy ideas I had taken up, and at last restored to myself, I am happy in the affection of the tenderest of fathers. May I not hope, Madam, to see my felicity compleat by the acquisition of your esteem and friendship? Duty and Inclination engage me equally to solicit them, all my endeavours shall tend to deserve them, and, with Mrs. Gibbon, I know that to deserve is to obtain. I have now been in England about two months, and should have acquitted myself much sooner of my duty, but frequent journeys to London scarce left me a moment to myself, and since a very ugly fever my father has had, engrossed all my thoughts. He is now entirely recovered, and desires his love and service to you, Madam, as well as to Mr. Law.

I am, Dear Madam,

With the sincerest esteem and most profound respect,
Your most obedient humble servant and dutiful nephew,
E. GIBBON, JUNIOR.

TO HIS FATHER

LONDON, October the 24th, 1758.

DEAR SIR,

The Chevalier and myself, after a pretty tedious journey, which his conversation did not render less so, arrived in town Sunday evening. We have got our old lodgings in Charles Street. Hugonin arrived a few minutes afterwards, tired of the country, and he seems to be now tired of the town. I have not yet got the lottery tickets. I shall certainly buy yours, but my forgetfulness of leaving money in my bureau may perhaps hinder me from buying my own myself. We have no great news in town, but that, one day, Sir George Elkin, a man of family and fortune, has married Miss Roach, a woman of the town. Everybody pities him. He is but eighteen: unluckily they were married in Scotland.

She stayed five days with him, the sixth she ran away and came up to London. I beg you would assure Mrs. Gibbon of my respects. I hope to see you the latter end of the week.

I am, Dear Sir,
With the greatest respect,
Your most obedient servant and dutiful son,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

November, 1758.

DEAR MADAM,

I arrived in town between four and five o'clock safe and well, though almost frozen. — Turton [1] was not to be found, but I will endeavour to see him to-morrow; though I believe that change of air and scene will be of greater benefit to me, than any prescriptions he can order me. — I write from Mrs. Porten's, who begs to be remembered to you in the kindest terms. She is totally ignorant of *forms*, but will see Mrs. Darrel to-morrow morning and endeavour to settle everything. Let me entreat you, my dearest Mrs. Gibbon, to try to divert thoughts, which cannot be suppressed, and believe me that I can only be easy as I have reason to think that you are so.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. G.

TO HIS FATHER

New Bond Street, December the 30th, 1758.

DEAR SIR,

Your illness really alarmed me. To be taken in so sudden and violent a manner. If you had not assured me that you was so much better, I would have set out immediately for Beriton. I hope you have had some advice better than

[1] Dr. John Turton (1736–1806) was in 1782 appointed physician to both the King and Queen. He attended Goldsmith on his death-bed.

Harvey's. I hope too that Mrs. Gibbon tries to hinder you from going out in the cold. I say tries, because I know that with regard to going out you are a most ungovernable patient.

At last Maty and I have downright quarrelled. He behaved so very contemptuously to me. Never made the least excuse for having eked out two weeks into two months, left two letters I wrote him since, without any answers, never came near me, that at last I desired him to send back my manuscript. He did so. I then wrote him a letter to explain my behaviour. He answered it by another politely bitter. So *tout est fini!*

I return you, Dear Sir, my sincerest thanks for telling me of my faults. I shall always consider it the truest proof of your affection for me. I hope you do not impute my not writing to Mrs. Gibbon to the least want of regard for her. I should be the most ungrateful of men, if I did not love and respect her like my own mother. But I really thought that in a union like yours, writing to one was writing to both. However, dear Sir, it is enough that you think it an omission, for me to repair it by the very next post.

I endeavour to see no company in town but such as you yourself would approve of. Mrs. Cilesia's and Mrs. Hayes's are the two houses I frequent the most. The former has promised to introduce me to Lady Harvey's [1] Assembly, where ('tis true though wonderful) there is no card-playing, but very good company and very good conversation. I am also to meet at Mrs. Cilesia's the great David Hume. I shall seek his acquaintance without being discouraged by Maty.

I have answered Bordot's letter. He desires a present relief, a quick release, and a good place in England. The first alone is in my power. I beg you would give him Five

[1] Lady Hervey, the beautiful "Molly Lepel," daughter of Brigadier-General Nicholas Lepel, was the widow of John, Lord Hervey, the "Sporus" of Pope's Prologue to the *Satires*, and the Boswell of George II. and Queen Caroline. Married in October, 1720, she was the mother of four sons, three of whom in succession became Earl of Bristol. She died September 2, 1768.

Guineas and deduct it upon the Christmas quarter of my Allowance. I do not doubt but you will do something for him, as I really think his situation deserves pity. This cessation of the prisoner's allowance shows, I think, better than fifty monitors to how low an ebb the French are reduced. I cannot help pitying them too. I do not think it necessary to have no compassion, in order to be a good Englishman. My unfashionable politicks are that a war can hardly be a good one, and a peace hardly a bad one. My sincerest love and regard wait upon Mrs. Gibbon.

I am, Dear Sir,

With the highest regard and best wishes for your health

Your most affectionate son and humble servant,

(E.) GIBBON.

P.S. — The Barometer was broke on the road. You will lay it upon me. I lay it upon François, and François upon Henry who packed up the things. Shall I buy another? Numbers 15553, 15554 Blanks.

TO HIS FATHER

1760.

DEAR SIR,

An address in writing, from a person who has the pleasure of being with you every day, may appear singular. However, I have preferred this method, as upon paper I can speak without a blush, and be heard without interruption. If my letter displeases you, impute it, Dear Sir, only to yourself. You have treated me not like a son, but like a friend. Can you be surprized that I should communicate to a friend all my thoughts, and all my desires? Unless the friend approve them, let the father never know them; or, at least, let him know at the same time, that however reasonable, however eligible, my scheme may appear to me, I would rather forget it for ever, than cause him the slightest uneasiness.

When I first returned to England, attentive to my future

interest, you were so good as to give me hopes of a seat in Parliament. This seat, according to the Custom of our venal country, was to be bought, and fifteen hundred pounds were mentioned as the price of the purchase. This design flattered my vanity, as it might enable me to shine in so august an assembly. It flattered a nobler passion; I promised myself that by the means of this seat I might be one day the instrument of some good to my country. But I soon perceived how little a mere virtuous inclination, unassisted by talents, could contribute towards that great end; and a very short examination discovered to me, that those talents were not fallen to my lot. Do not, Dear Sir, impute this declaration to a false modesty, the meanest species of pride. Whatever else I may be ignorant of, I think I know myself, and shall always endeavour to mention my good qualities without vanity, and my defects without repugnance. I shall say nothing of the most intimate acquaintance with his country and language, so absolutely necessary to every Senator. Since they may be acquired, to alledge my deficiency in them, would seem only the plea of laziness. But I shall say with great truth, that I never possessed that gift of speach, the first requisite of an Orator, which use and labour may improve, but which nature can alone bestow. That my temper, quiet, retired, somewhat reserved, could neither acquire popularity, bear up against opposition, nor mix with ease in the crowds of public life. That even my genius (if you will allow me any) is better qualified for the deliberate compositions of the Closet, than for the extemporary discourses of the Parliament. An unexpected objection would disconcert me; and as I am incapable of explaining to others what I do not thoroughly understand myself, I should be meditating, while I ought to be answering. I even want necessary prejudices of party, and of nation. In popular assemblies, it is often necessary to inspire them; and never Orator inspired well a passion, which he did not feel himself. Suppose me even mistaken in

my own Character; to set out with the repugnance such an opinion must produce, offers but an indifferent prospect. But I hear you say It is not necessary that every man should enter into Parliament with such exalted hopes. It is to acquire a title the most glorious of any in a free country, and to employ the weight and consideration It gives in the service of one's friends. Such motifs, tho' not glorious, yet are not dishonourable; and if we had a borough in our command, if you could bring me in without any great expence, or if our fortune enabled us to despise that expence, then indeed I should think them of the greatest strength. But with our private fortune is it worth while to purchase at so high a rate, a title, honourable in itself, but which I must share with every fellow that can lay out Fifteen hundred pounds? Besides, Dear Sir, a merchandize is of little value to the owner, when he is resolved not to sell it.

I should affront your penetration, did I not suppose you now see the drift of this letter. It is to appropriate to another use the sum you destined to bring me into Parliament; to employ it, not in making me great, but in rendering me happy. I have often heard you say yourself, that the allowance you had been so indulgent as to grant me, tho' very liberal in regard to your estate, was yet but small, when compared with the almost necessary extravagances of the age. I have indeed found it so, notwithstanding a good deal of œconomy, and an exemption from many of the common expences of youth. This, Dear Sir, would be a way of supplying these deficiencies, without any additional expence to you. — But I forbear. — If you think my proposals reasonable, you want no entreaties to engage you to comply with them; if otherwise, all will be without effect.

All that I am afraid of, Dear Sir, is, that I should seem not so much asking a favour, as this really is, as exacting a debt. After all I can say, you will still remain the best judge of my good, and your own circumstances. Perhaps, like most

Landed Gentlemen, an addition to my annuity would suit you better than a sum of money given at once. Perhaps the sum itself may be too considerable. Whatever you shall think proper to bestow upon me, or in whatever manner, will be received with equal gratitude.

I intended to stop here; but as I abhor the least appearance of art, I think it will be better to lay open my whole scheme at once. The unhappy War which now desolates Europe, will oblige me to defer seeing France till a peace. But that reason can have no influence upon Italy, a country which every Scholar must long to see; should you grant my request, and not disaprove of my manner of employing your bounty, I would leave England this autumn, and pass the winter at Lausanne, with M. de Voltaire and my old friends. The armies no longer obstruct my passage, and it must be indifferent to you, whether I am at Lausanne or at London during the winter, since I shall not be at Beriton. In the spring I would cross the Alps, and after some stay in Italy, as the war must then be terminated, return home thro' France, to live happily with you and my dear Mother. I am now two or three and twenty; a tour must take up a considerable time, and tho' I believe you have no thoughts of settling me soon, (and I am sure I have not) yet so many things may intervene, that the man who does not travel early, runs a great risk of not travelling at all. But this part of my scheme, as well as the whole, I submit entirely to you.

Permit me, Dear Sir, to add, that I do not know whether the compleat compliance with my wishes could encrease my love and gratitude; but that I am very sure, no refusal could minish those sentiments with which I shall always remain, Dear Sir, your most dutiful and obedient son and servant,

E. GIBBON, JUNIOR.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Winchester Camp[1], Monday Morning, [in pencil] '61?

DEAR MADAM,

I have got four dozen of Franks for you from Sir Gerard Napier, which I shall send you by return of the waggon. In return I must beg the favor of a book. It is Greek, but don't be frightened; you may easily find it. It is a short but very thick folio, bound in parchment, the title on the back in large letters, either Strabo, or Strabonis Geographia, printed in two columns, one Greek, the other Latin. I am pretty sure it is upon the couch. I hope you like the Devizes; the place is good, & I think the neighbourhood to Bath no objection. I hope soon to meet you there, and am,

Dear Madam,

Yours most affectionately,

E. GIBBON, JUNIOR.

TO HIS FATHER

Bologne, January the 25th, 1763.

DEAR SIR,

You see by the date of my letter where I am. I arrived here in company with the Duke of Bridgewater, the Marquis of Tavistock, Lord Ossory and a Mr. Leigh, about three in the afternoon, after a tedious but pleasant passage

[1] In June, 1759, Gibbon and his father joined the Hampshire regiment of militia as respectively captain and major. The South battalion, to which they belonged, was kept "under arms, in constant pay and duty," from the date of its enrolment till December 23, 1762, when it was disbanded as a permanent force. The battalion was at Winchester Camp from June 25 to October 23, 1761, and from the latter date to February 28, 1762, at "the populous and disorderly town of Devizes" (see next letter). His *Autobiography* shows that Gibbon found that "a camp," as Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale in October, 1778, "however familiarly we may speak of it, is one of the great scenes of human life," and that, partially at least, he agreed with

of about nine hours. We were forced to come in here, not being able to make Calais. I have hired a chaise, & propose setting out to-morrow, but alone, as the road will not supply horses for our number. I hope to be at Paris either Thursday or Friday. Writing in the midst of noise and hurry & being just ready to go to supper, you will excuse my ending abruptly.

I am, Dear Sir,
Yours most affectionately,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Paris, February the 12th, 1763.

DEAR MADAM,

You remember our agreement; short and frequent letters. The first part of the treaty you have no doubt of my observing: I think I ought not to leave you any of the second. *À propos* of treaty,[1] our definitive one was signed here yesterday, and this morning the Duke of Bridgewater and Mr. Neville went for London with the news of it. The plenipotentiaries sat up till ten o'Clock in the morning at the ambassador of Spain's ball, and then went to sign this treaty which regulates the fate of Europe.

Paris in most respects, has fully answered my expectations. I have a number of very good acquaintances which encrease every day, for nothing is so easy as the making them here. Instead of complaining of the want of them, I begin already to think of making a choice. Next Sunday for instance I have only three invitations to Dinner. Either in the houses you are already acquainted, you meet with people who ask you to come and see them, or some of your friends offer themselves to introduce you. When I speak of these con-

Lord Chesterfield, that "courts and camps are the only places to learn the world in."

[1] The Treaty of Paris was signed February 10, 1763.

nections, I mean chiefly for dinner & the evening. Suppers, as yet I am pretty much a stranger too, and I fancy shall continue so: for Paris is divided into two Species who have but little communication with each other. The one who is chiefly connected with the men of letters dine very much at home, are glad to see their friends, and pass the evenings till about nine in agreable and rational conversation. The others are the most fashionable, sup in numerous parties, and always play or rather game both before and after supper. You may easily guess which sort suits me best. Indeed, Madam, we may say what we please of the frivolity of the French, but I do assure you that in a fortnight passed at Paris I have heard more conversation worth remembering, and seen more men of letters among the people of fashion, than I had done in two or three winters in London.

Amongst my acquaintance I cannot help mentioning M. Helvetius,[1] the author of the famous book *de l'Esprit.* I met him at dinner at Madame Geoffrin's,[2] where he took great notice of me, made me a visit next day, & has ever since treated me not in a polite but a friendly manner. Besides being a sensible man an agreable companion, & the worthiest creature in the world He has a very pretty wife, a hundred thousand Livres a year and one of the best tables in Paris. The only thing I dislike in him is his great attachment to and admiration for Stanley,[3] whose character is indeed at Paris beyond any thing you can conceive. To the great civility of this foreigner, who was not obliged to take the least notice of me, I must just contrast the behaviour of the D. of B.[4] I could not see him (on account of his gout) till last

[1] Claude Adrien Helvétius (1715–1771) published his materialistic book, *De l'Esprit,* in 1758.

[2] Madame Geoffrin (1699–1777), a woman of humble origin, the widow of a wealthy ice-merchant, opened her *salon* to philosophers and men of letters and afterwards became famous for her friendship and good influence.

[3] The Right Hon. Hans Stanley, a distinguished diplomatist.

[4] John, fourth Duke of Bedford (1710–1771), to whom Gibbon had a letter of introduction from the Duke of Richmond.

Sunday. I was then introduced to him & presented my letter from the D[uke] of R[ichmond].[1] He received me civilly, desired I would apply to him whenever I wanted his assistance, and thus dismissed me. I have not heard of him since. Indeed I have often blushed for him, for I find his stateliness and avarice make him the joke of Paris. Instead of keeping any thing of a publick table, he hardly ever asks any body; while the Spaniard [2] gives balls every week, the magnificence of which is only exceeded by their politeness & elegance. Neville who is exactly Mr. W. Patton [3] received me very well, but seemed to laugh both at Mallet & his letter of recommendation.

I beg my duty to my father to whom I propose writing next week, and my most sincere compliments to the two Gentlemen.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most affectionately yours,
E. GIBBON, JUNIOR, *alias* DE GUIBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

PARIS, March the 25th, 1763.

DEAR MADAM,

I am afraid (as dates are stubborn things) that I have been rather too lazy. As you love truth, and know me, I will not attempt an awkward apology, but shall only say, that I will endeavor such a delay shall not happen a second time. My father has more extensive priviledges, and indeed he seems to be very well acquainted with them.

I still continue to like Paris, as well as I expected. You

[1] Charles, third Duke of Richmond, born 1735; ambassador at Paris, 1765; Secretary of State, 1766; Master of the Ordnance, 1783; died 1806.

[2] The Marquis Jeronymo Grimaldi, a member of an illustrious Genoese family, was at this time the Spanish ambassador. He negotiated the family compact of 1761 between France and Spain.

[3] Mrs. Gibbon's youngest brother.



know that is saying a great deal. In two months I am acquainted with more, (and more agreable) people, than I knew in London in two years. Indeed the way of life is quite different. Much less play, more conversation, and instead of our immense routs, agreable societies where you know and are known by almost every body you meet. I have added several families to those I have already mentioned to you, and I find my conquests multiply every day. With regard to Mrs. M.'s son,[1] I am glad to see that for once she has not exagerated; indeed she hardly could in speaking of him. We are now very intimate, & I think I begin to know his character. It is astonishing for a young French officer of the Guards. He is as reserved, as little a man of the world, and as awkward as I can be. But he has a fine natural understanding, improved upon almost every subject, a clear unprejudiced head, and a heart which seems to be full of the noblest sentiments of honor, probity and friendship. I will not decide too hastily, but I believe and hope that I am forming a connection which will last as long as my life. We see one another very often, and in most of my visits of curiosity he generally accompagnies me. These parties are of service to us both. I improve by the communication of his remarks, and he has occasion to see twenty places which he would perhaps not have seen for the too common reason, that they were in the place he had passed all his life in. The only unlucky circumstance is, that he has no women in his family. A Wife or a sister are, you know, most usefull and convenient things to bring friends together, whereas we are both single; he in his cousin's house, I in a lodging; and in this great town, are both obliged to get our living, which prevents our meeting so often as we could wish. Madame Bontems[2] is a very good sort of a woman, agreable

[1] M. d'Augny.

[2] Marie Jeanne de Chatillon, Madame Bontemps. Gibbon had met her son, who was acting as private secretary to the Duc de Nivernois in London,

and *sans pretensions*. She seems to have conceived a real motherly attachment for me. I generally sup there three or four times a week quite in a friendly way.

I have nothing new to say of his Excellency. I have not seen him since my last letter, and but once in all. Not a single invitation either general or particular, and tho' I have made it a rule to leave my name at the door, at proper intervalls, I have never been lett in. The behavior is so very singular (especially with *such a recommendation as mine*) that I am sometimes tempted to think, some ill offices must have been done me. Not that I am conscious of any thing wrong or even imprudent in my behaviour. On the contrary, whenever I have heard the D.'s manner of living here blamed and laughed at, I have always thought it right to try to justify him, even against my own conscience. Indeed I am sorry, for the honor of my country to see how contemptible a figure he makes amongst our late enemies and constant rivals. My only comfort is that the National character is as much revered as his is despised. What Cromwell wished is now litterally the case. The name of Englishman inspires as great an idea at Paris as that of Roman could at Carthage, after the defeat of Hannibal. Indeed the French are almost excessive. From being very unjustly esteemed a set of pirates and Barbarians, we are now, by a more agreable injustice, looked upon as a nation of Philosophers and Patriots. I wish we would consider this opinion as an encouragement to deserve a character, which I am afraid we have not yet attained. I could add many things (some curious enough) with regard to the reigning politicks and publick affairs; but I have no occasion to say *why* it is much better to talk them over in your Dressing room some time hence. Perhaps I have even said too much already.

With regard to Paris itself, I mean the houses and build-

at Mallet's house in November, 1762. She translated Thomson's *Seasons* into French prose in 1759.

ings, you know very well that their people of fashion are incomparably better lodged there than in London. Their vast Hotels, courts, stables, gardens, are very magnificent as well as convenient. A striking proof of the difference is the situation of our Embassador. He is full as well if not better lodged, in the Rue St. Dominique, than in Bloomsbury Square. However, his own house is reckoned one of the very best in London, and his hired one here is, both as to size, beauty and price, far inferior to a great many, even of that class, at Paris. Indeed I take the article of house-rent to be much higher than in London. Did you ever hear of seven and eight hundred and even a thousand pounds a year being given for a house unfurnished. There are instances of it here. But as to the middling people, even those of fashion, I like a London house better. Without a regular porter to answer at the door, our little street-doors are more convenient. A fine large court is a very agreable thing, but a dark nasty gate-way is a very disagreable one. When you get up stairs you generally meet with two rooms. If we sat as much in our bed-chambers as they do, we have as many. They have indeed besides, an ante-chamber ill fitted up, and much littered, which the servants inhabit all day, except at noon and night that it serves for an eating parlour.

I have just seen here two families, the one my father's acquaintance, the other your's. The first was Mr. Prowse, who only passed thro' Paris, in his way for Tours, to which place he was going, with all his family, for his health. I dined with him at Mr. Foley's [1] & went about with him to several places the next day. In consequence of some little civilities of that kind, he asked me to dine with him the day after. He is a very agreable sensible man, but a strange being in France. The second is your good friend Mrs. Poyntz,[2] whom I met by accident. She talked of you, whom

[1] The English banker at Paris.

[2] Mrs. Poyntz, wife of Stephen Poyntz, of Midgeham, Berkshire, was

she adores, asked me a hundred questions in a breath, told me all her own affairs, her tradesmen, her house-rent, her daughter, Lord Spencer, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c. &c., and insisted upon my calling upon her.

My love and duty to my father. I shall write to him next post and hope to hear from him sometimes. I have been obliged to draw for another hundred pounds. I do assure you I study the œconomical art.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most affectionately yours,
E. G.

TO HIS FATHER

Paris, April the 5th, 1763.

DEAR SIR,

I received your last letter with pleasure, because every thing that comes from you gives me pleasure; but I must own it afflicted me very much, as I see there are several things in which I have had the misfortune to displease either you or some other of my friends. I must endeavour to justify myself, and I think I can easily do it upon most of those heads.

Lord Litchfield [1] is angry at my writing to him. I am sorry for it and surprized at it at the same time. I could discover many reasons why he might not serve me, none that He could be angry at my application to him, especially as that application was made with all the decency and moderation, I could put into my letter. I should with pleasure have communicated it to you, and known your sentiments, but as we imagined here that the D. of B. would go away very soon, I was afraid that delay might destroy the very small hopes I had. Indeed I thought it the less necessary as I knew already your opinion both as to the eligibility of the thing, and the

mother of Lady Spencer and grandmother of Georgiana, the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire.

[1] George Henry Lee (1718–1772), who succeeded his father as third Earl of Lichfield in 1743, was one of the leaders of the Jacobites.

propriety of an application to the Noble Lord. I own the giving him no direction was not a happy specimen of my Secretarial acuracy.

As to my friends, Mallets, Worsleys,[1] Portens, &c. &c. &c. &c., I must plead guilty, very guilty indeed to the indictment. I will not take up my time and yours in vain excuses, my best and only excuse ought to be and shall be, more exactness for the future. Notwithstanding Mrs. M.'s outrageousness she is the person I trouble my head the least about. However I propose writing to her to-night tho' with great repugnance and difficulty. I neither chuse to go to the Bastille for sending her observations upon the French government, nor to fill my letter full of romantick protestations of attachment and friendship, which I do not feel for her, and which she feels for nobody. As to La Motte I cannot forgive him his complaints, when I have so much juster ones to make of him. Follow his advice I most certainly did not, since he never would give me any, tho' I asked him several times in as intelligible terms as I could properly make use of. I was forced to have recourse to my other friends, to Madame Bontems, to M. d'Augney and to M. de Mirabeau, and their directions have been very usefull to me. La Motte always shewed me such a dryness, such an unwillingness to connect himself at all with me, that I have been at last obliged to drop him almost entirely.

Do you think, dear Sir, that I would have stood upon the formality of a visit with the great Duke? Besides I had no occasion to do it. He returned mine the very next day. Since that time I have presented myself at his door once every week or ten days without being ever let in or hearing a syllable from him. What can I do more than sit down quiet and wonder at his behavior?

[1] Sir Thomas Worsley, Bart., Lieut.-Colonel of Gibbon's battalion of the Hampshire regiment, succeeded his father, Sir James Worsley, of Pilewell in Hampshire, and Appuldurcombe in the Isle of Wight.

I have enquired into Mr. Thos. Bradley's affair. Mr. Taaffe is no longer at Mr. George Woolfe's. He is in a much safer place, in the Châtelet, a prison of Paris for debt. He has settled with his English Creditors and given up his estate at Jamaica for the payment of his debts. He wants to compromise with his other Creditors who are very numerous, (but as they are convinced he wants to cheat them and that he only offers the same estate after the other debts are cleared, which cannot be in less than ten or fifteen years) they will hear of no compromise. All that Mr. Bradley could do, would be to join with those Creditors in case they should at last agree to his proposals. Mr. Taaffe's scheme is to keep another estate at Jamaica clear of his creditors. They on their side want to starve him into giving up that likewise. If Mr. Bradley thinks it worth his while to push the affair, it will be attended with some trouble and expence. He must impower somebody at Paris to act in his name, and in order to do so a journey to London will be necessary where he must find out Mr. Benjamin Bobbin an Attorney beyond the Royal Exchange, who does all that kind of business, and who will draw up a letter of attorney in French for him, and get it certified by the French ambassador; a formality absolutely necessary to give it weight in this country. As to his Attorney at Paris, the necessary delays of the Law will render it proper to have a man who is established at ——

I cannot therefore offer myself, (which I should otherwise do with great pleasure,) and I should hope Mr. Foley would be willing as he is certainly able to undertake it. I wish I could give Mr. Bradley a better account, but this seems to be the true state of the case.

My losses at Play have not been very considerable since I have been here, they amount to seven Livres lost one night at Picquet. It is indeed rather my good luck than my prudence that saves me. All my Societies are houses where I never see a card, so that I do not fall because I have no temptation. I find Paris however very expensive. One article which, tho'

it encreases my draughts at present, will diminish them hereafter is cloathes, ruffles, silk stockings, &c., which after serious deliberation, I thought I had better make a provision of at this Capital of the Fashionable world. However as I begin to have pretty well seen Paris, I propose (if you have no objection) setting out about the eighth of next month, & going thro' Dijon and Besançon to Lausanne to pass two or three quiet and cheap months with my old friends there on my way to Italy. Adieu, Dear Sir, my paper fails me and I would avoid a cover.

I am, Dear Sir,
Yours most affectionately,
E. G.

TO HIS FATHER

Lausanne, May the 31st, 1763.

DEAR SIR,

I staid four or five days at Besançon longer than I intended, so that I got here only the 25th. It was even with some difficulty that I could disengage myself so soon from Mr. Acton's civilities. Indeed nothing could exceed them. Not only they insisted upon my lodging in the house, but during the time I passed in it, the sole business of the family seemed to be finding out amusements for me. They carried me to the best houses in the place, showed me whatever was worth seeing, and made several parties for me in the country. What I saw of Besançon pleased me so much, that, could I have stayed there without being an inconvenience to them, I should have liked to have stayed a few days or even weeks longer. Mr. Acton is the best sort of man in the world, and is bent on doing everything most agreable. He has a great deal of business, many friends and a very high reputation. He has indeed unluckily been too long out of England to remember his own language, and not long enough in France, to have learnt that of the country. He talked a

vast deal of you, and tho' it is so long since you have been there, I have found your memory very fresh & many people who have enquired after you. The two sisters in particular of your *écuyer* (I have forgot their names) talked to me by the hour of their old friend Monsieur de Guibon. As to Acton's wife, you know the character Mrs. Darrel gives of her, and I was sorry to find it is pretty well established at Besançon; but she is certainly a very agreable and sensible woman, and I should have taken her for a very good-natured one. If she is a termagant I never saw such a Wolf in sheep's cloathing.

At last, Dear Sir, I am got to Lausanne and established very agreably among my old acquaintance, and in a way of life I like extremely, a moderate mixture of society and study. News from a place so very quiet and obscure you cannot expect. I have however seen an old friend of ours who has just left us; Sir Willoughby Aston. He had been here about a twelfmonth with Lady Aston and his numerous [family], and are just gone to Tours in France. Nobody could guess why. They lived very cheap here; Lady Aston had as many rubbers of Whist, and Sir Willoughby as many bottles of wine every day, as they wanted. What could they have more? Sir Willoughby asked much after you, and was glad to see me to talk over Winchester camp and Reading court martial.

A propos of our militia, I have seen that of Switzerland. Their General review (of the Lausanne Battalion) was last Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. I attended all three from beginning to end, and making all proper allowances saw them with great pleasure. They are only exercised twelve days in the year, and tho' many of them have been in foreign services, yet you know, Dear Sir, how very easy it is for a soldier to forget. They went through the manual, fired by divisions and platoons, formed the column, and square, a General discharge and charge: all very decently, and some (especially the Grenadiers) very prettily. I do not compare

them to our militia. As we were embodied two or three years, the comparaison would be an affront.

I took credit from Mr. Foley upon a Lausanne banker, who is likewise a brother captain of Grenadiers. I have not made use of it yet, and when I do, it shall be as sparing as possible. I have got a few books together, and am busy upon the ancient Geography of Italy and the reviewing my Roman history and antiquities. If you have no objection to leaving me here till the spring, I should like it very much and think it might be of use to me. But I submit the thing entirely to you.

You will be so good, Dear Sir, as to present my sincerest love and duty to Mrs. Gibbon, and my most affectionate compliments to her brothers, and to believe me

Most truly yours,

E. GIBBON, JUNIOR.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Lausanne, June the 18th, 1763.

DEAR MADAM,

If my own laziness did not deprive me of any right to complain, I should say perhaps that it was a great while since I had heard either from you or my father. I have indeed the satisfaction of knowing my father was well the 26th of May, and I hope he is by this time one of the Honorable Verdurers of the forrest of Beer. Pray, a propos of English and county news, who is our Lord Lieutenant? I had the mortification of seeing in the paper that the Duke of Bolton was turned out (I mean had resigned) and that the Marquis of Caernarvon was appointed in his room. *I hope* it is not true.

You have often heard me talk of Lausanne and of the pleasure I should have in seeing it again. Our imagination generally improves upon those agreable prospects; but I can assure you, my ideas had not heightened any part of this.

A beautifull country, great leisure for study, and a very agreable society, make me pass my time very much to my satisfaction. I have found all my old friends here very glad to see me, and my countrymen, who only know the outside of the companies, are amazed at the number of family parties I am asked to every day. Those countrymen (whom I do not reckon as a very important part of my happiness) consist only in a Mr. Sidney and a Mr. Guise. The former (Mrs. Perry's son) is a meer boy, and the second (a Sir John Guise of Gloucestershire's son) is a very sensible well-bred man. Pavillard and I were really glad to see one another. He shewed me his snuff-box which he always carries in a wooden case for fear of spoiling it. I was at first uneasy about my lodging. I did not chuse to see the leg of mutton roasted a second time with a gash in it, and yet I was afraid of disobliging my old friend. Luckily he had got into a new house and had no room for me; so that he himself assisted me in settling in a very agreable family which I was very well acquainted with before. The Husband [1] who is much of a gentleman keeps the Academy, his wife is a charming woman; and the apartments and table are both cheap and good. I should like extremely to pass the winter here, if my father would give me leave. Give me leave to add (for I am sensible you may have suspicions) that no woman is the least concerned in my desire, and that as to any old inclinations,[2]

[1] M. de Mesery.

[2] In Gibbon's Journal at Lausanne, in June, 1757, occurs the entry: "I saw Mademoiselle Curchod — *Omnia vincit amor, et nos cedamus amori.*" He was, in fact, shortly afterwards engaged to Suzanne Curchod, daughter and only child of the Minister of Crassy, a hamlet at the foot of the lower slopes of the Jura, between Geneva and Lausanne. Both the lovers were born in 1737, and were in their twenty-first year. Gibbon wrote her several letters, some of which are quoted by M. d'Haussonville in his *Salon de Madame Necker*, and addressed to her indifferent verses. They became engaged, and Gibbon implored her to marry him without waiting for the sanction of his father. This, however, she refused to do. When Gibbon left Lausanne in 1758, she wrote to him once; then all correspondence between them seems to have ceased, though Gibbon says that he wrote to her twice

they are so far from subsisting that no one can be more opposite to them at present than myself. This I assure you of upon my word of honor. I hope after that I need say nothing more.

I have just drawn a bill of fifty pounds sterling upon my father. I shall do my utmost to endeavour at Economy, and I hope here my endeavours will be successfull.

Present, Dear Madam, my love and duty to my father and my sincerest compliments to your brothers. Pray let me hear from you or my father soon.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most affectionately yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Lausanne, August the 6th, 1763.

DEAR MADAM,

I hope I need not assure you how agreable your letters are to me. Letters such as you write would be highly pleasing from an indifferent person, judge of the pleasure they must give me when I receive them from a friend and a mother: I put the friend first and I believe you will not blame me for it. I should be very glad to hear somewhat oftener from my father; But tho' his dislike to letter-writing is *inconceivable* to me, I see I must be contented with hearing from you that

on his journey and once on his return to England. He also sent her his *Essai* with a dedicatory letter in 1761. In August, 1762, he wrote to break off the engagement, on the ground of his father's opposition. In 1763 Gibbon came to Lausanne, and there received from Mademoiselle Curchod a letter in reply, which showed, so far as words could prove anything, that she had never ceased to love him. Her friend, the Pastor Moultou, endeavoured to interest J. J. Rousseau in the story, and to make him speak to Gibbon on the subject. But Rousseau declined to interfere, saying that Gibbon was too cold-blooded a young man for his taste or for Mademoiselle Curchod's happiness. Gibbon's continued coldness at length convinced Mademoiselle Curchod that his affection for her was entirely extinguished, and she took her leave of him in an indignant letter. She married, at the end of 1764, Jacques Necker, and became the mother of Madame de Stäel-Holstein.

he is well. At this time especially I have no hopes. He must be now (according to my reckoning) in the very midst of Harvest, and I am very sensible, that

> When Harvest is in the case
> All other business must give place.

You will hardly expect news from me. We are buried in a quiet Solitude, and seem separated from the rest of the universe by a Wall of mountains, whose summits are at this instant covered with snow. I have found most of my old friends well, and made some new ones, and between the society of both, I lead a very agreable life. I could talk to you with great pleasure about them did I not know how very uninteresting an account of people you know nothing of must be to you. I should be glad to know soon whether my father has any objection to my passing the winter here. I do not dissemble that my inclination would make me desire it; but I have a much better tho' as real a motive to alledge to him; a considerable work I am engaged in, which will be a most usefull preparation to my tour of Italy and which I shall not be able to finish sooner. It is a Description of the ancient Geography of Italy, taken from the Original writers. If I go into Italy with a work of that kind tolerably executed, I shall carry every where about with me an accurate and lively idea of the country, and shall have nothing to do but to insert in their proper places my own observations as they tend either to confirm, to confute, or to illustrate what I have met with in books. I should not even despair, but that this mixture of study and observation, properly digested upon my return to England, might produce something not entirely unworthy the eye of the publick on a subject, upon which we have no regular or compleat treatise.

I made a little excursion some days ago to Geneva, not so much for the sake of the town which I had often seen before, as for a representation of Monsieur de Voltaire's. He lives now entirely at Fernay, a little place in France, but only two

leagues from Geneva. He has bought the estate, and built a very pretty tho' small house upon it. After a life passed in courts and Capitals, the Great Voltaire is now become a meer country Gentleman, and even (for the honor of the profession) something of a farmer. He says he never enjoyed so much true happiness. He has got rid of most of his infirmities, and tho' very old and lean, enjoys a much better state of health than he did twenty years ago. His playhouse is very neat and well contrived, situated just by his Chappel, which is far inferior to it, tho', he says himself, *que son Christ est du meilleur faiseur de tout le pays de Gex.* The play they acted was my favourite Orphan of China. Voltaire himself acted *Gengis* and Madame Denys *Idamè;* but I do not know how it happened: either my taste is improved or Voltaire's talents are impaired since I last saw him. He appeared to me now a very ranting unnatural performer. Perhaps indeed, as I was come from Paris, I rather judged him by an unfair comparaison, than by his own independent value. Perhaps too I was too much struck with the ridiculous figure of Voltaire at seventy, acting a Tartar Conqueror with a hollow broken voice, and making love to a very ugly niece of about fifty. The play began at eight in the evening and ended (entertainment and all) about half an hour after eleven. The whole Company was asked to stay and set Down about twelve to a very elegant supper of a hundred Covers. The supper ended about two, the company danced till four, when we broke up, got into our Coaches and came back to Geneva just as the Gates were opened. Shew me in history or fable, a famous poet of Seventy who has acted in his own plays, and has closed the scene with a supper and ball for a hundred people. I think the last is the more extraordinary of the two.

You may imagine how glad I am to hear of the fall of our Tyrant[1] and the accession of a just and righteous prince.

[1] Charles Paulet, fifth Duke of Bolton, who committed suicide in 1765, was succeeded in the Lord Lieutenancy of Hampshire by James Brydges, Marquess of Carnarvon.

Lord [1] was always our utmost wish, and I have so very good an opinion of him as to believe he will not even plague our enemies to oblige us. I am very glad to hear the battalion addressed him, as you style it, and as I could not sign the general letter, I apprehend a particular compliment to his Lordship cannot displease him. I have accordingly wrote to him this post. My father had formerly some thoughts of resigning the Majority to me. It is a matter of great indifference at present, but if he has a mind to provide against a future storm, I suppose it would be very easily settled at present, and that my friend Poussy (who has never answered me any more than Sir Thomas [2]) would have the Company of course. I wish my father would consider too, whether changes of much greater consequence might not be effected, such as the incorporation of both battalions, &c. But these are only hints.

Present, Dear Madam, my love and duty to my father, my sincerest Compliments to your Brothers, and believe me ever

Most affectionately and entirely yours,

E. GIBBON, JUNIOR.

TO HIS FATHER

Lausanne, September the 10th, 1763.

DEAR SIR,

This morning I received your letter, and according to your desire prepared myself immediately to answer it.

I hardly thought it possible, any letter of yours could have given me so much uneasiness. I am very sensible how many obligations I have to you, and that in this affair you continue to act with your usual goodness to me. If there is any fault it is partly my own and partly that of unhappy circumstances. My expences have been too great for our fortune. I was afraid of it at the time; and tho' I cannot yet see that relative

[1] Name illegible. Probably Lord Northington.

[2] Sir Thomas Worsley, Bart.

to my situation of travelling and being at Paris I have launched into any extravagancy, the consequences are equally disagreable. But what is past cannot be recalled. With regard, Dear Sir, to the proposal mentioned in your letter; if your own ease or happiness had depended upon it, I should not have hesitated an instant, but as the advantages resulting from it relate only to me you will give me leave to canvass it freely.

I need not say any thing of the great inconvenience of mortgages nor how much they eat up an estate piece meal. We feel it but too sensibly: Sir T. R.'s is particularly disagreable, since he has it in his power to distress us whenever he pleases by calling for his money. I own the thought of increasing it hurts me very much.

The advantages for me would be, your being able to bring me into Parliament, increasing my annuity and enabling me to continue my travels. Give me leave to say, Dear Sir, that the first has very little weight with me. I find my ambition diminish every day, and my preference of a quiet studious life to hurry and business grow upon me. Besides I should imagine the thing almost impossible in the middle of a parliament and at such an interesting period: and if I was in, what could I do? Whether I consulted principle or prudence, every thing seems so unsettled that I might find myself very soon at the tail of an opposition; (and as a total change seems to be the modern maxim of every new Ministry,) in case I had got any thing, I should be reduced to my former situation, with the additional mortification of having just tasted a little more power and plenty. The encreasing my annuity would be certainly very agreable, but as it would be only the difference of passing four or six months every winter in London, I should not think it equivalent. The continuing my travels is the great object. When I am just in view of Italy, to be obliged to give up a scheme which has been always a favourite, would afflict me to the greatest degree.

Would it not be possible, Dear Sir, to think of another scheme? One has come into my head which would set me entirely at my ease without costing you a shilling. It would be to change my annuity into a perpetual rent charge upon the Estate: this I would sell immediately for an annuity upon my own life, which would certainly give me Six hundred pounds a year, would enable me to travel (at least with a small addition) and to live afterwards in a very agreable manner in England. I think I may venture to say I shall never marry, and even supposing that possibility and afterwards the possibility of children; Would this scheme hurt them more than the other? But I submit it entirely to you. In case this proposal should be disagreable to you, you have my full consent to the other. Only give me leave, Dear Sir, to mention one thing. I should be a monster, If I could distrust either your honor or your goodness to me; but I am afraid (excuse the freedom) that Œconomy is not the virtue of our family. A variety of schemes would offer, old incumbrances would appear, and you yourself would be the first surprised to find the sum almost sunk to nothing. I should think that the dividing it might equally suit us both. I should have a fund for my extraordinary expences, which I should be the more interested to husband, as I should know that I could have no pretence to ask for any thing more. You on the other hand, Dear Sir, would be likewise at a certainty with regard both to your expences and mine.

I shall end here, Dear Sir; for I am too much agitated to talk of any thing else: only begging you to excuse the liberty I have taken. Your goodness has encouraged me to it and I think our mutual interest requires it. In case you should approve of my first proposal, I suppose my going over in the Spring will be sufficient. Otherwise, I should be glad to hear from you as soon as possible, that I might set out before winter.

My love and duty are always Mrs. Gibbon's and my sincere compliments wait upon the Brothers.

I am, Dear Sir,
With the greatest affection sincerely yours,
E. GIBBON, JUNIOR.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Lausanne, December the 7th, 1763.

DEAR MADAM,

I am afraid I have made you wait a little. But let me tell you without any reproach that I have imitated your example in proclaiming the arrival of my letter about two months before it really begins its march. I must acknowledge your letters deserve waiting for better than mine. However I flatter myself you are as well pleased with hearing from me as I can be in hearing from you, and that is saying a great deal.

After having assured you how much I love and respect you, Dear Madam, which I hope you are convinced of without my saying it, I should give an account of my method of passing my time here, but the happiness the most difficult to be described is perhaps the truest in reality. If I was in a place where I could fill pages with accounts of balls, reviews, Court assemblies, &c., the conclusion would perhaps be only that I had spent a great deal of time and money with very little genuine satisfaction. Here every day is an agreable mixture of books and good company, & consequently every day resembles the day that preceded it; I have passed six months at Lausanne, but tho' the sum of my pleasures has been very pleasing I cannot pick out any single event that I think worthy your attention. You would hardly be entertained with minute characters of people you are not acquainted with & will probably never see.

We have some English here; most of them raw boys just escaped from Eaton. Mr. Guise — I do not reckon him in the number of them. He is about my age, has seen a good deal of the world, & without being a profound scholar is far from wanting either parts or knowledge. As far as I can judge of him he seems to be a prudent worthy young man. If I can go into Italy with him I should like it extremely. Lord Palmerston[1] passed thro' some time ago. He seems to have a very right notion of travelling and I fancy will make very great improvements.

As we have the English papers here, we are by no means strangers to what passes at home, and many an insignificant piece of news which we should not have minded in England, gives us great pleasure at this distance. I was very glad to hear of my friend Wilkes's deserved chastisement,[2] and if the law could not punish him, Mr. Martin could. After all the noise of faction, the numbers in the first division seem to have shewn that the court still preserves a very great superiority.

Will you be so good, dear Madam, as to assure my father of my constant love and duty, and to acquaint him that I have just drawn a bill of a hundred pounds upon him. I beg my best compliments to the brothers. I hope poor David has destroyed his old ennemy the gout. As to Billy [Patton] (do not tell it to him) I hope he is no longer at Beriton, and that he has got the better of a enemy still more dangerous — *Laziness*.

I am, Dear Madam,
Ever yours most affectionately,
E. GIBBON.

[1] Henry Temple, second Viscount Palmerston (1739–1802), a man of artistic tastes, and, in after-years, a frequent resident in Italy.

[2] Colonel Wilkes of the Buckinghamshire Militia had been challenged by Mr. Samuel Martin, M.P. for Camelford, for speaking of him in the *North Briton* as a low fellow and dirty tool of power. Wilkes was dangerously wounded in the duel, which was fought in November, 1763.

TO HIS FATHER

Lausanne, February the 1st, 1764.

DEAR SIR,

I had the pleasure of your letter last saturday, & found with great satisfaction that you & Mrs. Gibbon were very well, and that everything went on as usual in our part of the world. I am very proud of my new dignity,[1] tho' I have not as yet communicated my promotion to my countrymen here. We have three or four honest regulars in the house with whom I am in a constant state of war, which I have tolerably maintained as yet notwithstanding their great superiority of number; I hope you continue to be well-pleased with our Lord Lieutenant, and that he is in every thing the reverse of his predecessors.

I am much obliged to you, Dear Sir, for your goodness in paying the bill I drew upon you in December last, but am sorry to find you are so much dissatisfied at my expenses, which I endeavour to moderate as much as I can: keeping up the kind of figure which you would desire your son should. In case I leave this place about the end of next month, I am afraid that reckoning the several bills I have to pay, the purchase of a chaise, and some money to carry me on to the next place, I shall want about two Hundred pounds more, or at least one hundred and fifty. I am very much concerned I have already drawn for above half your income, and the more so, as I see no possibility of my expences being less when I am moving about in Italy. We have here a young Englishman and his governor, who is a very sensible sedate man. I have questioned him very much about Italy; he has assured me that it was not possible for an Englishman to keep good company in Italy, and to go thro' the country in an agreable manner, under 800 or at the lowest under 700 pounds a year.

[1] Gibbon refers to his promotion to the rank of major in the Hampshire Militia.

If it was possible for you, Dear Sir, to make such an effort for *only one year*, I should consider it as an obligation which it ought to be my study to repay by the most exact œconomy upon all other occasions, and by coming (if necessary) into any schemes which might be thought of to make us both easy. But in case you cannot do it, I had rather give up a scheme (I have indeed always set my heart upon) than it should be the occasion of perpetual unneasinesses and inconveniences to us both.

Upon reading over what I have wrote, I am afraid, Dear Sir, you will suspect me of murmuring and being out of humor. Such sentiments are far from me. I am convinced there is nothing occasions your complaints but your not being able to support it, and in that case, tho' I cannot lessen my expence, I can put an entire stop to it. May I beg, Dear Sir, your speedy directions for my conduct. If I am to pass the mountains (which I wish and hope still) I must not wait for the month of April as it is the very worst in the year.

I beg my love and duty to Mrs. Gibbon. I shall write to her very soon, though I have little more to say than what I have just said. My Aunt Porten —— Indeed I am much in the wrong, but I will not be so longer, and I hope very soon to clear score with all my friends. S^{r} Thomas is the only one with whom I have a C^{t} account; creditor indeed in more than one sense of the word. If he and George Dux, my other creditor, would pay me, it would be a little help.

I am, Dear Sir,
Most affectionately yours,
E. Gibbon, Junior.

TO HIS FATHER

Lausanne, April 14th, 1764.

Dear Sir,

The reason which has made me defer some time answering your last obliging letter was our waiting every post

for Mr. Guise's last instructions. As he has never received them, and we have settled the time of our departure, I take the first opportunity of laying before you our plan of operations.

We propose moving from hence next Wednesday the 18th instant, and passing by Geneva and Mont Cenis to Turin, which we shall reach in about ten days. After some stay at that place, which I hope our old camp acquaintance Pitt [1] will make very agreable to us, we intend going by the Boromean Islands, Milan, Brescia, Verona, Vicenza, and Padua to Venice, which we must reach by the 30th of May to be present at the great ceremonies of Ascension day, where we shall have an opportunity of paying our court to the Duke of York.[2] I hope we shall have seen Venice in about a fortnight, after which we shall have nothing to prevent our setting out from thence, passing thro' Ferrara and Bologna and reaching Florence by the latter end of June. We intend from thence to retire to Sienne or some other quiet town, and pass about six weeks in the study of Italian. When we get back to Florence, that place with Leghorn, Pisa, Luca, &c., will furnish us ample matter for between two and three months till the latter end of October, when we propose going to Rome, pushing on directly to Naples and returning again to Rome the latter end of November. If we pass there about three months I shall be ready to come out of Italy the beginning of next March, and hope to bring back some improvement, as I had pretty well prepared myself in England, and as I hope I have not lost my time here. I think I know my fellow-traveller very well, and that knowledge convinces he is a very sensible good-natured prudent young man.

[1] George Pitt, first Lord Rivers, served as Envoy at the Court of Turin from 1761 to 1768, in which latter year he was elected M.P. for Dorsetshire. He died in 1803, at the age of eighty-two.

[2] Edward Augustus, Duke of York, third child and second son of Frederick, Prince of Wales, born March 14, 1739, died September 17, 1767, at Monaco.

I wish, Dear Sir, I could have followed your Directions, but it was impossible for me to leave the town after paying all my bills without Drawing for £200, the remainder of which will barely carry me to Turin. I shall endeavour during my tour to live with the most exact æconomy and not to exceed the sum you have mentioned. I give you my word of honor that neither play nor women shall form any part of my expence, and I hope our being two will still contribute to diminish it. I am very sensible that it is often rather negligence than extravagance that runs away with my money, and I do assure that I will be as exact as I can. Consider, Dear Sir, that this is a sacrifice you make once in my life, and that a hundred pounds now are of more service to me than three times as much at any other time.

The passage of the mountains is very easy at present, and we have the advantage of going with a Sardinian officer who is very well acquainted with the country. As soon as I get to Turin I shall have the pleasure of writing to you. In the mean time I beg my compliments to the brothers, and my love and duty to Mrs. Gibbon, from whom I had a letter the other day.

I am, Dear Sir,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS FATHER

Turin, April 28, 1764.

DEAR SIR,

After a very tedious journey of nine days from Lausanne, I got safe to Turin the night before last. The roads thro' Savoy are very bad, but nothing could surpass the pleasantness of our passage over Monte Cenis. A very fine day, a most romantick variety of prospects, and a perfect consciousness that there could not be the smallest danger. I was carried over the mountain in a small chair by four

men, who relieved each other during about five leagues. The uphill work was very hard, but upon the plain, &c., downhill, they went a kind of a trot which I can only compare to our double time. I am sure you will not blame me for having added a Guinea to the half crown at which the King has taxed this hard day's work.

Upon my arrival at Turin, I was much disapointed to find Mr. Pitt was to set out for England as to-day. I saw him however yesterday, and nothing could be civiler than he was. He talked very much of you and of Winchester Camp, and has recommended me to his Chargé d'Affaires a Mr. Dutems, as well at to the Count de Virry, a Minister of State, for whom likewise Lord Mountstuart had given me a letter. We are (I believe) to be presented at Court to-morrow. We shall see some company and visit the King's palaces and manufactures, but I hardly think we shall extend our stay here beyond the fortnight we talked of at first. Every thing follows the example of the Court, which from one of the most polite in Europe is become bigotted, gloomy and covetous. Guise and I seem as yet very well satisfied with each other. Such a society is desirable both as to entertainment and lessening the expence. As I mentioned in my last letter that my draught at Lausanne would little more than send me out of the town, you will not be surprised, Dear Sir, at my having drawn for £100 here. As near as I can calculate at a distance, I shall be obliged to take another Hundred at Venice, two in Tuscany, and three at Rome and Naples as well as to get out of Italy, which will make up all the 700 which you have been so good as to mention, & which I am determined if possible not to exceed, but to watch with as scrupulous an attention over every expences as your goodness requires of me. Thus, Dear Sir, you will in the two years and half I may be abroad, have sacrificed about a thousand pounds extraordinary to the most agreable part of my life; a sacrifice I shall endeavour to repay by the behavior of my whole future life.

I propose writing next post to Sir Matthew Fetherston. Could not I make my peace for my Paris neglect, which is however excusable by my care and attention to his commands in Italy?

My love and duty attend Mrs. Gibbon and my best compliments the brothers. I shall not forget the Wax Candles. Shall I send you any Florence Wine? I fancy we shall move towards the 10th to be at Venice some time before the 31st, and in Tuscany towards the end of the month. Our direction will be, *recommended to Mr. Schalkhauser and Hughell at Venice, and to Mr. Joseph Frescobaldi et fils Bankers at Florence.*

I am, Dear Sir,

Most truly yours,

E. GIBBON.

I was forced to draw at fifteen days sight; the Banker did not chuse to give me more and wanted to have had only eight.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.[1]

Borromean Islands, May 16th, 1764.

DEAR LEGER,

Most certainly, I am a puppy for not having wrote to you sooner: it is equally certain that you are an ass if you expected it. Hurry of running about, time taken up with seeing places, &c. &c., are excellent excuses; but I fancy you will guess that my laziness and aversion to writing to my best

[1] At Lausanne, in 1764, Gibbon met Mr. Holroyd (afterwards Lord Sheffield). In his Journal for April 6, 1764, he says: "J'ai conçu une véritable amitié pour Holroyd. Il a beaucoup de raison et des sentimens d'honneur avec un cœur des mieux placé." The friendship then begun ripened into warm affection. "My obligations to the long and active friendship of Lord Sheffield," Gibbon says in the will by which he appoints his friend one of his executors, "I could never sufficiently repay." Of the warmth of his affection, and the nature of some of his obligations, the letters now published afford continual proof. This mutual and life-long friendship is one of the finest to be found in literature.

friend are the real motive, and I am afraid you will have guessed right.

We are at this minute in a most magnificent palace, in the middle of a vast lake; Ranging about suites of rooms without a soul to interrupt us, and secluded from the rest of the universe. We shall sit down in a moment to supper attended by all the Count's houshold. This is the fine side of the medal. Turn to the reverse. We are got here wet to the skin; we have crawled about fine gardens which rain and fogs prevented our seeing; and if to-morrow does not hold up a little better, we shall be in some doubt whether we can say we have seen these famous islands. Guise says yes, and I say no. The Count is not here; we have our supper from a paultry hedge alehouse, (excuse the bull,) and the Servants have offered us beds in the palace, pursuant to their master's directions.

I hardly think you will like Turin; the Court is old & dull;[1] and in that country every one follows the example of the court. The principal amusement seems to be driving about in Your Coach in the evening & bowing to the people you meet. If you go when the royal family is there, you have the additional pleasure of stopping to salute them every time they pass. I had that advantage fifteen times one afternoon. We were presented to a Lady who keeps a public assembly, and a very mournfull one it is. The few women that go to it are each taken up by their Cicisbeo; and a poor Englishman, who can neither talk Piedmontese nor play at Faro, stands by himself, without one of their haughty nobility doing him the honor of speaking to him. You must not attribute this account to our not having staid long enough to form connections. It is a general complaint of our countrymen, except of Lord Berkely, who has been engaged for about two years in the

[1] Charles Emanuel III., Duke of Savoy and second King of Sardinia, came to the throne on the abdication of his father in 1730. He died in 1773.

service of a Lady, whose long nose is her most distinguishing fine feature.

The most sociable women I have met with are the King's daughters. I chatted for about a quarter of an hour with them, talked about Lausanne, and grew so very free and easy, that I drew my snuf-box, rapped it,[1] took snuff twice (a Crime never known before in the presence-chamber,) & continued my discourse in my usual attitude of my body bent forwards, and my fore finger stretched out. As it might however have been difficult to keep up this acquaintance, I chiefly employ my time in seeing places, which fully repaid me in pleasure the trouble of my journey. What entertained me the most, was the Museum and the Citadel. The first is under the care of a M. Bartoli, who received us without any introduction, in the politest manner in the world, and was of the greatest service to us, as I dare say he will be to you. The Citadel is a stupendous work; & when you have seen the suterraneous part of it, you will scarcely think it possible such a place can ever be taken. As it is however a regular one, it does not pique my curiosity so much as those irregular fortifications hewn out of the Alps, such as Exiles, Fenestrelles, & Brunette would have done, could we have spared the time necessary. The last of these places you may see.

I mentioned you to M. Dutems, Chargé des Affaires de sa Majestè Brittanique, in Pitt's absence. He cannot send you so unlimited a permission as you wanted, but if you will write to him some days before you set out, specifying the time you shall pass, & the names of the peoples to be inserted, he will take care to have one sent to Suze.

Our next stage from Turin has been Milan, where we were mere Spectators, as it was not worth while to endeavour at forming connection for so very few days. I think you will be surprised at the great Church, but infinitely more so at the regiment of Baden-Baden, which is in the Citadel. Such

[1] This was a characteristic habit of Gibbon's throughout life.

steadiness, such alertness in the men, & such exactness in the officers, as passed all my expectations. Next Friday I shall see the Regiment reviewed by General Serbelloni. Perhaps I may write a particular letter about it. From Milan we proceed to Genoa, & from thence to Florence. You stare — But really we find it so inconvenient to travel like mutes, and to lose a number of curious things for want of being able to assist our eyes with our tongues, that we have resumed our original plan, and leave Venice for next year. I think I should advise you to do the same.

Milan, May 18th, 1764.

The next morning was not fair, but however we were able to take a view of the islands, which, by the help of some imagination, we conclude to be a very delightfull though not an enchanted place. I would certainly advise you to go there from Milan, which you may very well perform in a day and half. Upon our return, we found Lord Tilney and some other English in their way to Venice. We heard a melancholy piece of news from them; Byng[1] died at Bologna a few days ago of a feaver. I am sure you will all be very sorry to hear it.

We expect a volume of news from you in relation to Lausanne, and in particular to the alliance of the Dutchess with the frogs. Is it already concluded? How does the Bride look after her great revolution? Pray embrace her and the adorable, if you can, in both our names; and assure them, as well as all the spring,[2] that we talk of them very often, but particularly of a Sunday; and that we are so disconsolate, that we have neither of us commenced Cicisbeos as yet, whatever we may do at Florence. We have drank the Dutchess's health, not forgetting the little woman[3] on the top of Mont Cenis, in the middle of the Lago Maggiore, &c. &c.

[1] John Byng, youngest son of Hon. George Byng.

[2] *La Société du Printemps* was the name of the society of young ladies at Lausanne, mentioned in the *Memoirs*.

[3] Madame Besson.

I expect some account of the said little woman. Whether she talks —— as much as usual and who is my successor? I think Montagny had begun to supplant me before I went. Salute all our friends in both our names. The Count, the Queen's own, Buch Tysen, The foot Guards & the Oxford stage (& Mr. George Hyde Clarke). I am sorry to hear from Grand, that the last was ill. I heard likewise that your military list was augmented by a Hanoverian: I dare say the canonading of *Amenebourg* has often been fought over. As to people of the town, embrace Grand, Pavillard, and the Mesery, make some Compliments to a great many more, and don't forget to kick Constant & Dittermanches before you come away. I expect your answer at Florence, and your person at Rome; which the Lord of his infinite mercy grant. Amen.

TO HIS FATHER

Genoa, June the 4th, 1764.

DEAR SIR,

I dare say you will be surprised when you see the date of my letter, as according to my last from Turin, you must have imagined me at Venice. It was indeed our intention till we got as far as Milan, and saw the shoals of English that were pouring in from every side, and till we heard the same accounts from everybody of the crowds and dearness at Venice upon this occasion. Garrets hired as a great favor at four sequins a night, every thing else in proportion, and with regard to us, who could not have got there above two days before Ascension day, the greatest danger of lying in the street. A fortnight passed at Venice at this time would have occasioned a very considerable augmentation in my expences, greater I am afraid than would have suited you, and which I should have brought upon you merely for the sake of a ceremony, as I can take Venice in as convenient, and a much cheaper manner in coming home. I was happy enough to find

Mr. Guise entirely of my opinion, & we both agreed to strike off to Genoa & from thence by the way of Leghorn into Tuscany. I can easily conceive how extragavant Venice would have been upon such an occasion, from what I have already experienced of the dearness of travelling in Italy. Upon the road the necessary expences of the posts, &c., are higher than in England, and with regard to the inns, the instant they discover you are an Englishman, they do not know what to ask. We are constantly obliged to reduce their demands to one half, and even then to pay them too much. At Pavie I remember they asked us about twelve shillings for our lodging two nights in a single room. We gave them about eight, which they took after about half an hour's wrangling.

This, Dear Sir, is the disagreable side of travelling. In every other respect my tour exceeds my most sanguine expectations, altho' I am not yet got to the most interesting part of Italy. Turin, Milan, and Genoa have afforded me very great entertainement, and very different scenes. You cannot expect, Dear Sir, an account of any one of them. The whole it would be impossible to give you, and I should hardly know what particulars to select. We had better reserve them till we meet at Beriton, where the history of my peregrinations may perhaps furnish out the amusement of some evening when there is no post. Indeed if negligence and conciseness can be ever excused in a Correspondent they ought to be in a traveller. The common excuse of having no time is almost verified. Your morning is taken up with running about to see places, your evenings are commonly engaged in company, and you are forced to employ the very few moments you have at home in setting down some account of the things you have seen.

But amongst all my avocations I cannot help mentioning Mr. & Mrs. Celesia, who have received us not only in the most polite but really in the most friendly manner. We have dined and supped several times with them; once at their

Country house which is still wilder than Beriton, and they have introduced us to the Doge and to several houses in the town. This afternoon we are going with them upon a party in the country. Mrs. Celesia seems to retain the warmest friendship for Mrs. Gibbon; she is very sorry their correspondence has been dropt, and has some thoughts of renewing it herself. I likewise saw the other day Captain John Elliot,[1] who came in with his Frigate and sailed again in about a couple of hours for Minorca. He has been a great while beating about the Mediterranean.

Mr. Guise and I travel in great harmony and good humour. He is indeed a very worthy sensible man, and I hope I have formed a friendship that will last as long as my life. He is very far from being ignorant & will be more so every day, as he has a very proper spirit of curiosity and enquiry. My inferior companion (my servant) is a very useful one in this country, and in general a very good one. I never enjoyed a better state of health, and hope I shall stand the heats of Florence pretty well. I fancy I shall be obliged to draw again soon after my arrival there, which will be in about ten days. I hope I need say nothing of my sentiments which are always the same for Mrs Gibbon. I hope to write to her from Florence. My sincere compliments wait upon the brothers.

I am, Dear Sir,

Most affectionately yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Florence, June 20th, 1764.

DEAR MADAM,

Without any of those common apologies for not writing which are generally made use of to fill up the first half page of

[1] Captain J. Eliot, R.N., was connected through his sister-in-law, Mrs. Eliot of Port Eliot, (*née* Catherine Elliston), with Gibbon. He died unmarried, an admiral and governor of Newfoundland.

a letter, I shall tell you at once that I am got here safe and in perfect health, tho' somewhat later than I intended. We proposed going by sea from Genoa to Leghorn. We had taken a Felucca, and were to have embarked the 7th, but a strong south-west wind springing up the day before, made it impossible for any vessel to stir out of the harbour, and kept us waiting six days a most disagreable state of anxiety and attendance. At last, seeing no likelyhood of any alteration in the wind, we were forced to set out by land, and to come round thro' Parma, Modena and Bologna. As we stopt to see what was worthy our notice upon the road, (excepting only Bologna, which will require a fortnight or three weeks) we got here only last night, and are settled in an excellent good *hôtel garni* kept by one Charles, an Englishman, whom the Duke of Richmond is very well acquainted with as well as with our footman Valentin (for we only take one between us), to whom he has given an exceeding good character in writing.

Every step I take in Italy, I am more and more sensible of the obligation I have to my father in allowing me to undertake the tour. Indeed, Dear Madam, this tour is one of the very few things that exceed the most sanguine and flattering hopes. I do not pretend to say that there are no disagreable things in it: bad roads, and indifferent inns, taking very often a good deal of trouble to see things which do not deserve it, and especially the continual converse one is obliged to have with the vilest part of mankind — innkeepers, post-masters and custom house officers, who impose upon you without any possibility of preventing it, — all these are far from being pleasing. But how amply is a traveller repaid for those little mortifications by the pleasure and knowledge he finds in almost every place. The actual beauties are always the very great singularity of the country, the different pieces of antiquity either dispersed or collected into cabinets, and the variety of master-pieces of sculpture and painting have already made me pass some of the most entertaining days I

have yet known, and I have before me the pleasing reflexion that what I have yet seen is far inferior to what I shall find in this place as well as Rome and Naples. I flatter myself, that the works of the greatest artists, which I have continually before my eyes, have already begun to form my taste for the fine arts. I shall however endeavour not to become a Coxcomb, nor to take the knowledge of a few terms for real science. I shall perhaps bring back to England an unafected taste for those arts, I am afraid without the judgment of a connoisseur, and I hope without the ridiculous part of that character.

I have never lost sight of the undertaking I laid the foundations of at Lausanne, and I do not despair of being able one day to produce something by way of a Description of ancient Italy, which may be of some use to the publick, and of some credit to myself. At least I know that I have already collected a considerable stock of materials which is daily encreasing, and that from reading and travel I have made a number of observations which will enter, very properly enter, into such a work, and which will have at least the merit of novelty. You will excuse me, Dear Madam, from entering into particulars as to any part of what I have seen; the task would be endless, and I must employ in giving you a very imperfect account a time of which I want almost every instant. But as my memory is pretty good, and as I keep a very exact journal; the recollection of this part of my life may be no disagreable employment of some winter evenings at Beriton. I am going to take an Italian master, and shall endeavour to get as much out of him as I can during my stay here, which Mr. Guise and I seemed to have fixed at about two months.

We have several English here. Lord Exeter, whom we shall hardly see, as he sets out after dinner; Mr. Ponsonby, son to the Irish speaker, a very agreable young man whom we knew at Turin; Mr. Littleton, son to Lord Littleton, &c. Some more whom I have not yet seen. We make our first

visit after dinner to Sir Horatio Mann, who happens to be a distant relation of Mr. Guise. Indeed without that advantage his general behavior to the English assures of the politest reception and an introduction into the best company in town. From the universal character of Florence I expect to meet with a very agreable society. I hope we shall avoid the fate of Lord Fordwich (whom I forgot to mention). The charms of a superannuated beauty have captivated him to such a degree as to make him totally forget his country, and to fix him at Florence these five or six years without the least prospect of his ever leaving it. The Duke of York is expected here to-night from Venice in his way to Leghorn, from whence he goes by sea to Marseilles and so to Paris. It is said he will finish [1] his travels by a visit to his sister at Brunswick. I suppose we must be all presented to him.

I was much disapointed to find no letters from England, and especially from my father; as I had wrote to the banker at Venice to send all that might come to Florence. I hope none on either side have miscarried. I wrote upon leaving Lausanne, as well as from Turin and Genoa. I shall be obliged to draw immediately for a hundred pounds; and as far as I can foresee my expences I hope I shall keep within my bounds. I am very sensible of the times I may have launched out a little too much, but I can safely say, that were I to perform the journey I have already I could not do it for a Guinea less. I have made some progress in the arts of æconomy and exactness, but those of the Italians are necessarily superior to mine. Will it be necessary, Dear Madam, to repeat any assurances of those sentimens which duty and inclination have an equal share in?

I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

E. GIBBON.

[1] The Princess Augusta, eldest child of Frederick, Prince of Wales, born August 11, 1737. Married the Duke of Brunswick.

TO HIS FATHER

Rome, October the 9th, 1764.

DEAR SIR,

We set out from Florence last Saturday sevenight and are arrived here after a journey of about ten days. We came round by Lucca, Pisa, Leghorn and Sienna, and I think made a very agreable tour of it. I must acknowledge that I had the least pleasure in what my companion enjoyed I believe the most; the Opera of Lucca. That little republick, who could give usefull lessons of gouvernment to many states much more considerable, lays out a very large sum of money every autumn in entertaining an exceeding good Opera at the time that public entertainements are very dead in the other towns of Italy, and receives their money again with very good interest from the great affluence of strangers who resort to Lucca upon that occasion. Of the different tastes which a man may form or indulge in in Italy that of musick has hitherto been lost upon me, and I have always had the honesty never to pretend to any taste which I was in reality devoid of.

We past four days at Leghorn where I saw the Actons. They were so civil to me that I was much embarassed how to behave. The poor old Commodore is in a most melancholy situation. Last winter he had a most violent attack of the Apoplexy; whilst in that situation he was persuaded either from motives of interest or devotion to change his religion in which he had been till then very steady. The immediate consequence of which imprudent step was the total neglect of all his English friends, who from being very intimate with him have taken the unanimous resolution of not holding the smallest connection with him. I most sincerely pity him. At his time of life, to lose the only friends he had, (for he has never been able even to learn the language of the country) to be continually regretting England which he will never see again, and to find himself oppressed with every misfortune of

age and infirmity, is a situation truly melancholy. He talked to me a great deal of you and of times which I had scarce any remembrance of, and I think from his manner and conversation that I never saw a more lively picture of an unhappy man. I thought it right to acquaint the English at Leghorn of my reasons for not neglecting him as they did, and they all seemed to approve of my behavior.

I am now, Dear Sir, at Rome. If it was difficult before to give you or Mrs. Gibbon any account of what I saw, it is impossible here. I have already found such a fund of entertainement for a mind somewhat prepared for it by an acquaintance with the Romans, that I am really almost in a dream. Whatever ideas books may have given us of the greatness of that people, their accounts of the most flourishing state of Rome fall infinitely short of the picture of its ruins. I am convinced there never never existed such a nation, and I hope for the happiness of mankind there never will again. I was this morning upon the top of Trajan's pillar. I shall not attempt a description of it. Only figure to yourself a column 140 feet high of the purest white marble, composed only of about 30 blocks and wrought into bas-reliefs with as much taste and delicacy as any chimney piece at Up-park.

The sickness of Naples seems pretty well over. I shall not however yet venture to it. The concern you and Mrs. Gibbon express in her last letter, makes it my duty to avoid the appearance as well as the reality of danger. If I allow about three months to Rome, a month to Naples, and a fortnight or three weeks to the road, &c., visiting again some of the most curious things upon my return, I shall have but few idle moments, and yet shall hardly be able to take my last leave of Rome before the end of February. About six weeks may do for Bologna, Verona, &c., and Venice, and towards the middle or end of April I hope to have finished a tour attended with the greatest pleasure, and I flatter myself with some improvement. I shall then be ready, Dear Sir, to obey your orders with regard to the time and manner of my returning to Eng-

land. The grand tour of Germany I do not even think of, as I am sensible of the considerable and unavoidable expence it would be attended with. The route thro' Bavaria to the Rhine and Low Countries, or that of the south of France to the same parts, would have their several advantages and might each employ about two months. However from the great extent of country I must pass thro' so rapidly, they would not be without an addition of expence. Believe me, Dear Sir, that is a consideration I feel so often and so sensibly; that rather than any thing should disturb the pleasure of our meeting, I will come down from Venice to Leghorn and embark for England. Satisfied with the enjoyment of Italy and France, I will rather reflect upon what I shall have seen than upon what I shall have lost. I wait, Dear Sir, for your directions. I have asked for them rather soon, both to unburthen my mind, and because we are neither of us the most exact Correspondents. I have a hundred more things to say. I would thank Mrs. Gibbon for the agreable news she sent me in her last letter of your having entirely got over your late indisposition, but my paper is out and I can only add that I am and ever shall be,

Dear Sir,
Most sincerely yours,
E. GIBBON, JUNIOR. *May I add Major?*

TO HIS FATHER

Rome, December the 5th, 1764.

DEAR SIR,

This moment to my great surprize, Barazzi, the banker of Rome, sent for me to shew me a letter he had just received from the banker at Lausanne, who had given me my general credit all over Italy, to recall that credit and to desire he would give me no more money. This can be only owing to the last draught from Florence having been protested, and as the

banker has probably sent the same advice to his other correspondents, my character is ruined in every great town in Italy, and what makes it more unfortunate is the draught I gave from hence about a week ago for £100 more at twenty days' sight; which will probably have the same fate. I feel my situation the more as I am not conscious of having deserved it by distressing you with extravagant draughts. After a mature deliberation you fixed upon 700 pounds for my tour of Italy. I have always advised you regularly before I drew, and I have never, Dear Sir, exceeded my proportion of the sum. To what then am I to attribute this unforeseen misfortune? In your last letter you say nothing, and yet you must have then received mine from Florence. Forgive my warmth, Dear Sir, I scarce know what to think, write, or do.

I shall wait with the utmost impatience for an answer. Indeed I shall be very uneasy till it comes. Barazzi, who was very civil upon the occasion, desires if you send me credit upon any other banker (which will be absolutely necessary) that you would apply to Andrew Drummond whom he corresponds with. Till then it will be impossible for me to stir from Rome, or to live with much pleasure in it, while I know there are people who may very naturally suspect me of being a rogue or an adventurer. Once more, Dear Sir, forgive a man who scarce knows what he writes, and believe me ever

Most sincerely yours,

E. G.

I beg, Dear Sir, a speedy answer.

TO HIS FATHER

Rome, the 5th of December, 1764.

DEAR SIR,

Since I sent my letter, which is already sealed up in Barazzi's packet, I have considered that the new credit which

it will be necessary to send me must be given by the London Banker upon the other towns I am to go to, as well as upon Rome; at least upon Naples, Bologna, Venice, and one or two principal places in France or Germany according as you intend I should come home. After so unfortunate an accident I can scarce hope Barazzi himself will give me any credit elsewhere; and I must be the more exact, as in several of those places I shall find the bankers prepossessed against me by the letter of the Lausanne banker which must have been circular. How can it have happened, Dear Sir, that a letter can have had the time to go from London to Florence, from Florence to Lausanne, and from Lausanne to Rome without my having had the smallest intimation of it from you?

I am, Dear Sir, once more

Most truly yours,

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Naples, January the 29th, 1765.

DEAR MADAM,

I am very sorry for the reason (it is really no excuse) which I have had for my late dilatoriness in writing. I have waited with great impatience for an answer to the letters I had wrote my father, have always hoped and imagined that I could scarce fail of receiving it the very next post, and living in that daily expectation have suffered several posts to elapse without writing myself. Indeed I begin to fear that some letters must have miscarried. I hope however to hear from my father very soon, since if I should return to Rome without having had any orders from him as to the time and manner of my returning home, I should find myself very much embarassed how to act.

We arrived here only last night, so that as yet I have seen nothing; not even the glorious prospect of the bay of Naples. A thick foggy cloudy day (for such weather have we some-

times even in this happy climate) hangs over it, and veils all its beauties. The journey from Rome has satisfied at least one species of a disagreable curiosity, that of being acquainted with the very worst roads in the universe. You are sometimes sunk in sloughs and sometimes racked and battered on the broken remains of the old Appian way, and when after a tedious day you at last arrive at the long desired inn, you soon wish for the moment of setting out again. Governor Ellis who is here, a man famous for attempting the North West passage, and consequently acquainted with every species of hardship, declares that he had rather circumnavigate the Globe, than go from Rome to Naples. This single circumstance may convince you, Dear Madam, how just are the common but melancholy observations, of the wretched state of this fine country and of the misery of its idle and oppressed inhabitants. They are indeed painted in too lively colours to escape the notice of the most inatentive traveller, and so shocking as to excite the pity of the least feeling one. I will not repeat here, Dear Madam, my old and lazy maxim of saying little because I have a great deal to say, and of reserving every thing for your dressing Room. I assure you without flattery, that I am very impatient to see it. I cannot say whether you will find me improved in any thing else, but at least I think I am become a better Englishman, and that, without adopting the honest prejudices of a Hampshire farmer, I am reconciled to my own country, that I see many of its advantages better than I did, and that a more enlarged view has corrected many errors of my præmature and partial observation.

We are at present in the midst of a most brilliant carnaval, and shall scarce be able to breath between balls, operas, Assemblies and dinners. I have not yet seen Mr. Hamilton our Minister, but he is extremely liked by the English here, of whom most are our Roman or Florentine acquaintance. Our only Peer is Lord Berkely, with whom we are just going to dine. I imagine we shall be presented to the

boy King next Sunday. It must be a most ridiculous farce of Majesty.

Will you be so good as to acquaint my father that I drew for £100 at twenty days' sight the morning I left Rome, and that not having time to write by that post I acquainted Mr. Darrel with it by a letter of four lines.

How superfluous is it, Dear Madam, to repeat my protestations of duty and affection to my father, of tenderness to yourself, or of real friendship, and my best wishes for your brothers.

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Venice, April the 22nd, 1765.

DEAR MADAM,

Your last letter which I received only at Bologna was a most pleasing renewal of a correspondence, which (somehow or another) had been a little interrupted, but which I shall always consider as both usefull and agreable to me, since I am sure of finding in all your letters the tenderness of a mother, the sincerity of a friend and the entertainement of a most knowing correspondent. I am indeed but too unworthy of such a commerce.

Of all the towns in Italy, I am the least satisfied with Venice; objects which are only singular without being pleasing produce a momentary surprize which soon gives way to satiety and disgust. Old and in general ill built houses, ruined pictures, and stinking ditches dignified with the pompous denomination of canals, a fine bridge spoilt by two Rows of houses upon it, and a large square decorated with the worst Architecture I ever yet saw, and wonderfull only in a place where there is more land than water: such are the colours I should employ in my portrait of Venice; a portrait certainly true in general, tho' perhaps you should attribute the very great darkness of the shades to my being out of humour with the place. Here are no English, and all com-

munication with the natives of the place is strictly forbid. Our chief ressource is our Resident Mr. Murray, an honest plain man, and a very good companion, who gives us most excellent dinners every other day.

I found here that my prudence in taking up a larger sum of money at Rome than I immediately wanted, was very far from being a vain precaution. I found this Banker a sour, suspicious old fellow, who began by vexing me very much in talking of my letters having been protested in presence of Guise, to whom I had never mentioned it. Indeed the Brute did it in so very abrupt a way that it seemed his chief design was to mortify me. Upon my mentioning that I believed the Lausanne banker had restored my credit, he began to make a number of difficulties, which I at last cut short by telling him that I neither wanted his money nor his company. It was very lucky I had it in my power to talk in that manner.

The part of your letter, Dear Madam, which related to my being at home in May made me a little uneasy. My father hinted something of that kind in a former letter. I am sorry that your's is wrote before the reception of my answer, as I should then know whether my father still expected my return so soon. It would be most highly inconvenient to me. I could indeed, going directly from hence, arrive in England by the end, and the end only, of May. But in order to do it, I must go the very straitest road, never stop, and give up a number of curious things which will scarce ever be within my reach again! Cannot the meeting be put off till September? Cannot Sir Thomas[1] protract his stay one month longer? Will my missing one more meeting hurt the Battalion very sensibly? I am forced to ask all these questions without being able to wait for their answers. I must here at once determine for myself and I am afraid of determining wrong. I could have wished, my father would have explained himself more clearly, whether he thought my return in May, a thing

[1] Sir T. Worsley.

absolutely necessary and right, and am almost inclined to imagine that he would have done so, if he had looked upon it in that light. I have still some hopes of receiving his answer to my letter from Naples, which I should immediately obey.

You may see, Dear Madam, in what a state of perplexity I am, and that I am not really yet determined what to say or what to do. However the prospect of my tour thro' the South of France (which will only delay my return about a month or six weeks) is so pleasing, and the means of obviating any inconveniences in the Battalion appear so easy, that I cannot help taking a resolution which I hope will not displease my father. I leave this place in a day or two and shall be at Turin about the beginning of May; from thence I shall proceed to Lyons, go down the Rhone to Avignon and wheel round by Provence and Languedoc to Bordeaux, where I shall easily find a ship bound for London. I have made this alteration, as it enlarges my tour, without making any difference either in time or expence. I shall only draw for another hundred, and my father may depend upon my being at Beriton by the end of June or the beginning of July; barring accidents of wind and weather. With what pleasure, Dear Madam, shall we meet. I assure you I have not forgot the Wax Candles. Venice is the place for them, but, as far as I can learn, tho' whiter they do not burn so well as ours. I cannot make out whether in point of price it is worth sending them.

I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

E. G.

TO HIS FATHER

Lyons, May the 29th, 1765.

DEAR SIR,

After a pretty troublesome passage of Mount Cenis we are at last arrived here. I say at last, for it is at least a fort-

night later than we expected, occasioned by several inevitable hinderances. Upon casting up as well as I could my accounts of time and money, I soon found how impossible it would be for me to execute my tour of the south of France within the limitations of both which I had proposed. I mean to execute it with any degree of pleasure or profit, to stay long enough in any place to be acquainted with the inhabitants, and not to hurt my health perhaps by travelling too quick in a very hot season and country. Perhaps, Dear Sir, if I had had time to have consulted you, you might have indulged me a little longer; but it was an indulgence I was determined not to grant myself at the expence of the promise I had made you of being in England by the end of June or beginning of July. The only way I have of keeping my word is going from hence to England by the way of Paris, where I shall stay a few days. I have drawn from hence £100 at eight days' sight (which term was forced upon me). When I consider that my last draught from Rome was about the middle of March, I cannot think I have been extravagant in spending about £150 in ten weeks and a journey of above 700 miles. I own that when I consider I have only seen Paris and Italy in two years and a half, I am displeased with myself for having staid so long at Lausanne. Had I set out for Italy the autumn before, I might have passed last winter in the south of France, and yet been at home in the spring; but it is easier to condemn than to repair past faults. Perhaps one day you may spare me, Dear Sir, some months to compleat what I have left unfinished at present — But my duty is now to set down contented at Beriton with you and Mrs. Gibbon, and I can assure you that never was duty more agreable to inclination.

At Suze at the very foot of the Alps I met Sir Thomas Worsley and family. We supped together and talked over national, provincial, and regimental affairs. He is just the same as he was; only not so great a courtier. He seems much pleased with his intended scheme. I think it a very bad one. Naples has no advantage, but those of climate and

situation; and in point of expence and education for his children is the very last place in Italy I should have advised. Indeed I should have thought that the south of France would have suited him much better.

I shall write once more from Paris: till when, Dear Sir, believe me

Most sincerely yours,
EDWARD GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ., AT BERLIN

Beriton, October 31st, 1765.

DEAR LEGER,

Why I did not leave a letter for you at Marseilles? For a very plain reason: Because I did not go to Marseilles. But, as you have most judiciously added, why did not I send one? Humph! I own that nonplusses me a little. However, hearken to my history. After revolving a variety of plans, and suiting them as well as possible to time and finances, Guise and I at last agreed to pass from Venice to Lyons, swim down the Rhosne, wheel round the South of France, and embark at Bourdeaux. Alas! At Lyons I received letters which convinced me that I ought no longer to deprive my country of one of her greatest ornaments. Unwillingly I obeyed, left Guise to execute alone the remainder of our plan, passed about ten delicious days at Paris, and arrived in England about the end of June. Guise followed me about two months afterwards, as I was informed by an epistle from him, which, to his great astonishment, I immediately answered. You perceive there is still some virtue amongst men. *Exempli gratiâ*, your letter is dated Vienna, October 12th, 1765; it made its appearance at Beriton, Wednesday evening, October the 29th. I am at this present writing, sitting in my library, on Thursday morning, between the hours of twelve & one.

I have ventured to suppose you still at Berlin; if not, I presume you take care that your letters should follow you. This Ideal march to Berlin is the only one I can make at present. I am under command; and were I to talk of a third sally as yet, I know some certain people who would think it just as ridiculous as the third sally of the Renowned Don Quixote. All I ever hoped for was, to be able to take the field once more, after lying quiet a couple of years. I must own that your executing your tour in so compleat a manner gives me a little selfish pain. If I make a summer's escape to Berlin, I cannot hope for the companion I flattered myself with. I am sorry however I have said so much; but as it is difficult to increase your honour's proper notions of your own perfections, I will e'en let it stand. Indeed I owed you something for Your account of the favourable reception my book [1] has met with. I see there are people of taste at Vienna, and no longer wonder at your liking it. Since the court is so agreeable, a thorough reformation must have taken place. The stiffness of the Austrian Etiquette, and the haughty magnificence of the Hungarian princes, must have given way to more civilized notions. You have (no doubt) informed yourself of the forces and revenues of the Empress. I think (however unfashionably) we always esteemed her. Have You lost or improved that opinion? Princes, like Pictures, to be admired, must be seen in their proper point of view, which is often a pretty distant one. I am afraid you will find it peculiarly so at Berlin.

I need not desire you to pay a most minute attention to the Austrian and Prussian discipline. You have been bit by a mad Serjeant as well as myself; and when we meet, we shall run over with every particular which we can approve of, blame, or imitate. Since my arrival, I have assumed the august character of Major, received returns, issued orders, &c. &c.

[1] Gibbon's *Essai sur l'étude de la Littérature* was published in 1761. The essay, translated into English, was published in 1764.

I do not intend you shall have the honor of reviewing my troops next summer. Three-fourths of the men will be recruits; and during my pilgrimage, discipline seems to have been relaxed. I do not care to expose the chosen seed to the prophane mockery of the uncircumcised. But I summon you to fulfil another engagement. Make me a visit next summer. You will find here a bad house, a pleasant country in summer, some books, and very little *strange* company. Such a plan of life for two or three months must, I should imagine, suit a man who has been for as many years struck from one end of Europe to the other like a tennis-ball. At least I judge of you by myself. I always loved a quiet, studious, indolent life; but never enjoyed the charms of it so truly, as since my return from an agreable but fatiguing course of motion and hurry. However, I shall hear of your arrival, which can scarce be so soon as January, 1766, and shall probably have the misfortune of meeting you in town soon after. We may then settle any plans for the ensuing campaign.

En attendant, (admire me, this is the only scrap of foreign lingo I have imported into this Epistle — if you had seen that of Guise to me!) let me tell you a piece of Lausanne news. Nanette Grand is married to Lieutenant-colonel Prevôt, *a poor unfortunate half-pay officer.* Grand wrote to me; and by the next post I congratulated both father and daughter. There is exactness for you. The Curchod (Madame Necker) I saw at Paris. She was very fond of me, and the husband particularly civil. Could they insult me more cruelly? Ask me every evening to supper; go to bed, and leave me alone with his wife — what an impertinent security! It is making an old lover of mighty little consequence. She is as handsome as ever and much genteeler; seems pleased with her fortune rather than proud of it. I was (perhaps indiscreetly enough) exalting Nanette de Illens's good luck and the fortune. "What fortune?" said she, with an air of contempt — "not above 20,000 Livres a year." I smiled, and she caught herself immediately. "What airs I give myself in despising

twenty thousand Livres a-year, who a year ago looked upon 800 as the summit of my wishes."

I must end this tedious scrawl. Let me hear from you: I think I deserve it. Believe me, Dear Holroyd, I share in all your pleasures, and feel all your misfortunes. Poor Bolton! I saw it in the newspaper. Is Ridley with you? I suspect not: but if he is, assure him I do not forget him tho' he does me. Adieu; and believe me, most affectionately yours,

E. GIBBON, JUN.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Miss Lake's in St. James's place, January the 18th, 1766.

DEAR MADAM,

I have the pleasure of assuring you that my Rheumatism (or what else you chuse to call it) has again sounded a retreat & left me quite well. However I do still intend to consult a physician by way of precaution, & I think that Physician shall be Heberden. I have seen a number of servants, but believe I shall pitch upon one who seems very clever without having anything of the fine Gentleman, & whose demands surprize me only by their reasonableness. I wrote to his last master at Bath four or five days ago, & expect an answer with some impatience. — I believe I mentioned in my last that I was to introduce d'Eyverdun to Miss C. at the play. They saw each other: the Lady with some apparent pleasure; the Gentleman with as little horror as could be expected. I presented him, proposed a visit, pressed for time & place; & am by her own appointment to carry him to pass the evening with her next Monday. The rest must depend on himself. As to myself; I hardly know myself as yet, in this immense City; & to speak honestly am not as yet very highly entertained. I have had some invitations & expect more, but I must acknowledge, I sometimes regret the small parties where an acquaintance may pass the evening &

sup without form or invitation. I have however candor enough to lay these defects rather upon the confined circle of my friends than on the general manners of the Metropolis. Society (no doubt) may be very agreable here, but the avenues to it are fortified with some care, and I wish I may be able to muster up that modest assurance which is so necessary to force them. Several more of my acquaintance Up park, Port Elliott, Hartley, are however come or coming to town & may serve to enliven it. The public diversions are a great resource, and the Cocoa Tree[1] serves now and then to take off an idle hour. I am not even without hopes of being enrolled in the School of Vice which, notwithstanding the terrors of its name, is as agreable and I believe as innocent a Club as any in this Metropolis. What I want the most, is to be taken off the town and to get into private keeping. You may guess I mean my old scheme of boarding in a genteel family. You know I have talked of Toriano. I wish it may succeed, but the very situation of the man which makes it so agreeable makes it likewise very difficult. Things must be treated with a degree of delicacy. An acquaintance must be formed, and I shall not think this winter ill-spent if it lays a good foundation for next. In the mean time I am looking out for something to stay my stomach. I have heard of a house near Leicester fields which appears tolerable, and of another near Soho whose very situation excludes it.

We wait for Tuesday Sevennight with impatience. Mr. Pitt is in Town and spoke a great while last Tuesday. He is the declared Advocate of the Colonies, but a very equivocal one of the present ministry; tho' great compliments passed between him & Conway.[2] The debate yesterday (which

[1] Under Lord Bute, the Ministerial Club, as it was at first called, used to meet at the Cocoa Tree Tavern, in St. James's Street. In 1745 it had been the great resort of the Jacobites. Gibbon describes a supper at the club in his Journal for November, 1762.

[2] The Stamp Act, charging stamp duties on all legal documents executed in the Colonies, received the royal assent March 22, 1765, and came into

lasted till nine in the evening) was on printing the American papers. The friends to secresy, thought it much better only to leave them upon the table for the inspection and copies of about 500 people. — Almost all the separations come to nothing except that of L. & Lady B. which has taken place already.

I forgot upon the study table some maps which I want to make up into an atlas. Will you be so good, Dear Madam, as to collect all the French or Latin loose maps in the study and send them to me by the first opportunity. Pray do not despise me so far as to give me no commissions.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly your's and my father's,
E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Beriton, April 29th, 1767.

DEAR LEGER,

I happened to-night to stumble upon a very odd piece of intelligence in the St. James's Chronicle; it relates to the marriage of a certain Monsieur Olroy, formerly Captain of Hussars. I do not know how it came into my head that this Captain of Hussars was not unknown to me, & that he might possibly be an acquaintance of yours. If I am not mistaken

operation November 1, 1765. When Parliament reassembled on January 14, 1766, Pitt attacked the policy of the Act. General Conway, one of the Secretaries of State, who replied to him, said that the sentiments which he had expressed were substantially those of the ministers, and that, for his own part, he would gladly resign his office if Pitt would take it. Grenville, who followed, defended the Act, and it was in reply to him, on the same evening, that Pitt delivered one of the most eloquent and famous of his speeches. Ireland took a keen interest in the question, and the debate happens to be fully reported by two Irish gentlemen, Sir Robert Dean and Lord Charlemont; otherwise, like many others of the time, it might have passed without record. In the same session, February 24 to March 17, two resolutions were carried in both Houses, one declaring the right of Great Britain to tax the Colonies, the other repealing the Stamp Act. Two Acts of Parliament expressed these resolutions in legislative form.

in my conjecture, pray give my compliments to him, & tell him from me, that I am at least as well pleased that he is married as if I were so myself. Assure him, however, that tho' as a Philosopher I may prefer celibacy, yet as a Politician I think it highly proper that the species should be propagated by the usual method; assure him even that I am convinced, that if celibacy is exposed to fewer miseries, marriage can alone promise real happiness, since domestick enjoyments are the source of every other good. May such happiness, which is bestowed on few, be given to him; the transient blessings of beauties, and the more durable ones of fortune, good sense, and an amiable disposition.

I can easily conceive, and as easily excuse you, if you have thought mighty little this winter of your poor rusticated friend. I have been confined ever since Christmas, and confined by a succession of very melancholy occupations. I was scarce got to Beriton, where I only proposed staying about a fortnight, when a brother of Mrs. Gibbon's died unexpectedly, tho' after a very long and painfull illness. We were scarce recovered from the confusion which such an event must produce in a family, when my father was taken dangerously ill, and with some intervalls has continued so ever since. I can assure you, my dear Holroyd, that the same event appears in a very different light when the danger is serious & immediate; or when, in the gayety of a tavern dinner, we affect an insensibility that would do us no great honor were it real. My father is now much better; but I have since been assailed by a severer stroke — the loss of a friend. You remember, perhaps, an Officer of our Militia, whom I sometimes used to compare to yourself. Indeed the comparaison would have done honor to any one. His feelings were tender and noble, and he was always guided by them: his principles were just and generous, and he acted up to them. I shall say no more, and you will excuse my having said so much, of a man you had not the least knowledge of; but my mind is just

now so very full of him, that I cannot easily talk, or even think, of any thing else. If I know you right, you will not be offended at my weakness.

What rather adds to my uneasiness, is the necessity I am under of joining our Militia the day after to-morrow. Tho' the lively hurry of such a scene might contribute to divert my ideas, Yet every circumstance of it, and the place itself, (which was that of his residence,) will give me many a painful moment. I know nothing would better raise my spirits than a visit from you; the request may appear unseasonable, but I think I have heard you speak of *an uncle* you had at Southampton. At all events, I hope you will snatch a moment to write to me, and give me some account of your present situation & future designs. As you are now fettered, I should expect you will not be such a *Hic et ubique*, as you have been since your arrival in England. I stay at Southampton from the 1st to the 28th of May, & then propose making a short visit to town; If you are any where in the neighbourood of it, you may depend upon seeing me. I hope then to concert measures for seeing a little more of you next winter than I have lately done, as I hope to take a pretty long spell in town. I suppose the Goat[1] has often fallen in your way: He has never once wrote to me, nor I to him: in the Country we want materials, and in London we want time. I ought to recollect, that you even want time to read my unmeaning scrawl. Believe, however, my dear Leger, that it is the sincere expression of a heart entirely yours.

E. GIBBON.

TO HIS FATHER

Newport, I. of W., December the 1st, 1767.

DEAR SIR,

Here I am, and how much longer I may stay in this little island, Lord knows. Jemmy Worsley is still at Guernsey

[1] A nickname for Mr. Guise.

upon Election business. I have passed four or five days at Stenbury with only Sir Thomas, his son, and Jemmy's sister, rather quietly indeed than agreably. Last night we were summoned to Newport quite unexpectedly, & this morning Sir Thomas is gone to Newtown with three Lawyers in order to fix the boundaries of some borough lands; I expect him back to dinner, as it is the monthly club of the island, & I fear will be a drunken day. Upon the whole this is to me a very unpleasant scene, but I am engaged in it & I can scarce tell how to get away from it. The first step after the conveyances of my borough land are finished, is to oblige the Mayor (Holmes himself) to swear me in a burgess of Newtown; for the constitution of that borough is of a very mixed nature. Mandamus's for this purpose are every day expected from the King's bench; so that, should I leave the island *pendente lite*, I might be recalled the next day. It is however some comfort that my conscience will be less burthened than I expected. We were both mistaken as to that terrible oath which regards only freeholds in Counties.

As to our success or possibility of success you will excuse my entering into particulars, especially upon paper & by the post.[1] In general we are sanguine, especially at Newtown. Affairs are incomparably well managed by the advantage of having a great lawyer acting for himself. He hurries things thro' the courts with a expedition that is rather uncommon in law proceedings. The ennemy contrived however to insert into our friend's advertisement a most curious *quaere* which you have probably seen. The printer will ask pardon or be prosecuted. Power as well as art is employed. Yesterday we learnt that Captain Lee, who refused to promise his vote, was turned out of the government of Carisbroke Castle, (ten shillings a day) and the place given to Captain Holmet.

[1] Parliament was dissolved March 11, 1768, and the elections took place in March. Gibbon seems to have assisted the Worsleys in the Isle of Wight against the Castle interest and that of the Holmes family.

It seems to occasion a great outcry, and may perhaps do them more harm than good.

I am, Dear Sir,
Most truly your's and Mrs. Gibbon's,
E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

London, April the 18th, 1768.

DEAR MADAM,

The reason I have delayed (besides the usual one) was the real scarcity of news either of a publick or a private nature. As to myself I got safe to town, and have lived there in my usual manner; the Romans,[1] Boodle's,[2] the Theatre and some acquaintances whom you already know. In all these places nothing new or interesting has occurred. Ranelagh[3] is indeed opened. I was there last night for the first time. Notwithstanding the brilliancy of the first moment, I must own I think it very soon grows insipid to a by-stander, or by-walker if you like it better. I acknowledge it indeed the most convenient place for courtships of every kind. It is certainly the best market we have in England. Lord Abingdon is just going to make a pretty considerable purchase; of Miss Warren, Mrs. Fitzroy's sister. The Lord wants money, the Lady a title, so that as the bargain seems advantageous to both parties we apprehend it will speedily be concluded.

I will not trouble you with election news, as it is both dull and uncertain. I must however mention that I have seen Serjeant Glynn, who is encouraged by the Sollicitor General to pursue his petition, and who flatters himself that the Duke of B. will lend his weight, and that the D. of G. will stand

[1] A convivial club, meeting once a week, established by Gibbon and other travellers.

[2] Gibbon was a member of Boodle's Club, known as the *Savoir vivre*.

[3] Ranelagh Gardens, now part of Chelsea Hospital Gardens, stood on the site of a villa belonging to Lord Ranelagh.

neuter. He is strongly of opinion that Sir Thomas should be in town to make interest, and *has intended for some time past* to write to the Baronet who sleeps at Pilewell. The opponents (*without intending anything*) have already canvassed most of the members. Indeed there seems to be a general dislike to petitions (of which there never was known so great a number), and I think most of the returned members have a very good chance unless they are attacked by formidable men. Such is the case of Preston fought by Lord Strange, and such I fear will be the case of Yarmouth; many people at least have a bad opinion both of our cause and of our interest. I do not think this can be called carrying the three boroughs in the isle of Wight. Northampton will be attacked and defended with great vigour and expence. That will be the second act of Lord H's Tragi-Comi-farce. As Osborn & Rodney have exactly all the same votes, if Howe succeeds, there must be a new election of a second member, and in that case the two Noble Lords may probably quarrel about the man, which may compleat the third act of the said farce. I shall say nothing of Wilkes;[1] every man has his story and his opinion, which mutually destroy each other. Wednesday will decide most of these disputes, and you may depend on my immediately writing some particulars of that great day. Lord B.'s tryal[2] is not yet come out. I will take care to send it with *La Princesse de Babylone*, a new Romance of Voltaire which is a very agreable absurd trifle. A propos, poor Voltaire is almost ruined. He had intrusted most of his money to that expensive scoundrel the Duke of Wirtenbergh, who paid him a much greater interest for it than anybody else would give. The Duke is ruined, the security worth nothing and the money vanished. Voltaire has dismissed several dependants who lived in his house, and even

[1] John Wilkes was expelled from the House of Commons in January, 1764, and outlawed in the following August.

[2] Lord Baltimore was charged with decoying a young woman to his house.

his niece Madam Denys, all with handsome presents; and keeps only a man and three maids, with Père Adam an old Jesuit that plays at chess with him from morning to night. I am really sorry for the poor old man; as he spent his fortune much better than he acquired it.

I hear Sir Simeon[1] is confined with the gout to Hartley. The reputation of his new Physician is quite ruined by it.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly your's & my father's,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS FATHER[2]

January the 21st, 1769.

DEAR SIR,

We had this morning a long conference with Southouse, who complains very much of the obscurity of our affairs, which is so great he cannot as yet form even a clear Idea of the difficulties which surround us. These difficulties however and the delays which they produce are chiefly owing to your neglecting either to keep or to send us the necessary writings.

Let me beg of you, Dear Sir, not to suffer any indolence or false delicacy to prevent your going to the bottom of your affairs. The time of temporary expedients is now passed. Nay, without a compleat knowledge of things, hardly anything can be done even at present, for as to borrowing any money on the Putney Estate, Mr. S. thinks it not practicable till a clearer title is made out. He desires you would immediately send up the Writings of the Copper share; as

[1] Sir Simeon Stuart, Bart.

[2] The bulk of the letters for 1769 relate to the pecuniary affairs of the Gibbon family. Mr. Gibbon was the owner of estates at Maple Durham, in the parish of Beriton near Petersfield, at Lenborough in Buckinghamshire, and a house, garden, and lands at Putney. He had also inherited shares in the New River Company, and other investments. But he had for years lived beyond his income, and it was only to the wreck of this fortune that the historian succeeded in 1770.

that is unencumbered it may form part of a basis for some temporary security. We will do every thing that can be done, but these obstacles are not to be so easily surmounted.

I am very unhappy at not being able to send you, *for the present*, a more favorable account, and am the more unhappy as I fear you will even magnify every difficulty, and really make things worse by the state of your own mind. Upon that head, Dear Sir, what can I say! what have I to add on so melancholy a subject. Your health, your credit, Mrs. Gibbon's health and peace, (I feel for what she must have suffered) my own ease and fitness for any business, all depends on your resolution.

I am, Dear Sir,

Most truly yours,

E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Beriton, October 16th, 1769.

MY DEAR HUSSAR,

I received your agreeable Missive about two days ago; and am glad to find that, after all your *Errors*, you are at last a settled man.[1] I do most sincerely regret that it is not in my power to obey your immediate summons. Some very particular business will not at present permit me to be long absent from Beriton. The same business will carry me to town, about the 6th of next Month, for some days. On my return, I do really hope and intend to storm your Castle before Christmas, as I presume you will hardly remove sooner. I should be glad to meet Cambridge; but the plain dish of friendship will satisfy me, without the seasoning of Attic Wit. Do you know any thing of Guise? Have you no inclination to look at the Russians? We have a bed at your Service. Vale.

[1] In 1769 John Baker Holroyd purchased from Lord de la Warr the estate of Sheffield Place in Sussex.

Present my sincere Respects to those who are dear to you; Believe me, they are so to me.

Do I direct right to East Grinstead?

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Boodle's, Ten o'Clock, Thursday Evening.
[Dec. 1769.]

DEAR HOLROYD,

My schemes with regard to you have been entirely disapointed. The business that called me to town was not ready before the 20th of last month, and the same business has kept me here till now. I have, however, a very strong inclination to eat a Christmas Mince-pye with you; and let me tell you that inclination is no small Compliment. What are the trees and waters of Sheffield-place compared with the comfortable smoke, lazy dinners, and inflammatory Junius's, which we can every day enjoy in town? You have seen the last Junius?[1] He calls on the distant Legions to march to the Capital, and free us from the tyranny of the Prætorian Guards: I cannot answer for the ghost of the '*Hic & ubiques*,' but the Hampshire Militia are determined to keep the peace for fear of a broken head. — After all, do I mean to make a visit next week? Upon my soul I cannot tell. I tell every body that I shall. I know that I cannot pass the week with any man in the world, with whom the pleasure of seeing each other, will be more sincere or more reciprocal. Yet between you and [me] I do not believe that I shall be able to get out of this town before you come into it. At all events I look forwards with Great impatience to Bruton Street and the Romans.

Believe me,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

[1] The letters signed "Junius" began to appear in the *Public Advertiser* on January 21, 1769: the last was published on January 21, 1772.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Pall Mall, February 17th, 1770.

DEAR MADAM,

Laziness and procrastination are poor excuses for silence; yet such as they are I am too often forced to employ them. However at this time, I was partly satisfied by the frequent [accounts] I received from Beriton both by Pitman's journey & the channel of Mr. Porten; and I might perhaps have remained still longer in my Lethargy, had I not been rouzed by the unaccountable fate which your last letter has met with. Thro' some strange jumble between Mr. Porten's servant, the maid & Luke, it has dropt somewhere by the way. This *upon my honor* is the exact truth; so that if there was any thing in it which requires a particular answer I must intreat you to repeat it.

Baron Wentzel is at last arrived, but says himself that he is at present overwhelmed with business. I submit it to my father and yourself, whether it may not be better to wait till he shall be somewhat more at leisure.

This great public scene is still as noisy & as nonsensical as ever. Particulars would be endless, & indeed the papers are now so daring that they almost forestall any private intelligence. Conjectures I leave to men more idle or more busy than myself. However the general opinion is that the next fortnight must decide the fate of the ministry.[1] If Lord North (whose spirit & abilities are certainly great) holds out till then, the minority will probably divide, desert, & run away.

A more agreable piece of private news relate to our old

[1] On the 9th of January, 1770, the Earl of Chatham returned to public life, from which he had retired in October, 1768. His reappearance, and his attacks upon the Government, determined the Duke of Grafton, who had succeeded him as Prime Minister, to resign office. On January 28, Lord North, who was already Chancellor of the Exchequer, accepted the post of First Lord of the Treasury, which he held for eleven years.

arrears, which we are in a fair way of recovering as the North already have. Abbot is in town and we are pushing the affair. This will amount to about £100 for myself, & near double for my father, and with this I close my Militia service. I have already conversed with Sir Simeon & propose resigning in a few days. However I will come to the meetings, if I am absolutely necessary, & should be glad to know the days.

I am, Dear Madam,
Your's & my father's,
E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Beriton, August the 9th, 1770.

DEAR HOLROYD,

I am much obliged to you for persisting to court a friend who has the appearance of neglecting you. But when you are told the reason of it, you will rather pity than blame me. It is my poor father's illness that confines me here, and cannot permit me to stir till the affair is decided: a confirmed Dropsy and Asthma which have either produced or been caused by a general decay of the constitution allows us no hope of his recovery.

You may easily suppose that I am in a very improper frame of mind for the easy flow of a familiar epistle. I shall therefore only speak to business. The men I spoke of are the two Smiths, the father who lives at Havant, and the son who lives at Wickham in this county. Both, especially the son, are famous for surveying and valuing *Timber* (the surveying land is a separate branch, and quite out of their way). My father has always had reason to be satisfied with their skill and honesty. Their price for surveying is a guinea a day, or so much in the pound (I don't know exactly what) if they sell the timber. I will make any further enquiries you desire,

and in the meantime, wish you would sometimes raise my spirits by a friendly salutation.

I am, Dear H.,
Most truly yours,
E. G.

TO JAMES SCOTT, ESQ.

Beriton, November the 13th, 1770.

DEAR SIR,

Yesterday evening, about six o'clock, it pleased God to take my poor father out of the World. My situation and that of poor Mrs. Gibbon will excuse my saying any more on the melancholy occasion, than that I am and ever shall be,

Dear Sir,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Beriton, November 18th, 1770.

DEAR HOLROYD,

The melancholy and long expected event of my father's death happened last Monday the 12th instant. The expectation itself through the course of a very painful illness had in some measure prepared me for it. Yet notwithstanding these just motives of consolation it has been a very severe shock. The multitude of affairs I find myself so suddenly involved in, will not allow me to say when I can hope to wait on you, or indeed what portion of the Winter I shall be able to spend in town. I must however go there next week on particular business. I should think myself very lucky, if, during my stay (which will be about ten days) anything should call you to London. I shall be in my old Lodgings opposite to the Duke of Cumberland's, Pall Mall.

Believe me, my dear Holroyd,
Most sincerely yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Pall Mall, November 27th, 1770.

DEAR MADAM,

I went this morning with Mr. Porten to Doctor's Commons to take out letters of administration, a formality, as I found, indispensably necessary. There I was told, that before I could properly administer, a proxy, in the enclosed form, must be signed by you, in the presence of two Witnesses. If you will be so good as to return it by Thursday's post, the business will be entirely finished Saturday Morning.

I am sorry to find by a letter from Mr. Bayley, that you have not yet left your own room. Let me intreat you, Dear Madam, to allow your friends to see you, and not to refuse the reliefs of air and change of place. As to myself they have so good an effect on *my* health, that were I to consult a Physician, I should be at a loss what bodily complaint to alledge.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. G.

TO HIS AUNT, MISS HESTER GIBBON

December, 1770.

DEAR MADAM,

In the midst of the justest affliction nothing could afford me a greater consolation than your kind letter: as it convinced me that the nearest relation of my poor father shared my grief, and still interested herself in my future Welfare. Some immediate business which called me to town prevented my answering it directly, nor indeed did I find myself able to enter so soon into the melancholy detail which you are desirous of hearing.

The first affliction with which my father was visited, was a

gradual decay of sight, which at last terminated in an almost total blindness. With his sight he lost almost every pleasure of life, as he could no longer enjoy the country nor attend to the business of the farm, in which for many years his chief amusement and occupation had consisted. Tho' he bore this severe stroke with surprizing fortitude and resignation, yet the effect it had on his health and spirits began to alarm us very much, when last spring we were still more terrified by the symptoms of an approaching dropsy; a shortness of breath, swelling of the legs and body and the loss of rest, strength and appetite. The Physician who attended him encreased our apprehensions by confessing his own difficulties, as he was well assured that Mr. G.'s constitution could not support the usual methods external or internal, which might otherwise be proper for his disorder. In the month of August however a favourable Revolution seemed to happen. Dr. Addington, whom a friend in London consulted, advised the use of broom ashes. They immediately produced a very great evacuation of Water, reduced my father's legs and body to their natural size, and for a while gave us very great room to hope, tho' our hopes were at the same time mixed with so many fears as prevented us from writing to any of our friends at a distance. My father himself kept us from taking such a step, by insisting that Mrs. Eliott should not be acquainted with his situation, for fear her tenderness should bring her to Beriton and expose him to an interview to which his strength and spirits were not equal. At length, Dear Madam, after several turns in his disorder, which all gave him a temporary relief, without in the least restoring his strength, my poor father was on Tuesday the 6th of last month taken with a fainting fit. They returned several times during the week with more or less violence, but during the intervals between them he was perfectly easy and composed. The fatal one of Monday the 12th began about Noon and lasted near six hours, tho' we have every reason to think that he

suffered very little in the last struggle. Nature was entirely exhausted and his disorder, whatever appearances it might assume, was a total decay of the constitution.

Long before the melancholy event my father was sensible of his approaching end, and prepared himself for it with the truest resignation; besides his private prayers he was attended by the Clergyman of the Parish, from whom he received the Communion, who testified the highest satisfaction in his edifying behaviour. But my father's best preparation was the comfort of a well-spent life. He was followed to the grave by the tears of a whole country which for many years had experienced his goodness and charity.

There is one circumstance indeed which I would conceal even from you, were it possible to conceal it from the World. Economy was not amongst my father's Virtues. The expences of the more early part of his life, the miscarriage of several promising schemes, and a general want of order and exactness involved him in such difficulties as constrained him to dispose of Putney, and to contract a mortgage so very considerable that it cannot be paid unless by the sale of our Buckinghamshire Estate. The only share I have ever taken in these transactions has been by my sensibility to my father's wants and my compliance with his inclinations, a conduct which has cost me very dear, but which I cannot repent. It is a satisfaction to reflect that I have fulfilled, perhaps exceeded my filial duties, and it is still in my power with the remains of our fortunes to lead an agreable and rational life. I am sensible that as no Estate will answer the demands of vice and folly, so a very moderate Income will supply the real wants of Nature and Reason.

I have now, Dear Madam, gone thro' the heads of what I apprehended to be most interesting to you. Should there be any other points, about which you wish for farther information, I shall esteem myself happy in giving you all the satisfaction in my power, as well as in embracing every

opportunity of convincing you, with how much truth and regard

I am, Dear Madam,
Your affectionate Nephew and faithfull humble Servant,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Pall Mall, May the 4th, 1771.

DEAR MADAM,

I am rather vexed than disappointed at the delays of the formal Mr. Bricknall. All men of business are like him when they know you cannot easily get out of their hands. Mr. Newton in town, tho' far preferable to old Southouse, is full of delays and avocations. I press him as much as I can to get through the Writings, and hope you will be so good as to do the same both in your own name and in mine with the aforesaid Bricknall.

You know that the country merely in itself has no charms for me, and I do not see *that as yet* my presence can be of any use. I therefore propose staying here the remainder of the month; towards the middle of it I shall see my friend Holroyd, who is obliged upon some particular business to make the tour of Ireland, Scotland and Yorkshire, but who will certainly be at Beriton, as the active little man writes me word, by the end of June. By that time I hope we may persuade Mr. Scott to make us a visit, which may in many respects be of use. In the mean time I am only concerned at the solitary life you lead there, and though nobody that I know possesses more resources against the complaint of Ennui, yet I could wish you had more living company than Sir John Dalrymple. Surely Mrs. or at least Miss Roberts could come over. In the mean time I have sent you Robertson's book,[1] in

[1] William Robertson (1721–1793) published in 1758 his *History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and James VI.*, and in 1769 his *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles the Fifth.*

which I think you will find much entertainment and information.

Mrs. Eliott, with whom I dined yesterday, told me she had just wrote to you. I suppose she acquainted you with the doubtful tho' pleasing suspense they are in since Colonel Nugent's death. We are *amazing* friends, and I am actually employed in fishing out intelligence for them, by the means of my connections with Lord Berkeley.

I am, with best *Wishes* to William,

Dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

1771.

DEAR MADAM,

I am much obliged to your friendship, for the advice you have given me with regard to my future conduct, and shall always pay the most sincere deference to it. Both prudence and inclination will engage me to get rid of the farm as soon as such a complicated piece of business can be transacted. With respect to my expences they shall always be proportioned to my income, and I am already preparing to discharge a cook, a groom, and other unnecessary Servants. There is one part of your letter which has given me, Dear Madam, very great uneasiness. You say that you have heard from undoubted authority that my own imprudences had so much embarrassed me, as to oblige me to make a concession which otherwise I might not have done. Were I conscious of these imprudences, I should fairly acknowledge them, and endeavour by future behaviour to make some amends for past follies. But an innocent person has a right to speak a very different language. I know my own innocence, and without any vain protestations of it, I will at once come to such facts as must either establish it, or else expose me not only as a prodigal, but as a man devoid of honour and veracity.

I therefore solemnly affirm the truth of the following facts.

1. When I returned from Switzerland about twelve years and a half ago, my father told me his affairs were a good deal embarrassed, and desired that I would joyn in cutting off the entail and in raising £10,000. I was then a raw lad of one and twenty, unacquainted with law or business, and desirous of obliging my father. He then gave me three hundred a year, a moderate allowance to which his eldest son would have had a natural claim, had no such transaction intervened.

2. Upon and within that allowance, I have constantly lived, except during two years and a half that I was abroad the second time. Whilst I was abroad I spent about seven hundred a year, a sum which, with the unavoidable expences of travelling, barely supports the appearance of an English gentleman.

3. I have never on any occasion received from my father any pecuniary inducements to consent to any step whatsoever, except once, four hundred pounds, near £100 of which were arrears of my allowances, and about the same sum I returned to my father when he wanted it very much.

4. I have never lost at play a hundred pounds at any one time; perhaps not in the course of my life. Play I neither love nor understand.

5. I have never taken up any money for myself, in any way whatever.

6. Neither at my father's death nor at any other period have I ever had any other debts than common tradesmen's bills, which are paid from one year to another, and even those to a very trifling amount.

I have tried to answer a general charge, as far as a general charge can be answered. But for our mutual satisfaction, let me intreat you, Dear Madam, to communicate that part of my letter to the persons from whom you received your intelligence. Desire that without sparing me they would contradict *by facts* any of those which I have advanced, or that

they would mention any which I have suppressed. If they are unable to do this, your candour must allow that they were either weakly deceived, or wicked Deceivers. As I neither know nor wish to know who they are, Charity induces me to believe the former rather than to suspect the latter.

I think, Dear Madam, you will excuse my warmth. I should deserve the imputation could I submit to it with patience. As long as you credit it, you must view me in the light of a specious Hypocrite, who meanly cloaked his own extravagancies under his father's imprudence, and who ascribed to filial piety what had been the consequence of folly and necessity. As long as you credit it, I must be deprived of the esteem of a person, whose good opinion and friendship it will ever be my wish and study to deserve.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

October 6, 1771.

DEAR HOLROYD,

I set down to answer your Epistle, after taking a very pleasant ride. — *A Ride! and upon what?* — Upon a horse. — "*You lye!*" — I don't. I have got a droll little Poney, and intend to renew the long-forgotten practice of Equitation, as it was known in the World before the 2nd of June of the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty-three. As I used to reason against riding, so I can now argue for it; and indeed the principal use I know in human reason is, when called upon, to furnish arguments for what we have an inclination to do.

I am obliged to you, for looking me out this Lancashire Man, who may assuredly be of use, and no less so for your intercession with Gosling or Clive. If he and his Partner will condescend to receive my Tribute, I am in no violent hurry to dispose of the Place, which under Mrs. Gibbon's management is certainly no losing Game. She thanks you for your

Papers, and has delivered the *Roster* to Mr. Luff, who, though it is new, likes it hugely.

What do you mean by presuming to affirm, that I am of no use here? Farmer Gibbon of no use! *Last week* I sold all my Hops, and I believe well, at nine Guineas a hundred, to a very responsible Man. Some people think I might have got more at Weyhill Fair, but that would have been an additional expence, and a great uncertainty. Our quantity has disapointed us very much; but I think, that besides hops for the house, there will not be less than 500*l.*; — no contemptible Sum of thirteen small Acres, and two of them planted last year only. *This week* I let a little Farm in Petersfield by auction, and propose raising it from 25*l.* to 35*l.* pr. annum: and Farmer Gibbon of no use!

To be serious; I have but one reason for resisting your invitation and my own wishes; that is, Mrs. Gibbon I left nearly alone all last Winter, and shall do the same this. She submits very chearfully to that state of solitude; but, on sounding her, I am convinced that she would think it unkind were I to leave her at present. I know you so well, that I am sure you will acquiesce in this reason; and let me make my next Visit to Sheffield-Place from town, which I think may be a little before Christmas. I should like to hear something of the precise time, duration, and extent of your intended tour into Bucks. Adieu.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Beriton, October 25th, 1771.

DEAR HOLROYD,

To shew that I am not an ungratefull Wretch, I wrote immediately to Damer,[1] and to shew that I am a very careless one, I directed the letter to another person, whose Epistle

[1] The Hon. John Damer, eldest son of Lord Milton, afterwards created Earl of Dorchester.

went to Damer. Lord Milton's heir was ordered to send me without delay a brown Ratteen Frock, and the Taylor was desired to use his interest with his cousin the Duke of Dorset. The mistake has been rectified, but I have not yet had an answer. Is your Bucks Scheme settled, do you start and where do I meet you? I will attend you either in London, at Winslow, or at Denham, where under your protection, I believe I might trespass for one night on Mr. Way. From thence, "Teucro duce et auspice Teucro," I will try to find out my little dairy. My Hops are well sold, with judgement, and that Judgement my own, for even Mrs. G. wanted me to keep them for Wayhill Fair, where they were a mere drug. The little farm, I told you of, I have raised from £25 to £38 pr. annum, but *Plâit au ciel*, that I had neither Farm, nor Tenants, they suit not my humour. *I have wrote on the wrong side of the paper.*

Your four-footed friend is not thought to have attained years of strength and discretion, however if you are impatient he shall be forthcoming. A two-legged friend of yours I breakfasted with this morning at Up-park, — Lascelles; he seems civilized. We abused you, your place, Wife, children, &c. &c., pretty much. Adieu.

E. G.

Pray write to me as soon as I wish, but much sooner than I deserve.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Boodle's, 10 o'clock, Monday night, Feb. 3rd, 1772.

I love, honour, and respect every member of Sheffield-place; even my great enemy Datch,[1] to whom you will please to convey my sincere wishes, that no *simpleton* may wait on him at dinner, that his wise Papa may not show him any pictures, and that his much wiser Mamma may chain him

[1] The name by which Mr. Holroyd's son called himself.

hand and foot, in direct contradiction to Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights.

It is difficult to write news — because there are none. Parliament is perfectly quiet; and I think that Barré,[1] who is just now playing at Whist in the Room, will not have exercise of the lungs, except, perhaps, on a Message much talked of, and soon expected, to recommend it to the wisdom of the H. of C. to provide a proper future remedy against the improper marriages of the younger branches of the royal family. The noise of Lutteral[2] is subsided, but there was some foundation for it. The Colonel's expenses in his bold enterprise were yet unpaid by government. The Hero threatened, assumed the Patriot, received a sop, and again sunk into the Courtier. As to Denmark, it seems now that the king, who was totally unfit for government, has only passed from the hands of his Queen Wife to those of his Queen Mother-in-Law. The former is said to have indulged a very *vague* taste in her Amours. She would not be admitted into the Pantheon, from whence the *Gentlemen Proprietors* exclude all beauty, unless unspotted and immaculate (tautology, by the by). The *Gentlemen Proprietors*, on the other hand, are friends and patrons of the Leopard Beauties. Advertising challenges have passed between the two Great Factions, and a bloody battle is expected Wednesday Night. *A propos*, the Pantheon, in point of Ennui and Magnificence, is the wonder of the XVIIIth Century and the British Empire. Adieu.

[1] Colonel Isaac Barré (1726–1802), M.P. He had served under Wolfe at Quebec, and appears in West's famous picture of the death of Wolfe. At the battle he lost his left eye, and in his picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds the right side of his face is turned towards the spectator.

[2] Colonel Luttrell, brother of the Duchess of Cumberland, was made adjutant-general of the land forces in Ireland, but in 1772, being discontented with the post, threatened to resign his seat for Middlesex.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Feb. 21, 1772.

DEAR H.,

An exact man should acknowledge the receipt of Letters, Papers, &c. How do I know for instance whether my Hampshire Acres, the long expected fruits of my Anabaptist's Labours, may not be sunk, irrecoverably sunk in the Sussex Dirt? However, notwithstanding my indignation, I will employ five minutes in telling you two or three recent pieces of News.

1. Charles Fox is commenced Patriot, and is already attempting to pronounce the words *Country, Liberty, Corruption*, &c.; with what success, time will discover. Yesterday he resigned the Admiralty. The most probable account seems to be, that he could not prevail on Ministry to join with him in his intended repeal of the Marriage Act (a favourite measure of his father, who opposed it from its origin,) and that Charles very judiciously thought Lord Holland's friendship imported him more than Lord North's.

2. Yesterday the Marriage Message came to both Houses of Parliament. You will see the words of it in the Papers; and, thanks to the submissive piety of this Session, it is hoped that the Princes of the next Generation will not find it so easy as their Uncles have done to expose themselves and to burthen the Public.

3. To-day the House of C. was employed in a very odd way. Tommy Townshend[1] moved, that the Sermon of Dr. Knowell, who preached before the House on the 30th of January (*id est*, before the Speaker and four Members,) should be burnt by the Common Hangman, as containing arbitrary, Tory, High-flown doctrines. The House was nearly agreeing to the Motion, till they recollected that they had already thanked the Preacher for his excellent discourse,

[1] Afterwards Lord Sydney.

and ordered it to be printed. Knowell's Bookseller is much obliged to the Right Honourable Tommy Townshend.

When do you come to Town? I want Money, and am tired of sticking to the Earth by so many Roots. No news from Fleet Street. *Embrassez de ma part la Sainte famille.* Adieu. Ever yours,

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Pall Mall, March 21st, 1772.

DEAR MADAM,

I admit the justice of your kind reproaches, and without attempting any idle excuses, I will endeavour to prove my repentance by my amendment. We are now (Holroyd and myself) very busy, but with much less success than I could wish. Though it has been mathematically demonstrated to the Goose, that at twenty-two, he would make near 3 pr. cent. of his money, the Goose, for such he most truly is, after a long shuffling dilatory suspense, without being able to find out his own foolish mind, has this morning told me that he must at least for the present decline it. We immediately proceed to an Advertisement, and the Oracle has made the value of the thing so clear even to me that I am almost as sanguine as himself. We are soon to have a Conference about Beriton. He thinks the map you have sent will be of use, and prevent his losing his Way, when he goes down with me about Easter, as he will certainly do. As from Bricknall's slowness it was impossible to let the Farms at Lady Day, they can only be let at Michaelmas: and we, however reluctantly, go through another and last Harvest. I am doubly anxious that it should be the last, not only to have my own affairs in a smaller compass and clearer order, but likewise to release you, dear Madam, from a melancholy situation, which your affection for me has persuaded you to undertake.

Sir Richard Worsley is just come home. I am sorry to see many alterations, and little improvement. From an honest

wild English buck, he is grown a *philosopher*. Lord Petersfield displeases every body by the affectation of consequence: the young baronet disgusts no less by the affectation of wisdom. He speaks in short sentences, quotes Montaigne, seldom smiles, never laughs, drinks only water, professes to command his passions, and intends to marry in five months. The two lords, his uncle as well as Jemmy, attempt to show him that such behaviour, even were it reasonable, does not suit this country. He remains incorrigible, and is every day losing ground in the good opinion of the public, which at his first arrival ran strongly in his favour. Deyverdun is probably on his journey towards England, but is not yet come.

The attention of the Public is much engaged about the Marriage Bill. The Princes of the Blood will lose their natural rights, and a most odious law will be forced upon Parliament. I do not remember ever to have seen so general a concurrence of all ranks, parties, and professions of men. Administration themselves are the reluctant executioners, but the King will be obeyed, and the bill is universally considered as his, reduced into legal or rather illegal form by Ld. Mansfield and the Chancellor. By the bye, the Duke of Manchester told me the other day that since the bill Lady Waldegrave has authorized all her friends to declare that she *is* married. The Duke and Duchess of C[umberland] are in town, but live in princely solitude. He drives her about the streets in a Phaeton, and they have sometimes concerts to which none but the Luttrel family are admitted.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Beriton, April 21st, 1772.

DEAR H.,

I am just arrived, as well as yourself, at my Dii Penates, but with very different intention. You will ever

remain a Bigot to those Rustic Deities; I propose to abjure them soon, and to reconcile myself to the Catholic Church of London. The inhabitants of this evil Country are frightened and have frightened me about advertising for proposals. *It has never been done, ergo it will never do, &c.* There is a Man near Chichester who has made offers, will only take the whole, buy all the stock. It is even *said*, that he does not seem astonished at 18 or even 20 Shillings for the Low Hill Ground, and every one is convinced that his purse is adequate to his proposals. Suppose I was to write him a polite Epistle — his character — first offer — willing to listen to his proposals, for taking Miss Nancy Beriton into private keeping, before I throw her upon the town. Decide.

Mrs. G. is well, and salutes you; but is not a little mortified at not seeing you. She is doubtfull of herself and of Luff, and wished you to examine into the *Present* State of Europe. I foresee I must look you over some day or other. In the mean time, I embrace Madame (*autant qu'il m'est permis*), Datch, the Capering Lady, and the rest of your family, Bipede and Quadrupede. I expect Clarke to-morrow, and shall be in town the middle of next week.

I am, yours sincerely,
E. G.

TO MRS. HOLROYD, SEN.

Beriton, near Petersfield, Hampshire, July the 17th, 1772.

MADAM,

There is not any event which could have affected me with greater surprise and deeper concern, than the news in last night's paper, of the death of our poor little amiable friend Master Holroyd,[1] whom I loved, not only for his Parents' sake, but for his own. Should the news be true (for even yet I indulge some faint hopes,) what must be the distress of our

[1] John William Holroyd, at that time the only son of Mr. Holroyd.

friends at Sheffield! I so truly sympathize with them, that I know not how to write to Holroyd; but must beg to be informed of the state of the family by a line from you. I have some Company and business here, but would gladly quit them, had I the least reason to think that my presence at Sheffield would afford the least comfort or satisfaction to the man in the world whom I love and esteem the most.

I am, Madam,
Your most obedient humble Servant,
E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Beriton, July the 30th, 1772.

MY DEAR HOLROYD,

It was my intention to set out for Sheffield as soon as I received your affecting Letter, and I hoped to have been with you as to-day; but walking very carelessly yesterday morning, I fell down, and put out a small bone in my ancle. I am now under the Surgeon's hands, but think, and most earnestly hope, that this little accident will not delay my journey longer than the middle of next week. I share, and wish I could alleviate, your feelings. I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Holroyd.

I am, My Dear Holroyd,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Sheffield Place, August the 7th, 1772.

DEAR MADAM,

I found a good deal of Company at Up-park, Harry [1] and Tutor, Franklin and Wife, Batten and son; Sir James and Lady Peachy came to drink Tea, and I should have

[1] Eldest son of Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh, and his successor in the baronetcy.

passed a very pleasant day, had it not been for the spectacle of poor Sir Matthew, who is visibly and *litterally* dying. I set out at six yesterday morning, got to Brighthelmstone about two — a very thin season, everybody gone to Spa. In the evening I reached this place. My friend appears, as he ever will, in a light truly respectable; concealing the most exquisite sufferings under the show of Composure and even chearfulness, and attempting though with little success to confirm the weaker mind of his Partner. I apprehend (tho' with much uncertainty) that my stay will not exceed a fortnight. Adieu, Dear Madam, remember me to Mr. Scott and the Baylys who (I hope) are with you, and believe me,

Ever yours,
E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Beriton, September the 25th, 1772.

Blessings on the man (his name is now buried in oblivion) who first invented the loud trumpet of Advertisements. Blessings on those two great men, the intrepid Holroyd and the prudent Hugonin, without whose charitable aid the wretched Gibbon must for ever have grovelled in the mire of Beriton.

We much depended, as you may remember, on the Rumsey Farmer and the Distiller. But — *omne quod humanum instabile.* The latter never replied to the letter which I sent him, the former missed the appointed Wednesday and threw me into an agony of despair, which was soon changed into joy on the discovery that I had escaped a very indifferent Tenant. Many candidates succeeded, a letter from Norfolk, and farmers of various appearance and from different places. Luff (I believe he used no foul play) always chose to show the farm, and then conducted them to Hugonin, who debated the matter with them over a bowl of Punch and then acquainted

me with the result. It would be tedious and at present of little use to expatiate on the objections, difficulties, &c. At last a Farmer named Winton from Shoreham who knows you (by the bye, all the farmers abuse you, a high compliment !) made his appearance: the father is a man of substance, 200 a year of his owne, the son a brisk active fellow about thirty, both of unexceptionable character, and throughout the whole transaction uncommonly fair and candid. They take all my stock at an appraisement, sheep excepted (they don't like the sort), and allow me a year for repairs, about which they gladly take Hugonin for Umpire, and have not indeed demanded any one unreasonable thing. I have given at their request a thirty years' lease, and immediately signed a legal article. Monday sennight the stock will be appraised by one on each side.

In a word, all is settled and (though I have given up something of the proposed rent) I should think it one of the most agreeable days of my life, were it not embittered by the uneasiness I feel on Mrs. G.'s account. She refused to yield an iota of her pretensions, and even to allow the Tenant any Rick Yard, or a way from the Lawn into his farm-yard. She was repeatedly told that every farmer did and ever would reject the farm on such terms. At length she gave Hugonin authority to say that she had given up all thoughts of the place: but her temper both then and since has been very different from what I could wish it. She is angry if she is not constantly consulted, and yet takes up everything with such absolute quickness, that we all dread to consult her. She is at present I fear equally offended with me, with Hugonin and Mr. Scott. Nothing shall however abate my regard for her, and as soon as I can discover whether she will fix on Bath or some country place, she may command every service within my power. All this *sub sigillo amicitiæ.*

I am summoned to dress. The Jolliffes dine here. Adieu. Every kind wish to Mrs. H.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Beriton, 3rd October, 1772.

I am so happy, so exquisitely happy, at feeling so many Mountains taken off my shoulders, that I can brave your indignation, and even the three-forked lightning of Jupiter himself. My reasons for taking so unwarrantable a step (approved of by Hugonin) were no unmanly despondency (though it daily became more Apparent how much the farm would suffer, both in reality and in reputation, by another year's management), but the following grounds. 1. The being secure against repairs for so long a term, and 2. The giving the Tenant a durable interest to use my land like his own. The Revolutions of this country may take various turns within that period; nor do I recollect that, although you fixed on 21 years, you so strongly disaproved of a longer term. However the Mischief is done; and I can only wish that, at or about Michaelmas in the year of our Lord God one Thousand seven hundred and ninety-three, you convince me that Gib-ben knows no more of country business than Maria, which by that time most probably will be very true. The rent after deducting Ponds, Yards, &c. (which every tenant objected to) is very little short of the grand desideratum twenty and ten, a price which fills the country round with terror and amazement. The Tenant is confessedly rich, and in this whole transaction about Covenants, repairs, &c., has shewn himself the reverse of *eminently troublesome.* The father may perhaps be slovenly, the son who is properly my Tenant is (in H.'s opinion) a very active, clever, sensible fellow.

But to turn from the past to the future. *My Bucks Tenants* have all consented (though 'tis very "*heard*") to pay Church and Poor, but before they sign the paper, they wish to wait on me, either here or in London, and Harris hints to me their intended request, "That they may have the cutting of the

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Hedges for wood for their own use, but not to sell any; and to cut such hedges as I think proper, and so much in the year; to be done in a husband-like manner, and to do all their own repairs, thatching and everything." On consulting Hugonin, I found that what they ask is allowed in this part of the country, so that I am almost enclined by sending them a gracious permission to secure their signature and prevent the deputation of the Savages. However I wait for orders. It is of more consequence to consider what further steps may be taken with regard to the disposal of Lenborough; for as I now see land, I am very impatient to get ashore. Suppose *you made Gosling* acquainted with all difficulties being smoothed and made him a final offer for — the Mortgage *and* £5000 shall we say? It is surely worth it. If he refuses We have no resource but the hazardous one of a Auction. Think of it: and of the steps to be taken, and whether in the last case we may not *divide* with success.

Mrs. G. is now cheerfull and I hope satisfied: but I fancy *will hardly accept* of your obliging invitation this year. Tomorrow we appraise the stock. The *week after I carry my* Hops to Weyhill. On my return we shall find much to do in settling the plan of selling my corn during the winter, selecting the choicest furniture and preparing for *an auction of the rest.* She is then desirous of going to look about her at Bath, where I shall attend her, and on my return shall be impatient to examine London in quest of a comfortable habitation. We shall probably meet when you are on your Surrey (I suppose Richmond) scheme, and you will find me a sure resource in the bleak season when you can get nobody else. Adieu.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Beriton, 15th October, 1772.

DEAR H.,

I am most seriously uneasy with regard to what you say of Mrs. H., her health, her spirits and her thinness.

I wish she may receive benefit from Dr. Pepys's prescription, but am of opinion that change of air and amusements would prove the best Physician. Recollect the service our little tour was to her, consider that the evenings are growing long and Sheffield Place affords no variety of objects or company. *You know she loves Bath*, which is now in season, and I should think that place would fill up the gloomy vacuity between this time and Christmas. If among a crowd of acquaintances one friend can afford you any comfort, I am quite at your service there.

You know as much as I do of Lord Verney's tythe. Harris has not answered that part of my letter; probably he had not seen his Lordship. I write to him by this post to enquire into that matter, & to order him absolutely *to lett the Underwood*, and, if he can, to prevail on the Tenants to pay something more for the liberty of cutting the hedges. Whatever is done about the sale must be *done quickly*, and on that account I fear not so well. The Goslings are impatient. I know not how to ask them for another year, and to take up so large a sum for one Year only would be attended with much difficulty and expence. They wish, if I cannot speedily dispose of Bucks, I would pay off part by the sale of the New River share, for which I know they have a hankering. It is a most delicious bit of Property, and I should be sorry to part with it for such a price as one commonly gets by a forced sale. If they would give me a *rotund* sum for both, it might perhaps tempt. I wish to hear from you soon. Everything is hastening to a dissolution. Winton has taken my stock (*all* the horses), but the appraisement came short of what I expected (not quite £1000). I believe many of the things, live and dead, were old. Last Monday I went with Mr. Scott to Weyhill fair, and sold my hops pretty well. The sheep are moving off very fast. My Corn, a noble stock, will be threshed out and sold *sous les Yeux de* Mr. Luff. The household furniture will be sold by auction after my departure, but I reserve a great deal (most assuredly

the three pictures) for my house in Town. Hugonin undertakes the repairs, so that I see nothing which can prevent my quitting this damned place in about a fortnight or three Weeks. As soon as I have deposited Mrs. G. at Bath, I shall be quite my own Master. Adieu.

E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Beriton, 21st of October, 1772.

To quit a subject now become a matter of curiosity, I shall only say that in this country the Hampshire Gentleman is supposed to have lett his farm exceedingly high, and that on every side he hears compliments from the Gentlemen and clamours from the Farmers. He did not *sneakingly conceal, &c.* The Tenant pays for the seeds, the Fallows were given him, from the opinion of Hugonin, &c., who agreed that they were very ill made. But now, hark forward.

The Gosling's impatience will I fear hurry us very unpleasantly. Their proposal of *the New River* share would not suit in any respect. It brings in at least £260 pr. annum, yearly encreasing, and must, I should think, as freehold be worth thirty years' purchase; call it £8000. The average (for it varies prodigiously) of *the Copper share* is under £100. I cannot think it would sell for more than £1500. When that was done, instead of a surplus of Money, I should find myself possessed of two Landed Estates, with at least £7000 mortgage on one of them, and for a time totally disabled from buying a house or forming any plans of life, for a great deal of the farm stock must go towards paying a variety of middling debts of my most careless Father, which it was unnecessary to trouble you with. So that scheme will never answer. I tell my Fleet Street friends that if it will be very inconvenient to them to allow me another year, or even to stay the Winter, I must endeavour to get their Mortgage transferred for a twelfmonth to some other Person, which cannot be done

without trouble and expence. In either case we must act with vigour. I am so far from chusing to *sell under* 30 *years' purchase* (a bare £20,000 without Manor, &c.) that I think *that a very sorry price: They are still at old Rents. Why cannot we try an auction of the whole* before we divide? *I wish to see you, and think Denham* a good place of Rendezvous: But before I can get from hence, carry Mrs. G. to Bath, and traverse to Bucks, it will grow *towards the 10th of November.* Will that do? To another man, I should talk nonsense about trouble, obligation, gratitude, &c. &c. To you, I only say, If I can't meet you at Denham, *take R. Way with you,* carve Lenborough and let the Deed itself serve you for a reward. I have had another letter from Harris: not a word *about Lord V.* But he speaks of *Mr. Monkeith,* a rich man who liked the Estate, and objected only to the Poor's tax. I desired he would give him my direction at the Cocoa Tree, and inform that that objection was removed. Adieu. *You do not say* a word about Mrs. H. I hope she is better.

E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Pall Mall, Dec. 11th, 1772.

DEAR H.,

By this time, I suppose you returned to the Elysian fields of Sheffield. The Country (I do not mean any particular reflections on Sussex) must be vastly pleasant at this time of the Year! For my own part, the punishment of my sins has at length overtaken me. On Thursday, the third of December, in the present year of our Lord, one Thousand seven hundred and seventy-two, between the hours of one and two in the Afternoon, as I was crossing St. James's Church Yard, I stumbled, and *again sprained my foot;* but, alas! after two days' pain and Confinement, a horrid monster, *ycleped the Gout,* made me a short Visit; and though

he has now taken his leave, I am full of apprehensions that he may have liked my company well enough to call again.

The Parliament, after a few soft murmurs, is gone to sleep, to wake again after Christmas, safely folded in Lord North's arms. The town is gone into the Country, and I propose *visiting Sheffield* about Sunday se'nnight, if by that time I can get my household preparations (I have as good as taken Lady Rous's lease in Bentinck-Street) in any forwardness. Shall I *angle for Batt?* No news stirring, except the Dutchess of G[loucester]'s pregnancy certainly declared. Way called on me the other day, and has taken my plan with him to consider it; he still wishes to defer to Spring; talks of bad roads, &c. and is very absolute. I remonstrated, *but want to know whether I am to submit.* Before I go out of town *I must call to settle with* the Gosling. I am afraid of *some peremptory* declaration, though I flatter myself they would not materially injure me by a precipitated sale. Adieu. *Clarke,* who is writing near me, begs to be remembered. The savage is going to hunt Foxes in Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, &c. Yours sincerely.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Pall Mall, December 21st, 1772.

DEAR MADAM,

I should be very uneasy at your prolonged silence, especially at this critical juncture, if I had not heard from Mr. Scott that you are arrived at Bath safe, though not perfectly well. I hope, as indeed I have hoped for several posts past, that a letter is now on the road to tell me that you have got the better of your fatigues and indisposition, that you begin to relish the new scene, and that you have seen a house to your mind. For me, I have at last pitched on Lady Rouse's house in Bentinck Street, which I have only taken till I find whether the place, situation, &c., will suit me. My uphol-

sterer is hard at work, and whilst he is employed, I shall set out next Thursday for Holroyd's, stay about a fortnight, send up for my books and *young* Housekeeper about the middle of next month, and get into my new Habitation towards the end of it; in which last article I possibly flatter myself too lightly. I think I shall be comfortable, and when I have shaken off the load of Lenborough dirt, not unhappy, which in this life is saying a great deal. In the meantime I have absolutely settled with Clark and Rout, and got a discharge for £900 less than I at first expected. I am rather vain of my conduct of that intricate business. Adieu, Dear Madam, Mrs. Porten begs her love and Compliments to you. I desire you would present mine (though love is rather too strong) to Mrs. Gould.

I am, most truly yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Pall Mall, December 31st, 1772.

DEAR MADAM,

I am called upon to perform a melancholy office, and to acquaint you with what I am sure you will esteem a loss, whatever accession of fortune you may derive from it.

Last Sunday sevennight I dined with our friend Mr. Scott at Mrs. Porten's, and thought him remarkably well and in spirits. On Thursday I went down into Sussex, and the bad foggy weather we had in town prevented my calling upon him in the mean time. He was however already very much out of order, with a bad cold apparently and a general weakness; his Apothecary however thought him in no danger, till Dr. Fothergill, who was sent for, apprehended there was a great deal, though he would not suffer the people of the House to acquaint him with it. They, on the Monday 28th instant, thought it incumbent on them to inform Mr. Oliver, the only friend of his they knew, of his dangerous situation.

Mr. Oliver, on the receipt of their very pressing letter, immediately dispatched a Post Office Express to Mr. Gibbon of Petersfield, and the Express (returned by the care of Mr. Bayley and Griffiths of the Cocoa Tree) reached me last night very late at Sheffield Place. I came up to Town this morning, but was too late. Your kinsman and my friend had already terminated a blameless and happy life by a very easy death about three o'clock Tuesday afternoon. There was so little appearance of a visible illness that Dr. Fothergill could only call it a sudden but general decay of Nature.

After consulting with Sir Stanier Porten we both judged it would be right to take no steps with regard to his Effects till you could be informed of what had happened. We went to his Lodgings this afternoon, and in the presence of the Landlord, the Apothecary and Mr. Newton's Clerk, we examined every probable place in search of a Will but found none. All the papers that seemed of any moment we locked up in a trunk and put our Seal upon it. The principal one is a bond of £1980 from me to Mr. Scott only a few days ago to pay off the Clarkes. I heartily wish that you may be my Creditor. I suppose it will be necessary and proper for you immediately to examine Mr. Scott's Lodgings at Bath, which I think was more his regular residence than London. If no Will should be found anywhere, you are his natural heir, nor do I understand that it will be necessary for you to come to town to administer unless you chuse it.

As I do not see that I can be of any immediate use to you, I propose returning to Sheffield to-morrow for about ten or twelve days more, but if I am wanted sooner, shall be ready at an hour's warning either to attend you in London or to execute any of your directions. Sir Stanier, who sincerely laments our old friend, proposes to undertake what requires the most immediate care, but it will be necessary for him to know whether, in case of a Will, Mr. Scott has left any orders concerning his funeral, or whether you would chuse to give

any particular ones yourself. If the matter is left to him, we had agreed that it should be in the Parish Church plain, decent and private. Tuesday next is the last day, and it would, I should think, be better to send your letter to Sir Stanier by a Post Office Express under cover to the Earl of Rochefort, Cleveland Row, which franks the Express.

The nature of the subject and the length of this letter prevents me from adding any more than that I most sincerely wish you every happiness of the next and of many succeeding years.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Pall Mall, January 16th, 1773.

DEAR H.,

Mrs. G. fastened upon me as soon as I got to town, and was in some measure the cause of some of the blessings you might possibly honour me with when Yesterday's post arrived at Sheffield. Mrs. G. succeeds without a Will to Mr. Scott, and though she certainly finds a sum of money, yet I believe it turns out very short of her expectations. She means to return to Bath, but you will still I fancy find her here.

I have not as yet got you either footman or stables. The latter seems almost impossible. In at least twenty yards, my man Henry has received the *same* answer; that it is not worth their while to let them for less than a year: so that I fear you will be reduced to a livery stable. In consequence of the Advertisement I had five or six Candidates at my *Lever*, but none tolerable. We shall see enough. Goose or Couse (what do you call him?) waited on me yesterday morning; but although the Sultan referred us to his Vizier, he had not signified to him that the House was agreed for.

I assured him it was; he believed me, and on the morning after your landing will wait on you with the Inventory and a short paper. The maid, a most usefull Servant as he says, is apprized of your coming and expects your servants. So much for business, and indeed so much for everything, for I have kept so close to Mrs. G. that I don't know a syllable of news. — If the Fosters are still with you salute them. Tell Mr. Harry that Mrs. G. has not the honour of being acquainted with any Monkey whatsoever. Mrs. H.'s watch is in the hands of Trajan, some relation I presume of the Emperor.

> Tandis que tristement sur ce globe qui balance,
> J'appercois à pas lents la mort qui s'avance;
> Le Francois emporté par de legers desirs,
> Ne voit sur ce cadran qu'un circle de plaisirs.

Mrs. H. when in town will, I fancy, be of the Frenchman's way of thinking. *Ainsi soit il.* Adieu — Yorkshire arrived in town very gratefull and not entirely dislocated.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck St., February 11th, 1773.

DEAR MADAM,

Though I cannot applaud your punctuality in giving me one line the first night of your arrival, yet a very excellent Cheese had already informed me that you had reached Marlborough, and were not unmindful of me. I still waited from post to post till I could date my thanks from my own house in Bentinck St. After some expence of temper occasioned by the cursed delays of upholsterers, I am got into the delightfull mansion and already enjoy the long wished comforts of it. May you soon be settled as much to your satisfaction at Bath as I am in London. Sir Matthew is expected here tomorrow, but I hear nothing of Eliotts; I suppose they will come up for the winter about the beginning of May. I am so

unfashionable as not to have fought a duel yet. I suppose all the Nation admire Lord B.'s behaviour.[1] I will give you one instance of his — call it what you please. L. T.'s pistol was raised, when he called out, "One moment, my Lord — Mr. Dillon, I have undertaken a commission from the French Embassador — to get him some Irish poplins — should I fall, be so good as to execute it. Your Lordship may now fire." L. B. is certainly quite out of danger, but the cure will be long and painfull.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

London, March 25th, 1773.

DEAR MADAM,

You are clearly in the right. If seldom, long letters: if short ones, often. 'Tis perfectly equitable, but now to my old reasons there is a new one added, — this abominable fine weather which will not allow me a quiet hour at home, without being liable to the reproaches of my friends and of my own conscience. It is the more provoking as it drives me not out of a stinking Apothecary's, but from my own new clean comfortable dear house, which I like better every week I pass in it. I now live, which I never did before, and if it would but rain, should enjoy that unity of study and society, in which I have always placed my prospect of happiness. Though I do not find my expences rise higher than I calculated that they would, I have not yet practised much of that

[1] The duel in question was fought between Lord Bellamont and Lord Townshend. The cause, according to the *London Evening Post*, was the offence taken by Lord Bellamont at the abrupt refusal of Lord Townshend, then Viceroy of Ireland, to see him at Dublin. As soon as Lord Townshend arrived in England, Lord Bellamont sent him a message that he would be glad if the affair could be "settled *à la militaire*." The duel took place February 2nd, in the Mary-le-bone Fields, when Lord Bellamont received a shot near the groin, and then fired his pistol in the air.

Economy with which the voice of Fame has complimented me: but at least I keep (in general) better hours than I ever yet could bring about in London.

With regard to the Cornish journey. I will fairly lay before you the state of my mind. As we are often tempted to sacrifice propriety to inclination, I am afraid that I should have deferred it another summer in favour of Derbyshire. Your company has fixed me, but I thought when you was in town we had settled it for the autumn. If you wish to be early in your visit, I will calculate that the Autumn begins with August, and will then attend you at Bath, or if you chuse to go *still* earlier, I will bring you back; for I fancy my stay at Port Eliott will hardly be so long as yours. I hear nothing of the Lord of it, but I know that the *copper* Lockwood impatiently expect him in town.

Holroyd, who begs to be remembered to you, has got a new scheme of regulating the Tythe-laws, holds meetings, writes declarations and employs his great soul and his little body entirely on the business. Mrs. Porten is, I must fear, in a very bad way: her old complaint, but the fits more violent and more frequent. We shall not possess her long.

This morning, the fact is certain, an Address was delivered to Lord B[ellamont] from the Grand Jury of the County of Dublin, thanking him for his proper and spirited behaviour. Incomparable Hibernians! A Judicial Body appointed to maintain and execute the Laws publicly applaud a man for having broke them.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, May the 5th, 1773.

DEAR MADAM,

Your kind letter and just reproaches, instead of making me do immediately what I had resolved to do every post-

night for a fortnight before, put off my letters two or three days longer. The Snail of Love-lane, I saw this morning, and he tells me that he had sent you a satisfactory explanation of his conduct; if it appears otherwise to you, and that his delays are still inconvenient to you, I beg that you would draw upon me, and hope you are persuaded that, as I have two hundred pounds in Fleet Street, you are welcome to one of them.

With Holroyd's assistance, who is determined to extricate me out of all my troubles, the sale of Lenborough by auction at Buckingham is fixed for the 24th of this month. He goes down with me, and the Estate has been carefully divided into four lots, rising successively in value above each other, so that, if any parts should remain upon my hands a while longer, they will be the best. These precautions are requisite in the present scarcity of money, which gives me little hopes of selling the whole together, and even the sanguine Holroyd is apprehensive that I shall be obliged to buy it in again and provide for the mortgage by some other measures, at least of the procrastinating kind.

Were it not for these worldly cares, I should be a very happy man. I never formed any great schemes of avarice, ambition or vanity: and all the notions I ever formed of a London life in my own house, and surrounded by my books, with a due mixture of study and society, are fully realised. I have seen the Eliotts several times, and think he and I take to one another very well this year. They both express great pleasure at the thoughts of seeing us in Cornwall. I shall be glad to know whether the time I mentioned will suit. I am obliged to you for your invitation to Bath, and am lost in admiration at the size of your house, which enables you to spare a bed-chamber and drawing-room; tho' after all, I can offer you the same apartment in my little Palace, which is absolutely the best house in London. The Waste-coats are *sincerely* pretty, without gratitude or compliment. The Madeira I have got from Oliver; it is incomparable, but

saddled with nine or ten pounds due for cellarage ever since Mr. Scott's arrival in England. Where was the Rum, for Oliver knows nothing about it? Apropos the Beriton pictures; should you think it worth while to frame and put them up at Bath? They will not suit my rooms and will be soon spoilt in a Lumber-room. If you do not chuse them, I believe I shall let them take their choice at Christie's, though I find by a very good painter's opinion that we much overrated their value. My compliments to the Goulds, &c. Poor Mrs. Porten has long and frequent attacks, but her spirits are still good.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Boodle's, May 11th, 1773.

DEAR H.,

I hope you got safe to S. P.; that the most amiable Ram, and the less admirable Bull, are both in health and spirit; that Maria remembers me; and that Mrs. H. is quietly metamorphosed from a Lady of the town (an awkward expression) into a country Gentlewoman. We dined to-day at the Romans, seven, who all talked of you — Lord A. was very happy to meet *Holroyd*, and enquired whether *Wilbraham* was gone into Sussex. Is your plan settled? when do you come? and are you resolved to take a bed in Bentinck Street? You will disapoint me extremely if you do not, for it is a point of ambition I have set my heart upon.

I am full of worldly cares, anxious about the great 24th, plagued with the public Advertiser, and distressed by the most dismall dispatches from Hugonin. Mrs. Lee claims a million of repairs which will cost a million of money.

The House of Commons sat late last night. Burgoyne made some spirited motions "that the Territorial acquisitions in India belonged to the State" (that was the word);

"that grants to the servants of the Company (such as jaghires) were illegal; and that there could be no true repentance without restitution."[1] Wederbourne[2] defended the Nabobs with great eloquence but little argument. The motions were carried without a division; and the hounds go out again next Friday. They are in high spirit; but the more sagacious ones have no idea they shall kill. Lord North spoke for the enquiry, but faintly and reluctantly. Lady C. is said to be in town at her mother's, and a separation is unavoidable; but there is nothing certain. Adieu.

Sincerely yours,
E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, July 13th, 1773.

DEAR MADAM,

You will excuse my silence when I tell you I have a friend with me, who takes up the greatest part of my last Friday se'nnight. Mr. d'Eyverdun most agreeably surprized me by walking into my library. His young Lord Chesterfield has come over for a few weeks, and as he went down almost immediately with Lovel Stanhope to the Duke of Chandos, my friend has established himself in my house during the too short period of his visit. You may easily suppose how much I think he embellishes my little habitation. I carry him about, we converse, read and write, and are together almost every hour in the day without the least constraint on either side. The town is growing empty and what is commonly called dull, but with such a companion and my books you will believe me when I say that I do not regret the pleasures of the winter. Even the latter would be

[1] The charges against Lord Clive, the famine in Bengal (1770), and the financial embarrassments of the East India Company, had for many months attracted public attention.

[2] Alexander Wedderburn, then Solicitor-General. Created Earl of Rosslyn in 1801.

sufficient, and were it not to see you, the charms of Cornwall would scarcely induce me to leave London in one of the hottest summers that we have felt for a great while.

The Eliott family is moving away by different detachments. Mrs. Eliott and William, Miss and Edward have already reached Cornwall, but it is impossible to discover when the Lord of St. Germains means to follow them. I have sounded him, and by his dark equivocal hints can only learn that he is certainly not upon the point of his departure. His slowness will I fear retard our intended visit and derange my subsequent operations. He will surely not be in Cornwall till the beginning of next month, and the decent time we must give him to settle himself will soon carry us to the end of it. I will send the earliest intelligence I can obtain of his motions, for I know by experience that a state of suspense even in trifles is painfull.

You will receive, dear Madam, by the Bath coach a representation which is said to be very like a person whom I believe is not indifferent to you. Whatever you may think of his face, be persuaded that his heart is sincerely your own. Adieu. d'Eyverdun desires his compliments and respects to you. If he should go to Bath, which is not impossible, his first visit would be to Charles Street.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ., AT EDINBURGH

Bentinck Street, Aug. 7th, 1773.

DEAR H.,

I beg ten thousand pardons for not being dead, as I certainly ought to be. But such is my abject nature, that I had rather live in Bentinck Street, attainted and convicted of the sin of laziness, than enjoy your applause either at old Nick's or even in the Elysian fields. After all, could you expect that I should honor with my correspondance a wild Barbarian of the bogs of Erin? Had the Natives intercepted

my letter, the terrors occasioned by such unknown Magic characters might have been fatal to you. But now you have escaped the fury of their Hospitality, and are arrived amongst a Cee-vi-leezed Nation, I may venture to renew my intercourse.

You tell me of a long list of Dukes, Lairds, and Chieftains of Renown to whom you are recommended; were I with you, I should prefer one David to them all. When you are at Edinburgh, I hope you will not fail to visit the Stye of that fattest of Epicurus's Hogs,[1] and inform yourself whether there remains no hope of its recovering the use of its right paw. There is another animal of *great*, though not perhaps of *equal*, and certainly not of *similar* merit, one Roberston;[2] has he almost created the new World? Many other men you have undoubtedly seen, in the country where you are at present, who must have commanded your esteem. But when you return, if you are not very honest, you will possess great advantages over me in any dispute concerning Caledonian merit.

Boodle's and Atwood's are now no more. The last stragglers, and Clarke in the rear of all, are moved away to their several castles; and I now enjoy, in the midst of London, a delicious solitude. My Library, Kensington Gardens, and a few parties with new acquaintance who are chained to London, (among whom I reckon Goldsmith and Sir Joshua

[1] David Hume, who was now living at Edinburgh, was, from 1763 to 1766, Secretary to the Embassy at Paris under the Earl of Hertford. The description is quoted from Mason's satire (published in 1773), *An Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers on his Book of Gardening* —

> "David, who there supinely deigns to lie,
> The fattest hog in Epicurus' sty,
> Though drunk with Gallic wine and Gallic praise,
> David shall bless Old England's halcyon days."

[2] William Robertson, the historian (1721–1793), whose *History of Scotland* (1758) and *History of Charles the Fifth* (1769) had already appeared, was now engaged on his *History of America* (1777).

Reynolds,[1]) fill up my time, and the monster *Ennui* preserves a very respectfull distance. By the bye, your friends Batt, Sir John [Russel], and Lascelles, dined with me one day before they set off; for I sometimes give the prettiest little dinners in the world. But all this happiness draws near its conclusion. About the 16th of this month Mr. Eliot carries me away, and after picking up Mrs. G. at Bath, sets me down at Port Eliot. There I shall certainly remain six weeks, or, in other words, to the end of September. My future motions, whether to London, Derbyshire, or a longer stay in Cornwall, (pray is not "motion for stay" rather in the Hibernian style?) will depend on the life of Port Eliot, the time of the meeting of Parliament, and perhaps the impatience of Mr. Lovegrove, Lord of Lenborough.

One of my pleasures in town I forgot to mention, the unexpected visit of d'Eyverdun, who accompanies his young Lord (very young indeed!) on a two months' tour to England. He took the opportunity of the Earl's going down to the Duke of Chandos's, to spend a fortnight (nor do I recollect in my life a more pleasant one) in Bentinck Street. They are now gone together into Yorkshire, and I think it doubtfull whether I shall see him again before his return to Leipsic. It is a melancholy reflection that while one is plagued with acquaintance at the corner of every street, real friends should be separated from each other by unsurmountable bars, and obliged to catch at a few transient moments of interview. I desire that you and My Lady (whom I most respectfully greet) would take your share of that very new and acute observation; not so large a share, indeed, as my Swiss friend, since Nature and fortune give *us* more frequent opportunities of being together. You cannot expect News from a Desert, and such is London at present. The papers give you the

[1] After the death of Goldsmith in 1774, Gibbon seems to have succeeded to his place as Sir Joshua's companion to places of amusement, masquerades, and ridottos.

full harvest of public intelligence; and I imagine that the eloquent Nymphs of Twickenham[1] communicate all the transactions of the polite, the amorous, and the marrying World. The great Pantomime of Portsmouth was universally admired; and I am angry at my own laziness in neglecting an excellent opportunity of seeing it. Foote has given us the 'Bankrupt,'[2] a serious and sentimental piece, with very severe strictures on the licence of scandal in attacking private Characters. *Quis tulerit Gracchos de seditione loquentes?* Adieu. Forgive and Epistolize me. I shall not believe you sincere in the former, unless you make Bentinck Street your Inn. I fear I shall be gone; but Mrs. Ford[3] and the Parrot will be proud to receive you and My Lady after your long peregrinations, from which I expect great improvements. Has she got the Brogue upon the tip of her tongue?

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Port Eliot, Sept. 10th, 1773.

DEAR H.,

By this time you have surely finished your Tour, touched at Edinburgh, where you found a Letter, which you have not answered, and are now contemplating the beauties of the Weald of Sussex. I shall demand a long and particular account of your peregrinations, but will excuse it till we meet; and for the present, expect only a short memorandum of your health and situation, together with that of my much-honoured friend Mrs. Abigail Holroyd. A word, too, if you please, concerning Father and Sister; to the latter I enclose a receipt from Mrs. G., who is now with me at Port Eliot.

[1] The family of Richard Owen Cambridge.

[2] Samuel Foote's *Bankrupt* was produced at the Haymarket in July, 1773, Foote himself taking the part of Sir Robert Riscounter.

[3] Gibbon's housekeeper.

Blind as you accuse me of being to the beauties of Nature, I am wonderfully pleased with this country. Of her three dull notes, *Ground*, *Plants*, and *Water*, Cornwall possesses the first and last in very high perfection. Think of a hundred solitary streams peacefully gliding between amazing Clifs on one side and rich meadows on the other, gradually swelling by the aid of the Tide into noble rivers, successively losing themselves in each other, and all at length terminating in the Harbour of Plymouth, whose broad expanse is irregularly *dotted* with two-and-forty Line of battle Ships. In *Plants*, indeed, we are deficient; and though all the Gentlemen now attend to Posterity, the country will for a long time be very naked. We have spent several days agreeably enough in little parties; but in general our time rolls away in an equal kind of insipidity. Our civil Landlord possesses neither a pack of hounds, nor a stable of running horses, nor a large farm, nor a good library. The last only would interest me; but it is singular that a Man of fortune, who chuses to pass nine months of the year in the country, should have none of them. One possession he has indeed most truly desirable; but I much fear that the Danae of St. Germains has no particular inclination for me, and that the interested Strumpet will yield only to a Golden Shower.[1] My situation is the more perplexing as I cannot with any degree of delicacy make the first advance. A propos, do you still think of starting for the Town . . . [illegible] will be very serviceable on the occasion.

According to our present design, Mrs. G. and myself shall return to Bath about the beginning of next month. I shall probably make but a short stay with her, and defer my Derbyshire Journey till another year. Sufficient for the summer is the evil thereof, of one distant country Excursion. Natural inclination, the prosecution of my great Work, and the con-

[1] Alluding to negotiations between Mr. Eliot and himself for a seat in Parliament.

clusion of my Lenborough business, plead strongly in favour of London. However, I desire, and one always finds time for what one really desires, to visit Sheffield Place before the end of October, should it only be for a few days. I know several houses where I am invited to think myself at home, but I know no other where I seem inclined to accept of the invitation. I forgot to tell you, that I have declined the publication of Lord C[hesterfield]'s letters.[1] The public will see them, and upon the whole, I think with pleasure; but the whole family were strongly bent against it; and especially on d'Eyverdun's account, I deemed it more prudent to avoid making them my personal enemies.

Yours,
E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, December 7th, 1773.

DEAR MADAM,

I break a long silence to write a little more than three lines. Though I cannot call it a silence, since we were regularly informed once a week, of the most essential points; each other's healths, and amusements. Of my amusements indeed the Sheffield newspaper (like most other newspapers) reported more than it could easily prove. The intelligence you received of fair eyes, bleeding hearts, and an approaching daughter-in-law, is all very agreeable Romance. A pair of very tolerable eyes, I must confess, made their appearance at Sheffield, and what is more extraordinary were accompanied by good sense and good humour, without one grain of affectation. Yet, still I am *indifferent*, and she is *poor;* remove those two little obstacles: and Miss H.'s intelligence might

[1] Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son were sold by that son's widow, Mrs. Eugenia Stanhope, and published in 1774. According to Walpole, an injunction was applied for to prevent the publication of the letters. Terms were, however, arranged by which the publication was permitted, on condition that the family expunged certain passages.

have some foundation. I came only four or five days ago from Sussex: the pleasing consciousness of being of some use and comfort to my friend, who is greatly mended, kept me there much longer than I intended. I am now pursuing the conclusion of Lenborough; some entertaining delays of the law have driven us a little beyond the appointed time, but I flatter myself we shall finish either before or immediately after the Holydays.

Mrs. Porten is young again. I mentioned Pitman to Sir Stanier, but wished I could have been more particular as to his pretensions and the *precise object* of his present ambition. I should be glad to be of service to him, especially as you interest yourself on his account; but am not even acquainted with the Johnsons, Governor Duprey, or any people of weight in that line. Besides, one ought to have favours to grant to have a right to ask any. — Caplin packed up your books. The old trunk, he says, was unequal to the weight and journey. However, it is still in Covent Garden.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Bentinck Street, Dec. 16th, 1773.

Do not be in such a passion. I think I use you very tolerably, nor did I ever set up for the Supplement to the Cambridge Mail. By the bye, you have had a full account from that region of the visit, the picture and the conspiracy, which entirely failed through my blundering management. The surprize was, notwithstanding that disapointment, very fine indeed, and moved me exceedingly. Our day at Twickenham passed off very easily, though two o'clock is a strange hour for dinner; but it suits our Father and consequently must be right. I am glad you was pleased with Sheffield. The designed visit from thence will be I suppose

after your excursion. As to my being present at it, fate and circumstances must determine. I neither fly to or from a Baron and Baronne; with regard to these it is probable I shall like them the better for being inclined to like me.

To the vulgar eye of an Idle man London is empty; but I find many pleasant companions both dead and alive. Two or three days ago I dined at Atwood's with a very select party. Lord G. Germaine was of it, and we communed for a long time. — You know L. Holland is paying Charles's debts. They amount to £140,000. At a meeting of the Creditors, his Agent declared that after deducting £6000 a year settled on Ste.,[1] and a decent provision for his old age, the residue of his wealth amounted to no more than £90,000. The creditors stared till Mr. Powell, a creature, declared that he owed everything to the noble Lord, that *he happened* to have £5000 in long annuities, and begged he might be permitted to supply the deficiency. How generous! Yet there are people who say the money only stood in his name. — "My brother Ste.'s son is a second Messiah," said Charles the other day. How so? "Because born for the destruction of the Jews."

My compliments to Mr. Walton, best wishes to Lascelles, duty to My Lady, and love to the Maria and to Sappho if she is with you. — What! nothing for fear of tales being told out of school. Adieu. As to business Lenborough moves slowly, either from temper or design Matthews starts difficulties that will certainly carry us beyond the Holydays — Winton grows pert again, and Hugonin mollifies. I have just wrote him a stinging letter, and insist on a written allowance of time. The House is clear by the Lease. I may carry it away.

E. G.

[1] The Hon. Stephen Fox, eldest son of Lord Holland, succeeded his father, July, 1774.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

January, 1774.

Way's letter trifling — He says nothing to the great point of the Modus. I have wrote to him to-night to call for his Evidence, which I should have for some day next week, when I am to meet my Horse-Jockey. Matthews is unaccountable. He declines coming up with his client; more shuffling, I fear.

I have a letter from Hugo, a *dreadful* one I believe, but it has lain four days unperused in my drawer. Let me turn it over to you.

Foster is playing at what he calls Whist; his partner swearing inwardly. He would write to you to-night, but he thinks he had rather write *next* post; he will think so a good while. Every thing public, still as death. Our Committee of the Catch Club[1] has done more business this morning than all those of the house of Commons since their meeting. Roberts does not Petition. This from the best authority, and perhaps totally false. Hare is married to Sir Abraham Hume's daughter. You see how hard pressed I am for news. Besides, at any time, I had rather talk an hour, than write a page. Therefore adieu. I am glad to hear of your speedy removal. Remember Bentinck Street.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

January 29th, 1774.

On recollection it appeared superfluous to send you Hugo's letter. It was wrote before he received yours. Winton bullies, Mrs. Lee scolds, but I am fearless. Clarke[2] promises me

[1] "The Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club" was founded in 1761, to encourage the composition and performance of catches and glees. Members were elected by ballot. It met every Tuesday from February to June at the Thatched House Tavern. The club still flourishes. Gibbon speaks as if he were a member; but his name does not occur in the lists of the club.

[2] Godfrey Clarke, M.P. for Derbyshire.

Franks from day to day, and prevented me from applying to any body else. I heard from R. Way; his declaration of my not warranting the Modus quite sufficient: it is sent to Lovegrove, whose only objection it appeared to be. He and his Lawyer decline a personal interview, and talk of what they should have done four months ago, laying the abstract of the Title before Mr. Duane. Patience is a virtue.

I am now getting acquainted with authors, Managers, &c. good company to know, but not to live with. Yesterday I dined at the Breetish Coffee-house,[1] with *Garrick*, *Coleman*,[2] *Goldsmith*,[3] *Macpherson*,[4] *John Hume*,[5] &c. I am this moment come from Coleman's Man of Business. We dined at the Shakespeare, and went in a body to support it; between friends, though we got a Verdict for our Client, his Cause was but a bad one. It is a very confused Miscellany of several Plays and Tales; sets out brilliantly enough, but as we advance the Plot grows thicker, the Wit thinner, till the lucky fall of the Curtain preserves us from total Chaos.

Bentinck Street has visited Welbeck Street. Sappho is very happy that she has left Lewes: on Sheffield-place she squints with regret and gratitude. Mamma consulted me about buying Coals; we can't get any round ones. Quintus is gone to head the Civil War. Of Mrs. Frances I have noth-

[1] The British-Coffee house, in Cockspur Street, was a favourite resort of Scotchmen. The Duke of Bedford, soliciting the votes of the sixteen Scottish peers in 1750, is said to have enclosed all the letters under one cover, and addressed it to the British Coffee-house.

[2] Garrick and Colman were managers of the two rival theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane.

[3] Goldsmith, whose play, *She Stoops to Conquer*, had been produced at Covent Garden under Colman's management (January, 1773), died April 4, 1774, scarcely more than two months after this dinner. Gibbon signed the Round Robin, drawn up at Sir Joshua Reynolds's by Burke, asking Dr. Johnson to write Goldsmith's epitaph in English instead of Latin.

[4] Probably James Macpherson (1736–1796), whose *Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands* were published in 1760.

[5] John Home (1722–1808), the author of *Douglas* (1756), had helped to bring Macpherson's Ossianic poems before the public.

ing to say. I have got *my intelligence for insuring*, and will immediately get the preservative against fire. Foster has sent me *eight-and-twenty pair of Paris silk stockings*, with an intimation that My lady wished for half-a-dozen. They are much at her service; but if she will look into David Hume's Essay on National Characters, she will see that I durst not offer them to a Queen of Spain. *Sachez qu'une Reine d'Espagne n'a point de jambes.*[1] Adieu.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

February 7th, 1774.

Quarrelled with you! aye sure, and if she had beat you it would have been perfectly agreeable to the rule of Right, and the fitness of things. A space of time *not less* than four natural days, each day consisting of twenty-four hours, My Lady is to pass in Bentinck Street, only making some occasional excursions to various parts of the Cities of London and Westminster. Garrick I believe acts Hamlet to-morrow night, and will probably repeat it once or twice within a fortnight: I am not sure whether I might not muster up interest enough to determine it for one Night rather than another. As to

[1] Gibbon refers not to the essay on *National Characters*, but to that on *Polygamy and Divorces*. Hume quotes a story from Madame d'Aunoy's *Mémoires de la Cour d'Espagne*. "When the mother of the late King of Spain was on her road towards Madrid, she passed through a little town in Spain famous for its manufactory of gloves and stockings. The magistrates of the place thought they could not better express their joy for the reception of their new queen, than by presenting her with a sample of those commodities for which alone their town was remarkable. The *major domo*, who conducted the princess, received the gloves very graciously; but, when the stockings were presented, he flung them away with great indignation, and severely reprimanded the magistrates for this egregious piece of indecency. *Know*, says he, *that a queen of Spain has no legs*. The young queen, who at that time understood the language but imperfectly, and had often been frightened with stories of Spanish jealousy, imagined that they were to cut off her legs. Upon which she fell a-crying, and begged them to conduct her back to Germany, for that she could never endure the operation; and it was with some difficulty they could appease her."

you, I much want your presence. I fear Lovegrove will not turn out much better than Winton. In spite of R. Way's positive Evidence, he insists that I had warranted the *Vicarial Tythes*. Adieu. Gib sends his Love to Maria. I will enquire about *Capability*.[1] Give me intelligence of your motions.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Boodle's, Wednesday Evening, March 16th, 1774.

Your Epistle of Sunday was not received till Monday night 12 o'Clock, Consequently your Commissions ceased of Course.

I was this morning with Newton. He was positive that the attempt to settle the preliminaries of Arbitration by Letters, would lead us on till the middle of the Summer, and that a Meeting was the only practicable Measure. I acquiesced, and we blended his Epistle and yours into one, which goes by this post. If you can contrive to suit to it your Oxford journey, your presence at the Meeting would be received as the descent of a Guardian Angel.

Very little that is satisfactory has transpired of America. On Monday Lord N[orth] moved for leave to bring in a Bill to remove the Customs and Courts of Justice from Boston to New Salem; a step so detrimental to the former town, as must soon reduce it to your own terms; and yet of so mild an appearance, that it was agreed to, without a division, and almost without a debate.[2] Something more is, however,

[1] Probably a reference to Lancelot Brown (1715–1783), the landscape gardener, known as "Capability Brown."

[2] The Boston Port Bill was brought in by Lord North on March 14, 1774, and received the royal assent on the 31st. It was followed on March 28 by the Bill for regulating the government of Massachusetts Bay. A third Bill was introduced (April 15) for "the impartial administration of justice;" it provided for the transfer of persons accused of being concerned in the late riots for trial in England. All three Bills were passed during the session. Governor Hutchinson was superseded by General Gage, who was sent out with four regiments.

intended, and a Committee is appointed to inquire into the general state of America. But administration keep their Secret as well as that of Free Masonry, and, as Coxe profanely suggests, for the same reason.

Don't you remember that in our Pantheon Walks we admired the *modest beauty* of Mrs. Horneck?[1] *Eh bien!* alas! she is * * *. You ask me with whom? with Scawen, of the Guards; both the Storers, Hodges, a Steward of Lady Albemarle's, her first love, and half the town besides. A Meeting of Horneck's friends assembled about a Week ago, to consult of the best method of acquainting him with his frontal honours. Edmund Burke was named as the Orator, and communicated the transaction in a most Eloquent speech.

N.B. — The same Lady, who, at public dinners, appeared to have the most delicate Appetite, was accustomed, in her own Apartment, to feast on port steaks and sausages, and to swill Porter till she was dead drunk. Horneck is abused by the Albemarle family, has been bullied by Storer, and can prove himself a Cornuto, to the satisfaction of every one but a Court of Justice. O Rare Matrimony!

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

March 29th, 1774.

Lenborough. — Last Sunday morning I saw R. Way in Bentinck Street. He had seen Lovegrove both in country and in Town, but it seems very difficult to make any thing of him. Way pressed him to call upon me or Newton to settle the preliminaries of the Arbitration. He replied, that without Matthews he could do nothing. Matthews on the other hand, when Newton wrote to him, said, that he could be of no

[1] Mrs. Horneck, wife of Captain Charles Horneck, Goldsmith's "Captain-in-Lace," was one of the most abandoned women of the time. She eloped with her husband's brother-officer, Captain Scawen, who had in the previous year fought a celebrated duel with "Fighting Fitzgerald."

use in town till the conveyances were ready for signing. Such damned shuffling. Way promised to call on Palmer, who in general has accepted the office of Arbitrator, and get him to write to Lovegrove to convince him of the necessity of settling things previously as to the object of the Arbitration, and penalty of the parties. On his return into the country he will see Lovegrove and Matthews, and assure them how strongly I *appeared* resolved for chancery, if I found any farther delay or difficulty. Would it were over!

Beriton. — Mrs. Lee, on receiving Andrews's letter, wrote to him to desire he would send it up to me (as it seemed written without my knowledge), and to press that I would disclose my real intention about repairs, maintaining that according to Law, Honor and my former declarations, I am obliged to fulfil them, hinting however, that if I can settle the business with Winton, Mrs. Lee desires to hear no more about it. On that ground I can direct a most excellent letter to Hugonin, which may tame the monster without making it desperate.

America. — Had I wrote Saturday night, as I once intended, Fire and Sword, Oaths of Allegiance and high treason tryed in England, in consequence of the refusal, would have formed my letter. Lrd. North, however, opened a most lenient prescription last night; and the utmost attempts towards a new settlement seemed to be no more than investing the Governor with a greater share of executive power, nomination of civil officers, (Judges, however, for life,) and some regulations of Juries. The Boston Port bill passed the Lords last night; some lively conversation, but no division.

Bentinck-street. — Rose Fuller the Great was against the Boston port Bill, and against his niece's going to Boodle's masquerade. He was laughed at in the first instance, but succeeded in the second. Sappho and Fanny very indifferent (as Mama says) about going. They seem of a different opinion. This morning d'Eyverdun arrived: When you consider him, morning walks, dinners, Evenings, the general

idleness of town, and my peculiar employment, you must not swear, if I am not very punctual. Adieu. Duty to My Lady, and love to Maria. I hope the *latter is quite well;* for Miss Huff insinuated somewhat to the contrary.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

London, April 2nd, 1774.

DEAR MADAM,

My Bucks affair is not settled, and I much fear that it will occasion me more trouble than I at first expected. Mr. Lovegrove's difficulty — not to call it by a harsher name — turns on a point of fact not of law, and is so very unreasonable that he must be condemned either in the more eligible way of arbitration (which I hope will be settled) or in the Court of Chancery, should I be reduced to the sad necessity of calling it to my aid. The uneasy suspense that it has kept and will keep me in for some time, defers my intended visit to Bath, and disappoints Mrs. Porten, as well as myself, of a pleasure which we had assured ourselves of enjoying.

I am at present engaging in two other tasks of a very different nature, the receiving one friend and the comforting another. d'Eyverdun arrived in Bentinck Street last Tuesday, and will I believe go abroad again in about a month with Lord Middleton. I dined with him to-day at Tommy Townshend's, his pupil's guardian. It's an unworthy office for him; but Lord M. appears a very tame bear, and if we can fix a quiet annuity, he may after this Tour enjoy ease and independence for the rest of his life. Upon recollection this paragraph must seem very unintelligible to you, as I do not believe that I mentioned to you, his having been forced to quit Lord C[hesterfield], by the little peer's strange behaviour, the uncertainty that he could be of any use to him or to himself, &c.

My other occupation, which claims at present the far greater

part of my time, is attending my poor friend Clarke, who has just lost a very excellent father by a very sudden and terrible stroke. The old gentleman, who was perfectly well, died of a stroke of apoplexy in his coach as he was going out to dinner. Clarke feels it severely, and as he seems pleased with my company, I seldom leave him, except when he goes to his sister.

Is not Mr. Eliot at Bath? How does he do at present? Is Mrs. E. with him? Do they think of coming to town? Be so good as to say everything proper in my name, and

Believe me, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

April 13th, 1774.

DEAR H.,

At length I am a little more at liberty. Clarke went out of town this morning. Instead of going directly into Derbyshire, where he would have been overwhelmed with visits, &c. he has taken his Sister, brother, and aunts, to a little Villa near Farnham, in which he has the happiness of having no neighbourhood. If my esteem and friendship for Godfrey had been capable of any addition, it would have been very much encreased by the manner in which he felt and lamented his father's death. Incredible as it sounds to the generality of sons, and as it ought to sound to most fathers, he considered the old Gentleman as a friend. He is now in very different circumstances than before; instead of an easy and ample allowance, he has taken possession of a great Estate, with low rents and high incumbrances. I hope the one may make amends for the other: under your conduct I am sure they would, and I have freely offered him your assistance, in case he should wish to apply for it.

In the mean time I must not forget my own affairs, which

seem to be covered with inextricable perplexity. R. Way, as I mentioned about a Century ago, promised to see Lovegrove and his Attorney, and to oil the wheels of the Arbitration. As yet I have not heard from him. I have some thoughts of writing *myself* to the Jockey, stating the various steps of the affair, and offering him, with polite firmness, the *immediate* choice of Chancery or Arbitration.

For the time, however, I forget all these difficulties, in the present enjoyment of Deyverdun's Company; and I glory in thinking, that, although my house is small, it is just of a sufficient size to hold my real friends, male and *female;* among the latter My Lady holds the very first place.

Apropos of My Lady, Harry Hobart the other day gave me a *very pleasing hint,* which he received from his wife. If there is any foundation for it, I sincerely congratulate you.

We are all quiet. — American business is suspended, and almost forgot. The other day we had a brisk report of a Spanish War.[1] It was said they had taken one of the Leeward Islands. It since turns out that we are the Invaders, but the invasion is trifling. Batt and Sir John not returned. Are you alone? I have received another dozen of handkerchiefs, and you, by this time, have got your books and silver spoons, which Caplin has sent by the coach. Adieu.

Bien obligé non (at present) for your invitation. I wish My Lady and you would come up to our Masquerade the 3rd of May. The finest thing ever seen. We sup in a transparent temple that costs £450.

[1] This probably refers to an attempt on the part of the English to collect sugar duties at the island of Toracola (Crabb Island) near Porto Rico, and the reply of the governor of Porto Rico that the island belonged to Spain. In the *Morning Chronicle* for April 12, 1774, it was reported "that the Spaniards had bombarded the town of Kingston in Jamaica."

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

April 21st, 1774.

DEAR H.,

I begin to flag, and though you already reproach me as a bad Correspondent, I much fear that I shall every week become a more hardened Sinner. Besides the occasional obstructions of *Clarke and Deyverdun*, I must entreat you to consider, with your usual candour, 1. The aversion to Epistolary Conversation, which it has pleased the Demon to implant in my nature. 2. That I am a very fine Gentleman, a Subscriber to the Masquerade, where you and My Lady ought to come, and am now writing at Boodle's, in a fine Velvet Coat, with ruffles of My Lady's chusing, &c. 3. That the aforesaid fine Gentleman is likewise a Historian; and, in truth, when I am writing a page, I not only think it a sufficient reason of delay, but even consider myself as writing to you, and that much more to the purpose than if I were sending you the tittle tattle of the town, of which indeed there is none stirring. With regard to America, the Minister seems moderate, and the House obedient.

Hugonin's last letter, by some very *unaccountable accident*, had never reached me; so that yours, in every instance, amazed me. I immediately wrote him groans and approbation. Winton, however, gives me very little uneasiness. I see that he is a bully, and that I have a stick. But the cursed business of Lenborough, in the midst of Study, Dissipation, and friendship, at times almost distracts me. R. Way seems to have done nothing with the Jockey, (who indeed is as strange as Winton himself, singular luck enough I have had) nor have I yet ventured to cross the Rubicon by writing to him. *I wish your journey here* and into Oxfordshire was to take *place soon*, and yet I hardly know what you could do for me. I am surely in a worse condition than before I sold the Estate, and what distresses me is, that *His ego nec metas rerum, nec tempora pono.*

Both Deyverdun and Clarke wish to be remembered to you. The former, who has more taste for the Country than ——,[1] could wish to visit you, but he sets out in a few days for the Continent *with Lord M[iddleton]*. Your letter for the latter was immediately mentioned and very kindly received. He is now at Aldershot with his family, and on this *occasion only* I write to him almost every post, as I am this moment preparing to do. Therefore Adieu.

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, April 23rd, 1774.

DEAR MADAM,

When I already began to chide my own laziness, a little gentleman from Bath brought me a very elegant proof of your kind attention to me. The little man himself I could not see, as I happened to be abroad twice when he called upon me; but I had the pleasure of hearing through him that Mr. Eliot was quite or almost recovered. I beg you would assure him and Mrs. Eliot how much I rejoice in the news.

Clarke has now been at his house near Farnham some days. Next week he is obliged to visit town on some business, and expresses a violent intention of carrying me down with him. The pleasure of being of service to an afflicted friend, may make even the country agreeable. In that case I should leave Deyverdun in possession of Bentinck Street, though I should grumble at giving up any part of his short stay.

I have likewise seen another heir, younger and much more cheerful than Clarke, though extremely decent, I mean Sir Harry Fetherstone. At present everything carries the appearance of sobriety and economy. The Baronet, instead of flying to Paris and Rome, returns to his college at Oxford, and even the house at Whitehall is to be left. Lady Fetherstone talked to me a great deal about you. Do you correspond with her?

[1] Word erased.

Our attention is now very much taken up with a very grand Masquerade, which Boodle's is going to give at the Pantheon. We have a great deal of money and consequently of taste. Flying bridges, transparent temples and eighteen thousand lamps in the Dome are the general subject of conversation. For my own part I subscribe, but am very indifferent about it. A few friends and a great many books may entertain me, but I think fifteen hundred people the worst company in the world.

I am still in very perplexing suspence about Bucks.

Adieu, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

May 4th, 1774.

Last night was the Triumph of Boodle's. Our Masquerade cost two thousand Guineas; a sum that might have fertilized a Province, (I speak in your own style,) vanished in a few hours, but not without leaving behind it the fame of the most splendid and elegant Fête that was perhaps ever given in a seat of the Arts and Opulence. It would be as difficult to describe the magnificence of the Scene, as it would be easy to record the humour of the night. The one was above, the other below, all relation. I left the Pantheon about five this morning, rose at ten, took a good Walk, and returned home to a more rational entertainment of Batt, Sir John [Russel], and Lascelles, who dined with me. They have left me this moment; and were I to enumerate the things said of Sheffield, it would form a much longer letter than I have any inclination to write. Let it suffice, that Sir John means to pass in Sussex the interval of the two terms. Everything, in a word, goes on very pleasantly, except the terrestrial business of Lenborough. Last Saturday se'nnight I wrote to Richard, to press him to see Lovegrove, and urge the Arbitration. He has not *condescended* to answer me. All is a dead Calm,

sometimes more fatal than a storm. For God's sake send me Advice. I seem to be in a much worse situation than before I agreed with him.

Adieu. My Lady's and Maria's healths were drank unanimously to-day. Deyverdun sets off for Lausanne in about ten or twelve days with Lord Middleton, Tommy Townshend's Nephew.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Boodle's, May 24th, 1774.

DEAR MADAM,

Instead of censuring my indolence (though you might as usual do it with very just reason), listen to a tale of wonders.

On Sunday last, when my servant came to the place where I had dined, with the carriage, he told me that Mrs. Gibbon was come to town, had sent to Bentinck Street and wished to see me that evening. It appeared somewhat singular that you should have run up to town without giving me any notice, and somewhat unkind that you should not have made Bentinck Street your Inn. — But, guess my surprize when a further enquiry discovered to me that it was not Mrs. Gibbon of Bath, but Mrs. Gibbon of Northamptonshire. I immediately went to Surrey Street where she lodged, but though it was no more than half an hour after nine, the Saint had finished her evening devotions and was already retired to rest. Yesterday morning (by appointment) I breakfasted with her at eight o'clock, dined with her to-day at two in Newman Street, and am just returned from setting down. She is in truth a very great curiosity, her dress and figure exceed everything we had at the Masquerade. Her language and ideas belong to the last century. However, in point of religion she was rational, that is to say silent. I do not believe that she asked a single question or said the least thing concerning it. To me she behaved with great cordiality, and

in her way expressed a great regard. In a light of interest, however, her regard is of little consequence to me; if I may judge from her appearance her life is a better one than mine. Please to communicate a proper part of this intelligence to our Cornish friends. She expressed the utmost disappointment at not finding Mrs. Eliot and her children in town. I am sorry to hear that we have less chance than ever of seeing them since Hams, Cheeses and my little friend John are gone down to Bath.

My knowledge of Mr. Eliot's disinclination to writing has prevented me from giving him the trouble of an answer. My despair of equalling the elegant raillery of the Goddess has kept me silent on that quarter likewise. Lazyness you will say never wants an excuse.

As the Summer advances (and sorry I am to say that it advances much faster than my Bucks business), I now fear that Mrs. P. and myself must defer our Bath journey to the latter season of the Year. There would however be a way which would bring us together much sooner. You have been long and impatiently expected at Sheffield Place, where I propose to pass at least the month of July. From Charles Street to Bentinck Street it is a pleasant drive; from Bentinck Street to Sheffield Place little more than a morning walk. Mrs. P. tells me that she has just wrote to you. She ought to go to a Masquerade once a year. Did you think her such a girl?

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, June 29th, 1774.

DEAR MADAM,

Do you remember that there exists in the World one Edward Gibbon, a Housekeeper in Bentinck Street? If the

standard of writing and of affection was the same, I am sure he would ill deserve it. I do not wish to discover how many days (I am afraid I ought to use another word) have elapsed since the date of my last, or even of your last letter; and yet such is the sluggish nature of the beast, that I am afraid nothing but the arrival of Mrs. Bonfoy, and the expectation of Mr. Eliot, could have rouzed me from my Lethargy. The Lady gave me great satisfaction, by her general account of your health and spirits, but communicated some uneasiness, by the mention of a little encounter, in the style of one of Don Quixote's, but which proved, I hope, as trifling as you at first imagined it. For my own part, I am well in mind and body, busy with my Books, (which may perhaps produce something next year, either to tire or amuse the World,) and every day more satisfied with my present mode of life, which I always believed was calculated to make me happy. My only remaining uneasiness is Lenborough, which is not terminated. By Holroyd's advice, I rather try what may be obtained by a little more patience, than rush at once into the horrors of Chancery.

But let us talk of something else. You remember surely Mrs. Hobson (Miss Comarque). She is just returned to England under a different name. She is now Madame la Baronne de Bavois. Her second husband is an old Swiss Officer about seventy, a man of family, but with as little money as character, who most probably married her for a fortune which he now begins to discover was spent to his hands. They talk of leaving England very soon, and fixing themselves in some cheap Provincial town in the South of France. The Baronne is more ridiculous, and will I fear be more miserable than ever. Mrs. Porten, out of regard to the laws of Hospitality, gave them a dinner last Sunday, & insists on my doing the same to-day, and her brother Sunday next. She grows younger every day, but Sir Stanier much older. You remember, I think in Newman Street, a good agreeable Woman, Miss Wybolt. The under Secretary is seriously in

love with her, and seriously uneasy that his precarious situation precludes him from happiness. We shall soon see which will get the better, Love or reason. I bet three to two on love.

I cannot find your last letter (a sad memento); did not you ask me with whom Deyverdun was gone abroad? with young Lord Middleton. Lady Fetherston (as they are to return next spring) is mad to get him, but I should fancy Sir Harry must be consulted — I hear confusedly of strange Revolutions in the Gould family.

Next week I go to Sheffield place. Holroyd, who passes a few days with me, was sincerely concerned to hear that you had no thoughts of the Journey this summer. His Father, I find, has had a violent attack.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Bentinck Street, Sept. 10th, 1774.

Since Heberden is returned, I think the road lyes plain before you; I mean the Turnpike road. The only party which in good sense can be embraced is, without delay, to bring My Lady to B[entinck] S[treet], where you may inhabit two or three nights, and have any advice (Turton, Heberden, &c.) which the town may afford, in a case that most assuredly ought not to be trifled with. Do this as you value our good opinion. The Cantabs[1] are strongly in the same sentiments. There can be no apprehension of late hours, &c. as none of Mrs. H.'s raking acquaintance are in town. As to Burtenshaw's Manifesto, I can form no judgement of an imperfect fragment, except that it appears to me very artful. The case relative to you I have reconsidered, but find no reason to alter my opinion.

[1] Probably the Cambridges of Twickenham.

1st. An answer on your side cannot be necessary, since he had no right to single you out.

2dly. It cannot be expedient, since a fellow of so much passion and cunning will surely in the end either provoke you or entangle you in an unworthy contest. If however you have given him hopes of an answer, I would positively declare to him that it should be the last, and that no consideration should tempt me to a reply.

You give me no account of the Works. When do you inhabit the library? *Turn over — great things await you.*

It is surely infinite condescension for a Senator to bestow his attention on the affairs of a Juryman. A Senator? Yes, sir, at last *Quod nemo promittere Divum auderet, volvenda dies en! attulit ultro.* About ten days ago Eliot spent an hour with me, talked sensibly of his will, and his children, and requested that I would be Executor to the one and Guardian to the other. I consented to accept an office which indeed I consider as an essential duty of social life. We parted. Yesterday morning, about half an hour after seven, as I was destroying an army of Barbarians, I heard a double rap at the door, and my Cornish friend was soon introduced. After some idle conversation he told me, that if I was desirous of being in Parliament, he had an *independent* seat very much at my service. You may suppose my answer, but my satisfaction was a little damped when he added that the expence of the election would amount to about £2400, & that he thought it reasonable that we should share it between us. I paused, and, recovering myself, hinted something of Parental extravagance, and filial narrowness of circumstances and want of ready money, and that I must beg a short delay to consider whether I could with prudence accept of his intended favour, on which I set the highest value. His answer was obliging, that he should be very much mortified if a few hundred pounds should prevent it, and that he had been afraid to offend me by offering it on less equal terms. His behaviour gave me courage to propose an expedient, which was instantly

accepted with cordiality and eagerness, that when his second son John (who is now thirteen) came of age I would restore to him my proportion of the money.

I am not disposed to build Castles in Spain, but I think my conduct prudent. Before that time my own honest industry or the deaths of old Ladies *may* make me a richer man: or else I can offer (some years hence) a fair and liberal bargain, that I will settle Beriton on John, in case I have no children, with the proviso that on the birth of a child, I shall pay him the money with legal interest. The agreement will be easy for me, and advantageous to them. This is a fine prospect opening upon me, and if next spring I should take my seat, and publish my book, it will be a very memorable Era in my life. I am ignorant whether my Borough will be Leskeard or St. Germains. You despise Boroughs, and fly at nobler game. Adieu.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, Oct. 4th, 1774.

DEAR MADAM,

Last Friday I went down to Sheffield Place at the particular request of Mr. H., to advise with him about a Parliamentary scheme of his own, but which proved impracticable. We then were talking only of next Spring, but the next day I received from Clarke the unexpected intelligence.[1] The Sunday I wrote to Mr. Eliot directing my letter into Cornwall, where I supposed him long since arrived, and I now wait impatiently for an answer. As to my journey, it has now become impossible; the election will be over before I can get there. Indeed, as I can have no interest there but

[1] Parliament was dissolved on September 30, "six months before its natural death. . . . The chief motive is supposed to be the ugly state of North America, and the effects that a cross winter might have on the next elections" (Walpole to Mann, October 6, 1774). The result of the elections was, on the whole, favourable to Lord North.

his assistance, his presence is alone necessary or useful. However, in my letter I offered *to fly*. If you will answer for Mr. Eliot's intentions I will answer for his power. His disturbance could arise only from his indolent temper, the surprize and perhaps some little concern about Grampound which does not relate to me. As he is in firm possession, the suddenness of the occasion is at all events more favourable to him than to any concealed or secret enemies. Therefore, I do indeed consider myself as secure. Before his offer, I could contentedly have borne my exclusion, but I could not now support the disappointment, and were it to happen, I would instantly and for ever leave this kingdom. A few days will now determine my fate, and you may depend on the first intelligence of it.

I am, Dear Madam,
Ever yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

October the 10th, 1774.

Since you have broke loose, my cold counsels must be changed into warm wishes, and, as far as my nothingness can extend, into warm actions. Yet my outset may appear careless and dilatory in not writing to you or to the others on Saturday night. Your damned coach kept the parcel all the evening, and it was not delivered to me till yesterday morning, therefore it was impossible to write sooner than to-day. It is very few borderers that Sir Hugh can collect, but I am sure he will do his utmost. I had a proper opportunity of writing to Lady Fetherstone, which I thought was still better than to Lascelles. I have wrote to L. likewise. I am sorry that you have started, but since you have done the deed, I wish you had done it sooner. *Sir Thomas*[1] *has now the advantage* of time and the show of a nomination. I shall be impatient to

[1] Sir Thomas Spencer Wilson was returned for Sussex.

hear of your success with the Grandees. The few Elections already over have been conducted (thanks to the Grenvillian Act) with a sobriety, a chastity and a parsimony unexampled in this venal country. My devoirs to My Lady, and the Cantabs; assure the latter that I much regret my running away from them. After Wednesday I shall hourly expect some Cornish news. Adieu.

Surely M. d'Harcourt uses both the County and his friends very ill in not taking the least notice of either. Do not they grumble? I congratulate you on the prospect of dining with your old acquaintance at the Mansion House.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

October 13th, 1774.

I received this day your two Epistles, the one per post, the other per coach. Your first was perfectly clear, and convinced of what you repeat in the second, that an honourable retreat is your only resource. Yet even that is difficult. What can you say? that you decline for the peace of the County? You advertised against a declared Candidate. Personal respect for Sir T[homas] W[ilson]? Do you owe him any compliment? Besides you cannot approve of him without betraying the honour of the East. It is much easier to advance than to retire, because you never can give the true reason of a retreat. Suppose you only say — To the Gentlemen, &c. "The Encouragement I have received from my "numerous friends deserves and claims my warmest acknow-"ledgements, but the powerful interest already formed in the "*Western part of the County* and in the neighbourhood of the "place of Election induces me to spare them the trouble of so "long and probably so useless a journey.

I am, &c.,

J. B. HOLROYD."



It is nonsense, but I see no better nonsense you have to write. I wish you had never begun it. Remember my old slow plan. It is now more likely to succeed than ever.

I am now in constant expectation of hearing from Cornwall. Adieu. Duane has thoroughly opposed my great tythes.

E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

October the 14th, 1774.

I am sure you have generosity enough to hear with pleasure the news which I have just received, that I am elected Member of Parliament for Liskeard.

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, October 15th, 1774.

DEAR MADAM,

I fancy Mrs. Eliot has already conveyed to you the pleasing intelligence which I received to-day, that I am elected Member for Liskeard.

I am,

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Bath, Nov. 13th, 1774.

I arrived at Bath, Thursday night, and saw the Pater and Sorella the next morning: the former in my opinion surprizingly well. They gave me very satisfactory information as to health and designs. If you really arrive the eighteenth, we shall have one week together in this enchanted spot, where the Goddess of Pleasure is supposed, by the vulgar, to hold her Court. You may possibly see Guise, but I fear Clarke will not be prevailed on to leave Town. I have most strongly pressed him, and I think you will call on him in

your passage, wherein I suppose of course you will lodge in Bentinck Street. I conclude: my coffee-house materials are most vile, and I hope this will not find you at Sheffield. My fellow travellers, Aunt and Deyverdun, are well, and Mrs. G. has almost choaked us with kindness and good things. Adieu.

E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Nov. 29th, 1774.

All safe and well. I am just returned from the Cock-pit. The K.'s speech vigorous with regard to America. Our address a loyal Echo.

I have talked with Barré about Tremlet, he is an intimate friend both of the Colonel and of Dunning, and they think him equal to all his Bath Atchievments. — Lord Clive *certainly* cut the jugular vein with a pen knife — it is called a feaver frenzy. To-morrow we are sworn in, and the amiable virtues of Sir Fletcher[1] will most assuredly procure him a Unanimity. I hope Bath still agrees with My Lady. I wish I could send you a favourable account of poor Clarke, but he is really very bad; his looks more shocking than ever, neither strength, rest nor appetite. Dr. Addington, his Physician, *hopes* his liver is not touched, but thinks him in one of the worst habits of body he ever saw, — his complaint bilious and obstructions of the bowels; dreads an inflammation. It is a melancholy subject.

Adieu. See Mrs. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

December, 1774.

Poor Clarke is too melancholy a subject to dwell much upon. Had I wrote last night I should have said that symptoms appeared rather more favourable, but I must now have con-

[1] Sir Fletcher Norton was re-elected speaker.

tradicted myself. I fear there remains but little hope. If I have any really good news to send you I will not lose a moment. Otherwise permit me to be silent on that unpleasant head.

Monday last was our first engagement. You have seen the Address, Lord John Cavendish's amendment, and the numbers — 264 to 73. Burke was a water-mill of words and images; Barré an Actor equal to Garrick; Wedderbourne artful and able. Lord G. Germaine, though An Anti-American, remained silent; Hartley, Sir William Maine and some other new Members lost their maidenheads with very little credit. Once or twice I was a little lewd, but am now well pleased that I resisted the premature temptation. I divided with the Majority. Your Lewes friend Sir Thomas[1] (to the general surprize) with the minority.

As to private affairs, It is a strange pair of brutes that I am engaged with. I send your letters as instructions to Hugonin. As to Lovegrove we expect his *Ultimatum*. The Bishop of Landaff gives a very bad character of Matthews.

Last Tuesday I dined at Lethieullier's with Maudit, Lascelles, and Sir Thomas Millar. Next Tuesday they dine in Bentinck Street, with the addition of Batt. From some circumstances it appears that my romantic attack on Lord A. might have succeeded. Adieu.

Embrace my Lady. The treaty between moles and paper is far advanced.

TO MRS. HOLROYD

Bentinck Street, Dec. 17th, 1774.

DEAR MADAM,

With regard to my silence, poor Clarke is too good and too melancholy an excuse. I know not what to say about him; he is reduced to nothing, and his disorder is attended with every bad symptom. Yet his Physicians — Addington

[1] Sir Thomas Miller, Bart.

and Thomas — are on the whole less desponding than they were some days ago.

Surely no affair was ever put into better hands than mine has been. Your skill and friendship I am not surprized at, but Mrs. Porten is a most excellent procuress, and The Lady Mother has given as proper an answer as could be expected. There is only one part of it which distresses me, *Religion*. It operates doubly, as a present obstacle and a future inconvenience. Your evasion was very able, but will not prudence as well as honour require us being more explicit in the *suite?* Ought I to give them room to think that I should patiently conform to family prayers and Bishop Hooper's Sermons? I would not marry an Empress on those conditions. I abhor a Devotee, though a friend both to decency and toleration. However, my interests are under your care, and if you think that no more need be said on *the awkward* subject, I shall acquiesce.

After all, what occasion is there to enquire into my profession of faith? It is surely much more to the purpose for them to ask how I have already acted in life, whether as a good son, a good friend, whether I game, drink, &c. You know I never practised the one, and in spite of my old *Dorsetshire* character, I have left off the other. You once mentioned Miss F. I give you my honour, that I have not either with her or any other woman, any connection that could alarm a wife. With regard to fortune Mrs. P. speaks in a very liberal manner; but above all things, I think it should not be *magnified*. If it should be necessary to hint at incumbrances, your delicacy I am sure could place them in such a light as might raise the character of the living without injuring the memory of the dead. You see how serious I am in this business. If the general idea should not startle Miss, the next consultation would be how, and where the Lover may throw himself at her feet, contemplate her charms, and *study her character*. After that we may proceed to other more minute enquiries and arrangements.

Mrs. Porten knows she was *blind*. Her brother is married. — How go on your Civil Wars? Next week Foote and Coleman will be with you. Adieu.

Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
BENEDICT GIBBON.

Excuse me to Holroyd for a post or two.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Dec. 24th, 1774.

I do not upon the whole like your Sackville Street plan. At least I should not like it, were it not for an unlucky guest I have got in the house. I do not mean my Gout, for that is on the wing, but a bad kind of small-pox which has attacked one of my Virgins in the Garret.

I am deep in America with Maudit, passed four hours with him yesterday, and I shall dine and spend the day tête-à-tête with him next Monday. He squeaks out a great deal of sense and knowledge, though after all I mean to think, perhaps to speak, for myself. I likewise (at his house) conversed with Governor Hutchinson, with whom I mean to get acquainted.

Tremlett I will try to see in May, but his book is not worth the 18 pence he gave for it. I mean barring the good Spanish. That Spanish is in truth the original, composed by one Miguel de Luna in the sixteenth century, as a pretended translation from an imaginary Arabic Manuscript of General Tarikh. The History is a Romance mixed up with gross improbabilities and anachronisms. Adieu. Young Cooke of Turin dined with me to-day. I thought it a civility to Denham, though I believe only half the house will thank me for it. He is a *very* fine Gentleman. Adieu. I salute My Lady. Do you salute *Madame ma mère*, Sunday morning, tell her that I am sorry for her Rheumatism, have taken care of the Lees, and will epistolize her Monday or Tuesday.

À propos — I thought of the Arabic MS., but had almost forgot to tell you that Gilbert of Lewes was with me this morning. He has discovered the owner of the Tythes, an Attorney — Mr. Charles Down of Hythe, where he is at present, but who lives in town.

I fear to put the Saint to any expence, and remembered what you said of negotiating in person. Therefore agreed that when Gilbert comes to London next month, we would see Down together; in the interim — silence. But if you think not a moment should be lost, I can by a line despatch Gilbert to Hythe.

Again — Adieu.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, Dec. 28th, 1774.

DEAR MADAM,

My poor friend died last Monday, and has left me — together with Mr. Skipwith — his Executors and Trustees, a very painful and perhaps thankless office. You will easily suppose that the shock, however expected, and the hurry of melancholy business, have swallowed up the remembrance of any lesser disappointment, and indeed engross all my thoughts. The Holroyds dine with me to-morrow. — You will be so kind as to excuse the Christmas draught for a week or ten days at farthest. I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

B.S., Thursday Evening, January 5th, 1775.

Winton has *submitted*,
His whole rent is remitted.

But what is to become of you and My Lady? are you both swallowed up in the Sussex roads? Deyverdun desires to be remembered. A letter of business from his Lord M[iddleton],

which he daily expects, still detains him in town. Give him a line *about your motions* and *tell him when* you may be ready to receive him. I say to him, rather than to me, because I lie Saturday night at Twickenham and dine on Sunday with the Widow. The 17th (Tuesday se'nnight) I shall be in Bentinck Street again, as our Parliamentary Campaign opens on Thursday. Adieu. I write with severall people in the room, and am called away to a Chess party. Will *Maria excuse* my silence? but she should early be taught that men retreat, when young Ladies advance.

I have had two very long days with Skipwith on poor Clarke's affairs; they are indeed in a very distressed condition, and reckoning the brother and sister's fortunes, £100,000 will hardly clear them, but the means are large, my colleague indefatigable, and it is the only office of friendship now left in my power. I could only wish that our authority was less circumscribed.

On re-reading Sir Hugh's letter, which I had not yet done, I find that after Winton's brother arrived they went to Petersfield, consulted with another Lawyer, and when they had *shamefully and scandalously* abused Andrews, paid the money and gave up everything, Straw demand, &c. They think no more of law, but will pay their rent quarterly into my own hands only. Cannot I refuse it (it will be disagreeable), and oblige them to pay it on the *spot to any person* I shall empower?

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, January 7th, 1775.

DEAR MADAM,

After the loss of my poor friend, I begin to be a little relieved from the load of business and anxiety which his confidence has devolved upon me in conjunction with Mr. Skipwith, and with assistance the affairs of poor Clarke will soon be brought into a regular method, which in time may enable us to discharge our trust and to deliver a very noble Estate

from a very heavy incumbrance of debt. I now propose to spend the ten days that remain before the meeting of Parliament, at Up-park. The change of air will not I fancy do me any harm either in mind or body; I mention the latter, as I find Sir Stanier betrayed me. The Gout has now asserted his rights in an unquestionable manner, but on this occasion he has exercised them in a very gentle manner, and I can say with truth, that I find myself rather benefitted than injured by his transient visit. I hope you may be able to send me as good an account of the Rheumatism.

The Willow Garland you sent me has not much disconcerted my Philosophy, and indeed the sanctity of the Lady, had a little prepared me for, and reconciled me to, the disappointment. I am only sorry that the ill-success of a negociation conducted with so much ability and of so promising an appearance should have given you a disgust for the honourable profession of Ambassadress. On the contrary, I should hope that in the well-furnished market we might, either now or hereafter, find the opportunity of retrieving our first miscarriage.

Sir Stanier and Lady Porten exhibit a very pretty picture of conjugal fondness and felicity, and yet they have been married very near three weeks.

I have now, dear Madam, sent you the Christmas Draught, and hope the short delay has not been attended with the least inconveniency to you. It was occasioned by the obstinacy of Winton, who obliged me to distress for rent. Hugonin obeyed very spirited orders with skill and alacrity, and the well-timed chastisement has rendered the Brute perfectly tame and submissive. His character indeed is of much less consequence to me than his substance, which is of a very responsible nature. Excuse me for dwelling a moment on so trifling and disagreeable a subject.

I am, dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

I set out about twelve o'clock, take a dinner and bed with the Cambridges and dine to-morrow at Up-park.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Boodle's, Jan. 31st, 1775.

Sometimes people do not write because they are too idle, and sometimes because they are too busy. The former was usually my case, but at present it is the latter. The fate of Europe and America seems fully sufficient to take up the time of one Man; and especially of a Man who gives up a great deal of time for the purpose of public and private information. I think I have sucked Mauduit and Hutcheson very dry; and if my confidence was equal to my eloquence, and my eloquence to my knowledge, perhaps I might make no very intolerable Speaker. At all events, I fancy I shall try to expose myself.

Semper ego auditor tantùm? nunquamne reponam?

For my own part, I am more and more convinced that we have both the right and the power on our side, and that, though the effort may be accompanied with some melancholy circumstances, we are now arrived at the decisive moment of persevering, or of losing for ever both our Trade and Empire. We expect next Thursday or Friday to be a very great day. Hitherto we have been chiefly employed in reading papers, and rejecting petitions. Petitions were brought from London, Bristol, Norwich, &c., &c., framed by party, and designed to delay. By the aid of some parliamentary quirks, they have been all referred to a separate inactive committee, which Burke calls a Committee of Oblivion, and are now considered as dead in law. I could write you fifty little House of Commons stories, but from their number and nature they suit better a conference than a letter. Our general divisions are about 250 to 80 or 90.

Gilbert was with me this morning. He has been with the Tythe Owner, whom Martin knows very well. The former seems inclined to sell but by auction. I wish you would send for Gilbert and settle something with him. I must soon write to Mrs. G. What must I say? When do you fix the rent of Newhaven? Remember Lady Day approaches: and we must say something definitive to Martin. Caplin knows not any proper servant, but will be so kind as to enquire, for his friend Mr. H. What wages, &c., do you give? Adieu. I embrace My Lady.

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

London, Jan. 31st, 1775.

DEAR MADAM,

An idle Man has no time, and a busy Man very little. As yet the House of Commons turns out very well to me, and though it should never prove of any real benefit to me, I find it at least a very agreeable Coffee-house. We are plunging every day deeper into the great business of America; and I have hitherto been a zealous, though silent, friend to the Cause of Government, which, *in this instance*, I think the Cause of England. I passed about ten days, as I designed, at Up-park, but was a little disappointed in my party. Instead of the Brothers I found Lord Egremont and fourscore fox-hounds. Sir Henry is very civil and good-humoured. But from the unavoidable temper of youth I fear he will cost many a tear to Lady F. She consults everybody, but has neither authority nor plan. In my return I called on the Bayleys and lay at Nursted.

The troubles of Buriton are perfectly composed, and the Insurgents reduced to a state, though not a temper, of submission. You may suppose I heard a great deal of Petersfield. Lutterel means to convict your friend of Bribery, to transport him for using a second time old stamps, and to

prove that Petersfield is still a part of the Manor of Buriton. I remain an impartial Spectator. I like the Epigram much. Don't you apprehend that the Eliots [are] at Bath? Their Cornish friends talk of it. If I should run down at Easter, would you secure me a Wife? It is surely a good Market. Adieu, Dear Madam,

I am ever yours,
E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Wednesday Evening (February 8th, 1775).

I am not damned, according to your charitable wishes, because I have not acted; there was such an inundation of speakers, young Speakers in every sense of the word, both on Thursday in the Grand Committee, and Monday on the report to the house, that neither Lord George Germaine nor myself could find room for a single word. The principal men both days were Fox and Wedderburne, on the opposite sides; the latter displayed his usual talents. The former taking the vast compass of the question before us, discovered powers for regular debate, which neither his friends hoped, nor his Enemies dreaded. We voted an address (304 to 105) of lives and fortunes, declaring Massachusets Bay in a state of rebellion. More troops, but I fear not enough, go to America, to make an army of 10,000 men at Boston; three Generals, Howe, Burgoyne, and Clinton. In a few days we stop the ports of New England. I cannot write Volumes: but I am more and more convinced, that with firmness all may go well; yet I sometimes doubt Lord N[orth]. I am now writing with Ladies (Sir S. Porten and his Bride), and two card tables, in the Library. As to my silence, judge of my situation by last Monday. I am on the Grenvillian Committee of Downton. We always sit from ten to three and a half; after which, that day, I went into the House, and sat

till three in the morning. I will shew your letter to Caplin as well for Porter as footman. I do not understand your new scheme. *Your drawing-room will never do!* Write soon about Gilbert.

E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Saturday Evening, February 25th, 1775.

Enclosed I send you Aunt's power of Attorney. It is not legal, owing I suppose to her ignorance of forms, but *still it expresses her sentiments*, and will, I think, relative to her, authorize you to take any measures that may be expedient for the general good, and they must be taken without delay. I think if we *could get a tolerable lease* of the Tythes for a good term of years, it would be a stop-gap in our favour till at better leisure we could purchase them.

We go on with regard to America, if we can be said to go on; for on last Monday a conciliatory Motion of allowing the Colonies to tax themselves was introduced by Lord North, in the midst of lives and fortunes, War and famine. We went into the House in Confusion, every moment expecting that the Bedfords would fly into Rebellion against those measures. Lord North rose six times to appease the storm; all in vain; till at length Sir Gilbert [Elliot] declared for Administration, and the Troops all rallied under their proper standards. On Wednesday we had the Middlesex Election. I was a Patriot; sat by the Lord Mayor, who spoke well, and with temper, but before the end of the debate fell fast asleep. I am still a Mute; it is more tremendous than I imagined; the great speakers fill me with despair, the bad ones with terror.

When do you move? My Lady answered like a woman of sense, spirit, and good nature. "Neither she nor I could bear it." She was right, and the Dutchess of Braganza would have made the same answer. How do you like your footman?

Sir H. only parted with him because the Man wanted to set up his Trade in his own Country. Adieu.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

March the 30th, 1775.

DEAR MADAM,

I hardly know how to take up the pen. I talked in my last pen of two or three posts, and I am almost ashamed to calculate how many have elapsed. I will endeavour for the future to be less scandalous. Only believe that my heart is innocent of the lazyness of my hand. I do not mean to have recourse to the stale and absurd excuse of business, though I have really had a very considerable hurry of new Parliamentary business: one day, for instance, of seventeen hours, from ten in the morning till between three and four the next morning. It is, upon the whole, an agreeable improvement in my life, and forms just the mixture of business, of study, and of society, which I always imagined I should, and now find I do, like. Whether the House of Commons may ever prove of benefit to myself or Country is another question. As yet I have been mute. In the course of our American affairs, I have sometimes had a wish to speak, but though I felt tolerably prepared as to the matter, I dreaded exposing myself in the manner, and remained in my seat safe, but inglorious. Upon the whole (though I still believe I shall try), I doubt whether Nature, not that in some instances I am ungrateful, has given me the talents of an Orator, and I feel that I come into Parliament much too late to exert them.

The H.'s have passed a fortnight with me and went away yesterday. I regret them much. We often thought and talked of you, and the more so, as we stumbled on your friend Mrs. Ashby. She is an agreable Woman, though we cannot think her either handsome, or proper for your daughter-in-law. Do you hear of Port Eliot coming to Bath? and, above

all, do you hear of Charles Street coming to Bentinck Street, in its way to Essex, &c. Adieu.

Dear Madam,

I am most truly yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Saturday Night, 8th April, 1775. Atwood's as usual.

A Letter from Aunt. She supposes me too much taken up with Public business to write. And yet, alas! throughout that public business I have remained silent, and notwithstanding all my efforts chained down to my place by some invisible — unknown invisible power. Now America and almost Parliament are at an end. I have *resumed my History* with vigour and adjourned Politicks to next Winter. Deyverdun will render account of his own Commissions. Lord Stamford and Booth Gray *hunt* Brown for your service. He is difficult to catch. I embrace My Lady and Maria. *She* (I mean My Lady) is good and grateful. Adieu.

Lovegrove still shuffles: I know not what to do.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

House of Commons, May the 2nd, 1775.

DEAR MADAM,

I accept the Pomeranian Lady with gratitude and pleasure, and shall be impatient to form an acquaintance with her. My presentations [1] passed graciously, and I am glad that I can now walk about the Rooms on a footing with other people. Sir S. P. had no concern in the business which was transacted by the Lord of the Bed-chamber in one place, and the Chamberlain on the other. My dinner at Twickenham was attended with less ceremony and more amusement.

[1] Gibbon had just been formally presented at Court.

If they turned out Lord N. to-morrow, they would still leave him one of the best Companions in the Kingdom. By this time I suppose the Eliots with you. I am sure you will say every thing kind and proper on the occasion. I am glad to hear of the approbation of my Constituents for my vote on the Middlesex Election; on the subject of America, I have been something more than a Courtier. You know, I suppose, that Holroyd is just stept over to Ireland for a fortnight. He passed three days with me on his way.

Adieu, Dear Madam. You have had but a disagreable Winter, I think, in point of health. A Journey to town, Essex, &c., would do you a great deal of good.

Ever yours,
E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

15th May, 1775.

Since your departure a considerable event has happened with regard to Deyverdun, which disconcerts many of our schemes. Sir Abraham Hume has proposed to him to go abroad with his younger brother for four years. Our friend was undetermined especially as the first year or eighteen months were to be passed in the uncomfortable University of Gottingen. But as he was offered in a very handsome way a Life annuity of £100 per annum which will secure him a Philosophic independence free from the odious necessity of riding post with young cubs, reason has compelled him to accept and me to acquiesce. He sets out soon, though he still hopes to see you. A fortune that would enable a Man to give him an Equivalent on less unpleasant terms would just now be a very desirable thing.

Returned this moment from an American debate. A Remonstrance and Representation from the Assembly of New York, presented and feebly introduced by Burke, but most forcibly supported by Fox. They disapprove of the violence of their neighbours, acknowledge the necessity of

some dependence on Parliament with regard to Commercial restraints and express some affection and moderation; but they claim internal taxation, state many grievances and formally object to the declaratory Act. On the last ground it was impossible to receive it. Division 186 to 67. The House tired and languid. In this season and on America, the Archangel Gabriel would not be heard. On Thursday an attempt to repeal the Quebec bill,[1] and then to the right about, and for myself, having supported the British, I must destroy the Roman Empire.

Are we not very popular in the Bog? Is your business done, and when do you *superas condere ad auras?* I frequently hear from the Heroine of Brighthelmstone, and in the brevity of my Rescripts treat her with the dignity of a Sultan. Adieu.

No news from Lovegrove. The affair begins to make me seriously unhappy.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

May 30th, 1775.

You will probably see in the Papers, the Boston Gazette Extraordinary. I shall therefore mention a few circumstances which I have from Governor Hutchinson.

That Gazette is the only account arrived. As soon as the business was over the Provincial Congress dispatched a vessel with the news for the good people of England. The vessel was taken up to sail instantly at a considerable loss and expence, as she went without any lading but her ballast. No other letters were allowed to be put on board, nor did the crew know their destination till they were on the Banks of Newfoundland. The Master is a man of character and moderation, and from his mouth the following particulars have been drawn. *Fides sit penes auctorem.*

[1] May 18, 1775. This Act, passed in the spring of 1774, sanctioned the free exercise of the Roman Catholic religion in Canada.

It cannot fairly be called a defeat of the King's troops; since they marched to Concord, destroyed or brought away the stores, and then returned back.[1] They were so much fatigued with their day's work (they had marched above thirty miles) that they encamped in the evening at some distance from Boston without being attacked in the night. It can hardly be called an engagement, there never was any large body of Provincials. Our troops during the march and retreat were chiefly harrassed by flying parties from behind the stone walls along the road and by many shots from the windows as they passed through the villages. It was then they were guilty of setting fire to some of those hostile houses. Ensign Gould had been sent with only twelve men to repair a wooden bridge for the retreat; he was attacked by the Saints with a minister at their head, who killed two men and took the Ensign with the others prisoners. The next day the Country rose. When the Master came away he says that Boston was invested by a camp of about fifteen hundred tents. They have canon. Their General is a Colonel Ward, a member of the late Council, and who served with credit in the last War. His outposts are advanced so near the town, that they can talk to those of General Gage.

This looks serious, and is indeed so. But the Governor observed to me that the month of May is the time for sowing Indian corn, the great sustenance of the Province, and that unless the Insurgents are determined to hasten a famine, they must have returned to their own habitations: especially as the restraining act (they had already heard of it) cuts off all foreign supply, which indeed generally become necessary to the Province before Winter. Adieu.

[1] On April 18, 1775, General Gage despatched several hundred British troops from Boston to destroy some military stores collected at Concord. On the 19th they reached Concord; but, on the return, they were attacked by the Colonial Minute-men, and were only saved from annihilation by the detachment which Gage had sent to their support at Lexington. The battle was immediately followed by the investment of Boston by the American militia.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Bentinck Street, June 3rd, 1775.

The American news becomes every hour more problematical. Darby, the master of the Ship, has not condescended to show to any one the original of the Salem Gazette. He has refused to come to Lord Dartmouth, and what is still more extraordinary, though he says he left his ship at Southampton, a person of consequence sent down there by Government has not been able to learn the least news about it. Yet on the other hand a ship from New York is certainly arrived at Bristol with the report that a Skirmish at Boston was talked of. No news from Gage. What am I to do about Handkerchiefs? I thought the letter you sent me for Downs was an order for them. He sent them to me without my application, and they are already marked and used. On the other hand Mrs. B[enjamin] W[ay] is outrageous. It is all your fault and must be cleared up by you. I think I see some hopes about Lovegrove, though too faint as yet to be worth any detail. I rejoyce in My Lady's health. What is the name of her friend the Dutchess's Captain? Deyverdun is on the wing. I wish you would make and send me a cheese. I must eat two before I think of Sheffield. Bath, who desires his compliments, promises himself a very pleasant summer there.

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

London, June 7th, 1775.

DEAR MADAM,

The post after I received your last letter, I wrote to Eliot to know whether he had any intention of coming to town from Bath, but his Lazyness has not yet condescended to answer me. With the frankness that our friendship permits and requires, I will fairly tell you the state of the case. If he does not visit London, decency and perhaps gratitude

call upon me to meet him at Bath; but if he relieves me from that necessity, the Autumn will be a much more convenient time for me to make my appearance in Charles Street. The season is more agreable, and I am just at present engaged in a great Historical Work, no less than a History of the Decline and fall of the Roman Empire, with the first Volume of which I may very possibly oppress the public next winter. It would require some pages to give a more particular idea of it: but I shall only say in general that the subject is curious, and never yet treated as it deserves, and that during some years it has been in my thoughts and even under my pen. Should the attempt fail, it must be by the fault of the execution. Adieu, Dear Madam; all Compliments, where they are due, and believe me,

Most truly yours,
E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

June, 1775.

Though Darby's vessel cannot be found, it is pretty clear he is no impostor. He arrived in his boat at Southampton, and probably left his ship in some creek of the Isle of Wight. He has now left town, and is gone, it is said, on a trading voyage to purchase Ammunition in France and Spain. Do you not admire the lenity of Government? This day news came that a Ship arrived at Liverpool from Rhode Island. She sailed the 20th, the day after the Skirmish, and has brought a general confirmation of it. There was a report this evening of the arrival of the Sukey from Gage, but it certainly is not true, and you know as much of the matter as Lord North.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

London, June the 17th, 1775.

I have not courage to write about America. We talk familiarly of Civil War, Dissolutions of Parliament, Im-

peachments and Lord Chatham. The boldest tremble, the most vigorous talk of peace. And yet no more than sixty-five rank and file have been killed. Governor H[utchinson] assures me that Gage has plenty of provisions fresh and salted, flour, fish, vegetables, &c.: *hopes* he is not in danger of being forced ——

What can I know of the Tythes? Gilbert has done nothing. I acquainted Mrs. G. with it in a very polite Epistle, which she has answered by a very polite silence.

After calling twice on Sir Richard Sutton, I sent to know when I could have the honour, &c. He was gone for the summer that very morning. — My Lady has received Sevigné,[1] that is one of the new volumes; instead of the other, a different book (I fancy Danville's *Geographie Ancienne*) was sent; as it may be of more use to me than to her, the error should be mutually rectified. Deyverdun goes next week. Yesterday I gave a dinner on his account to the Humes, Sir Charles Thompson and Sir Richard Worsley. He is going to marry the youngest Miss Fleming: love and £80,000. — This day I sent almost a *Charte blanche* to Lovegrove (do not be frightened) offering to warrant according to Duane's directions or wishing to know what he should expect as a compensation. The letter was settled between Newton and me, and if it does no good, will do no harm. Adieu.

E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

29th June, 1775.

America is too great a subject. Tythes are best in your hands — Nothing satisfactory from Lovegrove, to whom I have offered Warranty secundum. Duane, Arbitration or a treaty about some compensation — Now Lord Stamford and his brother are out of town. *I know not how to get at Brown.* The Roman Empire will derange Sheffield; *the*

[1] A new edition of Madame de Sévigné's letters appeared at Paris in 1775.

Press is just set to work, and I shall be very busy the whole *summer in correcting* and composing. Deyverdun wrote to me from Calais; he will not be fixed till his arrival at Gottingen. He has left me somewhat dull and melancholy. My respects to my Lady, Mama and the *sweet Maria*. Adieu. Batt dined with me yesterday, Thursday evening. You mistook me when I talked of his visiting Sheffield. It was not Lawyer Batt *but Dog Bath*, who sends you his compliments, and proposes to himself great amusement in Sussex. What does Foster (Mac) in England? He speaks of the Bog with great modesty.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

July the 3rd, 1775.

DEAR MADAM,

I wish you would believe, what is really the case, that before I received your letter I intended to have written this very post. It is true that I had the same intention for many posts before, and that the glorious spirit of procrastination always told me that the next would do just as well: I do not mean as to your franks, for those I must confess I had absolutely and irrecoverably forgotten. Deyverdun had left me just before your letter arrived, which I shall soon have an opportunity of conveying to him. Though, I flatter myself, he broke from me with some degree of uneasiness, the engagement could not be declined. At the end of the four years he has an annuity of £100 for Life, and may, for the remainder of his days, enjoy a decent independence in that Country, which a Philosopher would perhaps prefer to the rest of Europe. For my own part, after the hurry of the town and of Parliament, I am now retired to my Villa in Bentinck Street, which I begin to find a very pleasing Solitude, at least as well as if it were two hundred miles from London; because when I am tired of the Roman Empire, I can laugh away the Evening at Foote's Theatre, which I could not do in

Hampshire or Cornwall. You know I am not a writer of news, but I cannot forbear telling you that the Dutchess of Bedford made regular proposals of marriage to the young Earl Cholmondely, and was as regularly refused. Poor as he was (he replied to Mr. Fitzpatrick the Embassador) he was not quite poor enough to accept them.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly Yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Bentinck Street, August 1st, 1775.

Your apprehensions of a precipitate work, &c., are perfectly groundless. I should be much more addicted to a contrary extreme. The *head* is now printing? true, but it was wrote last year and the year before, the first Chapter has been composed *de nouveau three times;* the second *twice,* and all the others have undergone reviews, corrections, &c. As to the tail, it is perfectly formed and digested (and were I so much given to self-content and haste), it is almost all written. The ecclesiastical part, for instance, is written out in fourteen sheets, which I mean to *refondre* from beginning to end. As to the friendly Critic, it is very difficult to find one who has leisure, candour, freedom, and knowledge sufficient. However, Batt and Deyverdun have read and observed. After all, the public is the best Critic. I print no more than 500 copies of the first Edition; and the second (as it happens frequently to my betters) may receive many improvements. So much for Rome. Now for Ireland. I am desired to consult you about Lord Ely who (between ourselves) pays his court to a niece of Eliot's. His fortune is very large, he is a widower, and as we hear behaved well in his first place; but we wish to get an impartial account of his general character, manners, inclinations, virtues, and defects. Can you give or procure it?

We have nothing new from America. But I can venture to assure you, that administration is now as unanimous and decided as the occasion requires. Something will be done this year; but in the spring the force of the country will be exerted to the utmost. Scotch highlanders, Irish papists, Hanoverians, Canadians, Indians, &c. will all in various shapes be employed. Parliament meets the first week in November. I think his Catholic Majesty may be satisfied with his summer's amusement. The Spaniards fought with great bravery, and made a fine retreat; but our Algerine friends surpassed them as much in conduct as in number.[1] Adieu.

The Dutchess[2] has stopped Foote's piece. She sent for him to Kingston house and threatened, bribed, argued, and wept for about two hours. He assured her that if the Chamberlain was obstinate, he should publish it with a dedication to her Grace.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Bentinck Street, October 14th, 1775.

Yes, yes, I am safe enough in town, and so comfortably in mine own dear Library, and mine own dear Parlour, that I thought I might as well give myself a few Holydays from any Epistolary cares. Aunt Hester starts Monday or Tuesday *certainly*. It is *needless to say much of Bath*, from whence you receive weekly folios. You have been *informed how artfully the conspiracy was carried on*, and how I arrived eight and forty hours after I came. Since my return (I will not tell you what day) I have had regular and favourable de-

[1] A great expedition against the Barbary States was organised by the Spaniards, and on July 2, 1775, a powerful fleet landed their army at Algiers. After a fight of thirteen hours the Spaniards were obliged to retreat.

[2] The famous Duchess of Kingston married the Duke while her first husband was living. She was tried for bigamy and convicted in 1776. Foote proposed to tell her story in a play called *A Trip to Calais*. Lord Hertford, as Chamberlain, interdicted the piece, which Foote brought out in 1777 as *The Capuchin*.

spatches from Mrs. Gould, and this day for the first time an Epistle from Mrs. Gibbon herself, full of health, good spirits, and expressions of gratitude. She is much concerned that I had the trouble of coming to Bath, but if I know her, would have been much *more concerned if I had* not come. So much for that business, which has proved no inconsiderable interruption.

As to my domestic War, *Madox and the Solicitor-General* are enlisted; they have each of them received a Guinea to drink my health. Newton wanted likewise the Attorney-General; I hesitated, and asked if it was necessary to employ three great Lawyers to puzzle our plain case. A peremptory message was sent at the same time to Matthews to demand his ultimate answer. He replied by the next post that he would write as soon as he had seen Lovegrove, who was then from home. Unless they are at once subdued by the terror of my arms, I much fear that our dispute will last as long as the American Contest.

Apropos of that Contest, I send you two pieces of intelligence from the best authority, and which, unless you hear them from some other quarter, *I do not wish you should* talk much about. 1st, When the Russians arrive,[1] (if they refresh themselves in England or Ireland,) will you go and see their Camp? We have great hopes of getting a body of these Barbarians. In consequence of some very plain advances, George, with his own hand, wrote a very polite Epistle to sister Kitty, requesting her friendly assistance. Full powers and instructions were sent at the same time to Gunning, to agree for any force between five-and-twenty thousand men, *Carte blanche* for the terms; on condition, however, that they should serve, not as Auxiliaries, but as Mercenaries, and that the Russian General should be absolutely under the command of the British. They daily and hourly expect a Messenger, and

[1] George III. negotiated ineffectually with the Empress Catharine for the hire of twenty thousand Russian mercenaries for service in America.

hope to hear that the business is concluded. The worst of it is, that the Baltic will soon be froze up, and that it must be late next year before they can get to America. 2nd. In the mean time we are not quite easy about Canada;[1] and even if it should be safe from an attack, we cannot flatter ourselves with the expectation of bringing down that martial people on the back settlements. The priests are ours; the Gentlemen very prudently wait the event, and are disposed to join the stronger party; but the same lawless spirit and impatience of Government which has infected our Colonies, is gone forth among the Canadian Peasants, over whom, since the Conquest, the Noblesse have lost much of their ancient influence. Another thing which will please and surprize, is the assurance I received from a Man who might tell me a lye, but who could not be mistaken, that no arts, no management whatsoever have been used to procure the *Addresses which fill* the Gazette,[2] and that Lord N[orth] was as much surprized at the first that came up, as we could be at Sheffield. We shall have, I suppose, some brisk skirmishing in Parliament, but the business will soon be decided by our superior weight of fire. *A propos*, I believe there has been some vague but serious conversation about *calling out the Militia.* The new Levies go on very slowly in Ireland.[3] The Dissenters, both there and here, are violent and active. Adieu. I embrace My Lady and Maria. *Bath* not Batt, *Qui croit et s'embellit*, sends you his best Compliments, and expresses great satisfaction at the hope of visiting S. P. next summer.

[1] In May, 1775, Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold surprised the Forts of Ticonderoga on Lake George and Crown Point on Lake Champlain. General Carleton, the Governor of Canada, was in command of very inadequate forces, and it was feared that the province would join the Colonists against the British.

[2] Addresses from the principal trading towns of England poured in, asking the king to prosecute the war with vigour.

[3] The Government endeavoured to raise a regiment of Irish Catholics; but these, says Walpole, "would not list, nor could they in the whole summer get above 400 recruits in England."

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

31st October, 1775.

In the midst of Avocations, Litterary, Parliamentary and Social, which now on all sides overwhelm me, you must not expect any regular correspondence. Sayer's [1] business (you must know it by this time) is foolish beyond description. *He* was a fool! Richardson a busy knave, and Lord R. acting Justice of the Peace who was obliged to take the information. You will see by the numbers that last Thursday we had an easy, but it was a languid, victory. We have a warm Parliament but an indolent Cabinet. The *Conquest* of America is a *great* Work: every part of that Continent is either lost or useless. I do not understand that we have sufficient strength at home: the German succours are insufficient, *and the Russians are no longer hoped for. When do you come up?* I dined and lay at Twickenham, Sunday. Batt was there — Govr. Lyttleton seconded the Address, matter good, manner ridiculous. Adieu. I delivered yours to C.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

London, December 4th, 1775.

DEAR MADAM,

I am still alive, and in spite of the influenza perfectly well. But why have you not at least written *one* line in so very long a space of time? All that I can say on the subject is to declare with the utmost sincerity that not a single morning has arisen without my forming the resolution to write

[1] Stephen Sayer, a London banker, and one of the sheriffs of the City, was accused by one Richardson, a young American officer in the Guards, of a plot to seize the Tower, and attack the king as he went to open Parliament. The guards were trebled, and Sayer was committed to the Tower. The meeting of Parliament, however, passed off quietly, and the temporary panic subsided.

before the evening, and that not a single evening post-bell has rang without sounding the alarm to my conscience. In the mean time, days, hours and weeks have imperceptibly rolled away: a perpetual hurry and long days of Parliamentary business, the whole world coming to town at once, and a great deal of occupation at home relative to my History, which will come out some time after Christmas. In a word, I do not like to write to you, but I want very much to see you. Have you totally forgot your promise of making me a visit in town? I can lodge you, &c., without the smallest inconveniency, and I am sure that after getting the better of so formidable an enemy as you have done, nothing would be so likely to give the last polish as a change of air, of situation and of company. Be so kind as to send me an *answer* and not a compliment, on this subject.

Mrs. Porten is still well and young. Her sister-in-law has got and lost a child. The former wishes to be remembered to you. You see the honour which Mr. Eliot[1] has acquired. I am amazed how he condescended to accept of it. The Member of St. Germans might lurk in the country, but the knight of Cornwall must attend the House of Commons.— I salute from a distance all Bath friends: and particularly the Colonel,[2] Mrs. G[ould], Fanny, Birds, dogs, &c., &c.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, 3rd January, 1776.

DEAR MADAM,

Had I not been engaged in hastening and finishing the Impression, I would with great pleasure have made you a Christmas visit. I may truly say to you and not to Bath,

[1] Mr. Eliot, on the death of Sir J. Molesworth, was elected M.P. of Cornwall.

[2] Colonel Gould.

for I have never much relished the style and amusements of that seat of idleness which so many people are fond of; and I am much inclined to think that if you fixed your residence in any other part of the Kingdom, I might pass the remainder of my life without ever seeing Bath again. Since I have mentioned my book, let me add that it will probably make its appearance about the middle or end of February: and that one of the very first copies of it shall be carefully transmitted to Charles Street. The Public, I know not why, except from the happy choice of the subject, have already conceived expectations, which it will not be easy to satisfy: the more especially as lively ignorance is apt to expect much more than the nature and extent of historical materials can enable an author to produce. However, if the first volume is decently received in the world, I shall be encouraged to proceed; and shall find before me a stock of labour and of amusement sufficient to engage my attention for many years. The prosecution of some scheme is in my opinion the circumstance the most conducive to the happiness of life, and, of all schemes, the best is surely that, the success of which chiefly depends on ourselves. Parliamentary business, and agreeable society fill the eye, the intervals of my time, and my situation would in every respect be a comfortable one, if I could only put an end to my Buckinghamshire sale, which is still attended with many difficulties, and will hardly be decided without the interposition of Chancery. You will not wonder that I lose time and catch at every hope, rather than involve myself in that labyrinth of Chicane and expense.

I say nothing of public affairs. Never did they wear a more melancholy aspect. We much fear that Quebec[1] will

[1] On November 14, 1775, Benedict Arnold made an unsuccessful attempt to capture Quebec by surprise. Reinforced by a considerable body of troops under General Montgomery, he renewed his attack on December 31. Montgomery was killed, Arnold wounded, and the assault repulsed. The siege was, however, continued, and it was not till May, 1776, that General Carleton was able to assume the offensive and drive the Americans out of Canada.

not hold out the Winter. The Provincials have everywhere displayed courage and abilities worthy of a better cause; and those of my Ministerial friends who are the best acquainted with the state of America, are the least sanguine in their hopes of success for next year.

An odd discovery is just now made. At a sale in the country, an old cabinet was going to be knocked down for twenty shillings, when the curiosity of some people present urged them to examine it more closely. Two private drawers were found; one of which contained bank-notes to a very large amount, the other held an older and more valuable curiosity; the individual ring of Queen Elizabeth, the Earl of Essex, Lady Nottingham, &c.: you remember the story.[1] It was in a very fine purse embroidered with pearls; and is authenticated by a writing, found in the same purse, of an old Lady Cook who attended the Queen in her visit to the Countess, and picked up the ring when her Majesty threw it from her with horror and indignation. I have seen the purse and ring (a yellow kind of diamond) at Barlow's, a silk-mercer in King Street, Covent Garden, who affirms that he has read the paper, but the mystery which is made about the place of sale, and the name of the present proprietor, leaves room for suspicion. Horace Walpole is determined, if possible, to get to the bottom of the affair.

I hope, dear Madam, that not only your health, but your beauty likewise, are perfectly restored, but I must desire an explicit and *satisfactory* answer about your promised visit to London. The air will, I am sure, be of the greatest service to you, and as the Spring will soon advance upon us, you

[1] Gibbon alludes to the story, that the Countess of Nottingham kept back a ring which Essex, before his execution, sent by her hand to Elizabeth. The ring, which had formerly been worn by the queen, is probably now in the possession of Mr. Francis Thynne, to whom it descended through Lady Mary Devereux. It is a cameo head of Elizabeth, cut in a sardonyx, and set in a gold ring, enamelled at the back. It has been enlarged with *soft* solder, as though Essex had only trusted it to a jeweller working in his presence. Walpole makes no allusion to the alleged discovery.

may easily connect London with Essex, Sussex or any other part of the Kingdom, where you have any visits to make or promises to fulfill.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

London, January 18th, 1776.

How do you do? Are you alive? Are you buried under mountains of snow? I write merely to triumph in the superiority of my own situation, and to rejoice in my own prudence, in not going down to S. P., as I seriously but foolishly intended to do last week. Hugonin by appointment came to town, but we soon agreed that the expedition (on his side at least) must be deferred till next summer; for which time he made a very solemn and, as I believe, a very serious engagement. We talked over Horn farm, which will be let next month by auction, and I am only afraid of getting too much money for it. Chalk woods, &c., settled to admiration and every thing goes well except the d——d Lovegrove. However I have had the arrears of rent paid into Fleet street: which leaves a very moderate balance of interest against me.

We proceed triumphantly with the Roman Empire, and shall certainly make our appearance, before the end of next month. I have nothing public. You know we have got 18,000 Germans from Hesse Brunswick and Hesse Darmstadt. I think our meeting will be lively; a spirited Minority, and a desponding Majority. The higher people are placed, the more gloomy are their countenances, the more melancholy their language. You may call this cowardice, but I fear it arises from *their knowledge* (a late knowledge) of the difficulty and magnitude of the business. Quebec is not *yet* taken. I hear that Carleton is determined never to

capitulate with Rebels. A glorious resolution if it were supported with 50,000 men. Adieu. I embrace My Lady and Maria. Make my excuses to the latter for having neglected her birthday.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

January 29th, 1776.

Hares &c. arrived safe; were received with thanks, and devoured with appetite: send more, *id est*, of hares. I believe in my last I forgot saying any thing of the son of Fergus; his letters reached him. — What think you of the season? Siberia, is it not? A pleasant campaign in America. I read and pondered your last and think that in the place of Lord G. G.[1] you might perhaps succeed; but I much fear that our Leaders have not a genius which can act at the distance of 3000 miles. By the bye the little islands of the Bermudas have just declared in favour of the Congress. You know that a large draught of Guards are just going to America, poor dear creatures! We are met; but no business. Next week may be busy; Scotch Militia &c. Roman Empire (first part) will be finished in a week or fortnight. At last I have heard Texier;[2] wonderful! Embrace My lady. The weather too cold to turn over the page. Adieu.

Since this I received your last, and honour your care of the old Women, a respectable name which in spite of My lady may suit Judges, Bishops, Generals (*Je gage que j'ai raison*) &c. Several letters directed to you and enclosed to

[1] The Duke of Grafton resigned the Privy Seal November 9, 1775. Lord Dartmouth succeeded him.

[2] Horace Walpole, writing November 23, 1775, says, "A Monsieur Tessier, of whom I have heard much in France, acted an entire play of ten characters, and varied his voice, and countenance, and manner, for each so perfectly, that he did not name the persons that spoke, nor was it necessary. I cannot decide to which part he did most justice, but I would go to the play every night if I could see it so acted."

me, have been franked. Ferguson's might be among them. I am rejoyced to hear of Maria's inoculation. I know not when you have done so wise a thing. You may depend upon getting an excellent house. Adieu.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Bentinck-street, February 9th, 1776.

You are mistaken about your dates. It is to-morrow *sevennight*, the 17th, that my book will decline into the World. I will attend to Coachman and house, though I could wish that in point of price and situation you had been a little more explicit.

I am glad to find that by degrees you begin to understand the advantage of a civilized city, — I cannot say as much as Batt and Cantab, who dined with me, Beauclerck and Lady Di.[1] Adieu. No public business; Parliament has sate every day, but we have not had a single debate. There is a rumour that Quebec is taken, and Washington is said to have communicated the news to Howe, but it is not yet absolutely believed. I think you will have *your book* on Monday. The parent is not forgot, though I had not a single one to spare.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

House of Commons, Wednesday Evening, February, 1776.

DEAR MADAM,

I write two lines to return you my thanks for what you say of my book, of which you are not indeed so good a Judge as you would be of any written by another author. By a mistake you have received *two* bound books instead of one. Be so good as to return one of them by coach or wagon, and I will give an order that an unbound one shall go to-morrow to Brook Street. Your soiled one (honourable marks) you

[1] Topham Beauclerk and Lady Diana Beauclerk.

will retain. But when will you flatter me in person in Bentinck Street? March approaches.

I am, Dear Madam,
Ever yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

London, March 26th, 1776.

DEAR MADAM,

Lazyness is ingenious; but on this occasion mine was provided with too good an excuse, I mean your own silence. From post to post I have expected a letter to fix the time and manner of your Journey to London. I now begin to despair, and am almost inclined to think that your sedentary life has rivetted your chains, and cut off your wings. I must therefore try (though a very sedentary animal myself) whether I cannot visit you at Bath, and as the Easter vacation seems to promise me the most convenient leisure that I am likely to enjoy in the whole year, I entertain some thoughts of running down to you for a few days. The Eliots, who with great difficulty have existed in town about two months, seem to intend moving towards that place about the same time. The Holroyds are likewise in town: they have inoculated their girl, and I understand with the greatest pleasure that there are some hopes of an increase of family. — As to myself, I have the satisfaction of telling you that my book has been very well received by men of letters, men of the world, and even by fine feathered Ladies, in short by every set of people except perhaps by the Clergy, who seem (I know not why) to shew their teeth on the occasion. A thousand Copies are sold, and we are preparing a second Edition, which in so short a time is, for a book of that price, a very uncommon event.

I am, Dear Madam,
Ever yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

London, May 20th, 1776.

I am angry, that you should impede my noble designs of visiting foreign parts, more especially as I have an advantage which Sir Wilful had not, that of understanding your foreign lingos. With regard to Mrs. Gibbon, her intended visit, to which I was not totally a stranger, will do me honour, and though it should delay my emigration till the end of July, there will still remain the months of August, September and October. Above all abstain from giving the least hint to any Bath Correspondent, and perhaps, if I am not provoked by opposition, the thing may not be absolutely certain. At all events you may depend on a previous visit. At present I am very busy with the Neckers. I live with her just as I used to do twenty years ago, laugh at her Paris varnish, and oblige her to become a simple reasonable Suissesse. The man, who might read English husbands lessons of proper and dutiful behaviour, is a sensible good-natured creature. In about a fortnight I again launch into the World in the shape of a quarto Volume. The dear Cadell assures me that he never remembered so eager and impatient a demand for a second Edition.

The town is beginning to break up; the day after to-morrow we have our last day in the house of Commons to inquire into the instructions of the Commissioners; I like the man, and the motion appears plain. Adieu. I dined with Lord Palmerston to-day; a great dinner of Catches; Sir Farby and spouse part of the company or rather of the family: I embrace My lady and the Maria.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Almack's, May 24th, 1776.

DEAR MADAM,

Shame, shame, always shame —— Yet two lines will I write in the midst of a crowd. My mornings have been very

much taken up with preparing and correcting (though in a minute and almost imperceptible way) my new Edition, which will be out the 1st of June. My afternoons (barring the House of Commons) have been a good deal devoted to Madame Necker. Her husband and the rest of her servants leave this country next Tuesday, entertained with the Island, and owning that the barbarous people have been very kind to them. Do you know that they have almost extorted a promise to make them a short visit at Paris in the Autumn. But pray, Madam, when do you set out, the month of June draws near, and both myself, the Portens and the inhabitants of Sheffield Place are impatient to be informed of the time and circumstances of your intended journey.

Poor Mallet![1] I pity his misfortune and feel for him probably more than he does for himself at present. His "William and Margaret," his only good piece of poetry, is torn from him, and by the evidence of old Manuscripts turns out to be the work of the celebrated Andrew Marvel composed in the year 1670. Adieu, dear Madam.

I am most truly yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

June the 6th, 1776, from Almack's, where I was chose last week.

To tell you any thing of the change or rather changes of Governors I must have known something of them myself: but all is darkness confusion and uncertainty; to such a degree that people do not even know what lyes to invent. The news from America have indeed diverted the public attention into another and far greater channel. All that you see in the papers of the repulse at Quebec as well as the capture of Lee[2]

[1] Mallet passed off as his own, with very slight changes, a ballad called *William and Margaret*, a copy of which, dated 1711, had been discovered.

[2] The report of General Lee's capture was false.

rests on the authority (a very unexceptionable one) of the Provincial papers as they have been transmitted by Governor Tryon from New York. Howe is well and eats plentifully, and the weather seems to clear up so fast that according to the English custom we have passed from the lowest despondency, to a full assurance of success.

My new birth happened last Monday, 700 of the 1500 were gone yesterday. I now understand from pretty good authority that Dr. Porteous, the friend and chaplain of St. Secker, is actually sharpening his goose quill against the last two Chapters. Mrs. G. has not yet signified her intentions about the London and Sheffield expedition. I have not advanced one single step with regard to Lovegrove. Palmer will not interfere till he has seen the abstract of the title with Duane's observations, which we cannot get them to communicate even to their own friend. Adieu. I embrace My lady and the Maria.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Almack's, June 29th, 1776.

Yes, yes I am alive and well; but what shall I say? Town grows empty and this house, where I have passed very agreable hours, is the only place which still unites the flower of the English youth. The style of living though *somewhat* expensive is exceedingly pleasant and notwithstanding the rage of play I have found more entertaining and even rational society here than in any other Club to which I belong. Mrs. G. still hangs in suspense and seems to consider a town expedition with horror. I think however that she will be soon in motion, and when I have her in Bentinck-street we shall perhaps talk of a Sheffield excursion. I am now deeply engaged in the reign of Constantine, and from the specimens which I have already seen, I can venture to promise that the second Volume will not be less interesting than the first. The 1500 Copies are moving off with decent speed, and the obliging Cadell

begins to mutter something of a third Edition for next year. No news of Deyverdun or his French translation. What a lazy dog! Madame Necker has been gone a great while. I gave her *en partant* the most solemn assurances of following her *paws* in less than two months, but the voice of indolence begins to whisper a thousand difficulties and, unless your absurd policy should thoroughly provoke me, the Parisian journey may possibly be deferred. I rejoyce in the progress of —— towards light. By Cork Street I suppose you mean the Carters and highly approve of the place. We are in expectation of American news. Carleton is made a Knight of the Bath. The old report of Washington's resignation and quarrel with the Congress seems to revive. I shall say nothing of Lovegrove, the beast makes me very uneasy, as I cannot devise any expedient to force, persuade, or bribe him out of his obstinate silence. Adieu.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Saturday evening, August, 1776.

We expect you at five o'Clock Tuesday without a sore throat. You have ere this heard of the shocking accident which takes up the attention of the town. Our old acquaintance poor John Damer shot himself, last Wednesday night, at the Bedford arms, his usual place of resort, where he had passed several hours with four Ladies and a blind fiddler. By his own indolence rather than extravagance, his circumstances were embarrassed, and he had frequently declared himself tired of life. No public news, nor any material expected till the end of this or beginning of the next month when Howe will probably have collected his whole force.[1] A tough business indeed; you see by their declaration that they have now passed the Rubicon and rendered the work

[1] On August 27, 1776, General Howe defeated the Americans at the battle of Brooklyn or Long Island.

of a treaty infinitely more difficult: You will perhaps say, so much the better; but I do assure you that the *thinking* friends of government are by no means sanguine. Mrs. G. seems likely to expect your arrival. She has had no answer out of you. I am pretty much a prisoner except about *one* hour in the evening: but as she dines to-morrow with Mrs. Ashby, I take the opportunity of eating turtle with Garrick at Hampton. Adieu.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Saturday, ¼ past eleven, 19 Oct. 1776.

I have waited so long that the bell is tolling in my ear, but I know you would swear ——

By the enclosed you will see Sir Hugh's impediments, and if the rest of his letter requires any answer you may amuse yourself with scratching it out.

For the present I am so deeply engaged that you must renounce the hasty apparition at S. P.; but if you should be very impatient I will try (after the meeting) to run down between the friday and monday, and bring you the last Editions of things. — At present *nought* but expectation. The attack on me is begun, an anonymous eighteen-penny pamphlet, which will get the author more Glory in *the next World* than in this. The Heavy troops, Watson [1] and another, are on their march. No news from Richard Way. Adieu.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Ampthill Park, Oct. 24th, 1776.

DEAR MADAM,

I hardly dare recollect how long I have been without writing to you, but you know my sentiment and my laziness;

[1] *An Apology for Christianity, in a Series of Letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq.*, by Richard Watson, D.D. (afterwards Bishop of Llandaff). Gibbon had a great respect for Dr. Watson, at this time Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, as "a prelate of a large mind and liberal spirit." He writes

so I will say no more on that threadbare subject. I have been some days at this place and have spent them very agreeably. Luckily the weather has been bad, which in a great measure has secured me from excursions, and confined us to an excellent house, conducted on an easy plan, and filled with a comfortable society in which the principal part was performed by Mr. Garrick. I return to town to-morrow. By-the-bye, you will be so good as not to mention this Bedfordshire journey to Miss Holroyd: it might get round to Sheffield Place which I have cheated of a promised visit. In a few days our Parliamentary campaign will open, and the beginning of success which we have tasted in America will enliven our countenances, if they should not be clouded again by the apprehensions of a French war, which seem to increase every day. With regard to another great object of hostilities, — *myself*, — the attack has been already begun by an anonymous Pamphleteer, but the heavy artillery of Dr. Watson and another adversary are not yet brought into the field. I was afraid that I should be hurt by them, but if I may presume of my future feelings from the first tryal of them, I shall be in every sense of the word *invulnerable.*

My long depending and troublesome business with Lovegrove is at length, by the strenuous interposition of Holroyd, not concluded, but broke off. The fellow wanted either power or inclination to compleat his agreement, and after weighing all the difficulties and delays of Chancery, it was judged most expedient to consent to a mutual discharge. By this transaction I have lost a great deal both of time and money, and am now to begin the sale again. It has occasioned me much vexation, but Holroyd assures me that I have been guilty of no fault, and that I may still entertain very fair hopes. The subject was grown so odious to me, that I could not bring myself even to talk to you about it. Adieu, Dear

(November 2, 1776) to "express his sense of the liberal treatment which he has received from so candid an adversary."

Madam. Remember that by your summer excursions you gain health and give pleasure. This doctrine is true and I hope that another year you will draw some practical inferences from it.

I am,
Ever yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

November the 4th, 1776.

I hope you bark and growl at my silence: growl and bark. This is not a time for correspondence. Parliament, visits, dinners, suppers, and an hour or two stolen with difficulty for the Decline leave but very little leisure. I dare say you admire the Howes; so do I; and I firmly believe that whatever force can effect will be performed by them. I send you the Gazette and have scarcely any thing to add except that about five hundred of them have deserted to us, and that the New York incendiaries were immediately and very justifiably destined to the Cord.[1] Lord G[eorge] G[ermain] with whom I had a long conversation last night was in high spirits and hopes to reconquer Germany and America.[2] On the side of Canada he only fears Carleton's *slowness*, but entertains great expectations that the light troops and Indians under Sir William Johnson, who are sent from Oswego down the Mohawk River to Albany, will oblige the Provincials to give up the defence of the lakes for fear of being cut off. — The report of a foreign War subsides. House of Commons dull; and Opposition talk of suspending hostilities from despair.

[1] On September 15 General Howe occupied New York, which had been evacuated by the American troops; a few days later a great part of the city was destroyed by incendiaries.

[2] Lord Chatham boasted that he had conquered America in Germany. Wilkes, in March, 1776, had said, alluding to Lord G. Germain's misconduct at Minden and Chatham's boast, that Lord George might conquer America, though, he believed, it would not be in Germany. Gibbon apparently refers to this remark, and to Lord George's hope that he might recover his lost reputation by the reconquest of America.

An anonymous pamphlet and Dr. Watson out against me: (in my opinion) feeble; the former very illiberal, the latter uncommonly genteel. At last I have had a letter from Deyverdun, wretched excuses, nothing done, vexatious enough. — To-morrow I write to Suard, a very skilful translator of Paris, who was here in the spring with the Neckers to get him (if not too late) to undertake it. Not a line from R. Way! Adieu. I embrace, &c. Remember the fourteenth. I expect at least a week. What's the whim of my lady's not paying her proper respects to Bentinck Street?

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Almack's, Thursday evening, November 7th, 1776.

Letters from Bourgoyne. They embarked on the lakes the 30th of September with 800 British Sailors, 6000 regulars, 3000 Canadians, and a naval force superior to any possible opposition: but the season was so far advanced that they expected only to occupy and strengthen Ticonderoga and afterwards to return, and take up their winter quarters in Canada. — Yesterday we had a surprize in the house from a proclamation of the Howes [1] which made its first appearance in the Morning post, and which nobody seems to understand. By this time My lady may see that I have not much reason to fear my antagonists. Adieu till next Thursday.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Friday evening, November 22nd, 1776.

News from the Lakes. A Naval combat in which the Provincials were repulsed with considerable loss. They burnt

[1] The proclamation, issued September 19, 1776, was addressed to the people of America, promised a revision of recent legislation, and was designed to induce separate colonies to negotiate with the commissioners independently of Congress. It was not published in the official Gazettes, which had appeared on November 4 and 5, 1776.

and abandoned Crown point. Carleton is besieging Ticonderoga. Carleton, I say, for he is there, and it is apprehended that Bourgoyne is coming home. We dismissed the Nabobs without a division. Burke and Attorney General spoke very well. This evening a letter from Aunt Hester. She seems angry with Gilbert's accounts, and dissatisfied with her poor balance. Adieu.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Atwood's, Saturday Evening, Dec. 7, 1776.
Just going to supper.

This day a dispatch arrived from Northamptonshire. Mrs. G. is extremely satisfied with my diligence and prolixity; but seems to wish that *we* would settle her account with Gilbert. I have not her letter about me, but will send it next post. I expect to receive from you some plan for the disposal of Lenborough, the great thorn which sticks in the side of my happiness. Lord G. G. who is playing at Whist says there is not any news, though great hopes. — This morning, I received by the *post* (charged two guineas and a half) a first volume of a French translation containing only the seven first chapters, but to be continued. I did not however regret the money, as it is admirably well done by M. de Septchenes[1] (Sevenoaks), a young man who has been lately in England, and who sent me a very pleasant dose of flattery on the occasion.

I mean to eat my Christmas dinner with you, and think Sir Hugh will accompany me. I believe in the meantime I shall run down to Bath and pay a charitable visit to poor Beauclerck.

[1] The translation of the *Decline and Fall*, commenced by M. Le Clerc de Septchênes, and completed by other hands, passed through numerous editions in France. It was the foundation of an Italian version published at Pisa in 1779–86.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Thursday Evening, 19th Dec., 1776.

Believe me when I say *upon my honour*, that a particular business of serious importance has just arisen, which, as long as it is in agitation, will not allow me to quit town for a day. I still think however that I shall see S. P. before the close of the year. You may say in general in the family (if any should bark) that you are satisfied with my conduct, and order them to shut their trap.

Confused news from New York, the Howes' dispatches are not arrived; but it appears from some officers' letters which I have seen, that we attacked and carried a post ill defended by 6000 men, upon which they evacuated Kingsbridge, though they still occupy Fort Washington on the Island of N. Y.[1] They shew little courage or conduct, but the ground is incredibly strong, and it seems running into a War of posts. — I shall write to Mrs. G. Is the historian of the Roman Empire to write out twenty copies himself of a few acres in Bucks. I should like to have them transcribed or even printed. Why not? Adieu.

TO MRS. HOLROYD

Downing Street, January 16th, 1777.

Inconstant pusillanimous Woman!

Is it possible that you should so soon have forgot your solemn vows and engagements, and that you should *pretend* to prefer the dirt and darkness of the Weald of Sussex to the

[1] After the battle of Brooklyn, Washington withdrew his troops to the heights of Haarlem. General Howe, towards the end of October, engaged in several skirmishes with the Americans, but made no effort to bring them to a decisive engagement. On November 16, 1776, Fort Washington was taken by the British, and 2600 of the American troops, exclusive of officers, surrendered as prisoners of war. Following up his advantage, Howe advanced into New Jersey, Washington retreating beyond the Delaware.

splendid and social life of London? Before the reception of your Lord's epistle, Downing Street and Bentinck Street were ready to engage in a Civil War. They have now suspended their hostilities and united their interests, and they both, jointly and separately, insist on your appearance with or without your mate on the appointed Saturday the 25th instant, to remain a hostage in our hands till we think proper to dismiss you. Donna Catherina [1] will undertake to dress you, as human and female creatures are usually dressed. A proper application of rouge will conceal the variety of colours, and the deficiency of hair may be supplied by a fashionable periwig. Adieu.

DONNA CATHERINA.
MOUNTAINEER.[2]
LE GRAND GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Bentinck-street, January the 18th, 1777.

As I presume, My Lady does not make a practise of tumbling down stairs every day after dinner, by this time the colours must have faded, and the high places (I mean the temples) are reduced to a proper level. But what, in the name of the great prince, is the meaning of her declining the urban expedition? Is it the spontaneous result of her own proud spirit? or does it proceed from the secret machinations of her domestic tyrant? At all events, I expect you will both remember your engagement of next Saturday in Bentinck Street, with Donna Catherina, the Mountaineer, &c.

Things go on very prosperously in America. Howe is himself in the Jerseys, and will push at least as far as the Delawar River. The Continental (perhaps *now* the rebel) Army is in a great measure dispersed, and Washington, who wishes to cover Philadelphia, has not more than 6 or 7 thousand men with him. Clinton designs to conquer Rhode Island in his

[1] Mrs. Fraser. [2] General Fraser.

way home. But what *I* think of much greater consequence, a province has made its submission, and desired to be reinstated in the peace of the King. It is indeed only poor little Georgia, and the application was made to Governor Tonyn of Florida; some disgust at a violent step of the Congress, who removed the President of *their* provincial assembly, a leading and popular man, co-operated with the fear of the Indians, who began to amuse themselves with the exercise of scalping on their back settlements.

The measures for Lenborough are in train, but we must wait for our turn in the papers. Adieu. Town fills, and we are mighty agreeable. Last year, on the Queen's birthday, Sir G. Warren had his diamond star cut off his coat; this day the same accident happened to him again, with another star worth £700. He had better compound by the year.

E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Feb. 15, 1777.

You deserve, and we exult in, your weather and disappointments. Why would you bury yourself? I dined in Downing-street Thursday last; and I think Wedderburne was at least as agreeable a companion as your timber-surveyor could be. Lee is certainly taken, but Lord North does not apprehend he is coming home. We are not clear whether he behaved with courage or pusillanimity when he surrendered himself; but Colonel Keene told me to-day, that he had seen a letter from Lee since his confinement. "He imputes his being taken, to the alertness of Harcourt, and cowardice of his own guard; hopes he shall meet his fate with fortitude; but laments that freedom is not likely to find a resting-place in any part of the globe." It is said, he was to succeed Washington. We know nothing certain of the Hessians;[1] but there *has* been a blow. Adieu.

[1] Washington crossed the Delaware on Christmas Day, 1776, surprised

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Almack's, Wednesday evening, March 5, 1777.

In due obedience to thy dread commands I write. But what shall I say? My life, though more lively than yours, is almost as uniform; a very little reading and writing in the morning, bones or guts from two to four, pleasant dinners from five to eight, and afterwards Clubs, with an occasional assembly, or supper. As to Lenborough the bait is in the water, but I have not heard of any fish biting. America affords nothing very satisfactory; and though we have many flying reports, you may be assured that we are ignorant of the consequences of Trenton, &c. Charles Fox is now at my elbow, declaiming on the impossibility of keeping America, since a victorious Army has been unable to maintain any extent of posts in the single province of Jersey. Lord North is out of danger (the animal is so gross that we trembled for its important existence). I now expect that *My Lady* and you should fix the time for the proposed visitation to Bentinck Street. March and April are open — chuse. Adieu.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

London, March the 29th, 1777.

DEAR MADAM,

Instead of inventing any artificial excuses for my natural and original sin of indolence, I believe my most prudent method would be to quarrel with you for the provoking patience with which you have endured my long and scandalous silence. Even in the midst of the dissipation of this town I might have found a few moments to tell you that I have been perfectly well this winter, and to enquire after your health, your spirits and your amusements. Lady Dy.

two regiments of Hessians at Trenton, and in the following January again reduced the Jerseys, while Howe remained inactive at New York.

tells me that she was once in your company at Dr. Delacour's, for whom both she and Beauclerc express a veneration almost equal to your own. As little or no conversation passed between you, she had only an opportunity of admiring the harmony of your voice and the beauty of your teeth, on which she bestows the most lavish enconiums. They mean to visit Bath again this spring, and I am very desirous that you should be better acquainted with her. You will find her one of the most accomplished women in the World, and she will soon discover in you qualities more valuable than those which are now the objects of her enconiums.

The decline of the Roman Empire does not yet decline, the clamour subsides, the sale continues, and we are now printing a third edition in quarto of 1000 copies (in all 3500) with the notes at bottom. I am often pressed about the second volume, which advances very slowly indeed. Last year was allowed for repose and preparation, the usual distractions of the winter have been increased by a constant daily attendance of two hours *every day* to Dr. Hunter's Anatomy Lectures, which have opened to me a new and very entertaining scene within myself. This summer I propose passing at Paris, as I must not lose any time if I wish to catch my friends the Neckers in their brilliant and precarious situation of Ministers. As soon as we have paid the King's debts I intend (about the end of next month) to set forward on an expedition in which I promise to myself very great and various entertainment. You need not in any respect be allarmed at my design. My seat at Westminster is a full security for my return in four or five months; the supplies for the journey will be paid by the Roman Empire, and my business (particularly in Bucks) will be entrusted to the safeguard and active hands of the Lord of Sheffield. Adieu, Dear Madam,

I am,
Ever yours,
E. GIBBON.

Mrs. Porten is as young as ever. I understand that the giddy girl has neglected writing to you.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Saturday night, April 12th, 1777.

Your dispatch is gone to R. Way, and I flatter myself that by your assistance I shall be enabled to lose £1000 upon Lenbourough before my return from Paris. The day of my departure is not absolutely fixed; Sunday sen-night, the 27th instant, is talked of: but if any India business should come on after the Civil list, it will occasion some delay. Otherwise things are in great forwardness, a livery servant is provided, a Swiss who speaks French and English. I take my own chaise, and begin to think of settling my credit. Pray if I can save four pr. cent. by it, may I not decline Fleet Street, who are very indifferent, I believe, about that sort of business? Mrs. G. is an enemy to the whole plan; and I must answer, in a long letter, two very ingenious objections which she has started; 1st, that I shall be confined, or put to death by the priests, and, 2ndly, That I shall sully my *moral* character, by making love to Necker's wife. Before I go, I will consult Newton, about a power of Attorney for you. By the bye, I wish you would remember a sort of promise, and give me one day before I go. We talk chiefly of the Marquis de la Fayette, who was here a few weeks ago. He is about twenty, with 130,000 Livres a year; the nephew of Noailles, who is Ambassador here. He has bought the D. of Kingston's Yacht, and is gone to joyn the Americans. The Court *appear* to be angry with him. Adieu.

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, April the 14th, 1777.

DEAR MADAM,

I will freely acknowledge that I was not a little surprized and even vexed at finding by your last letter, that you had conceived so strong a dislike to my intended journey. But I must add at the same time that I was equally sensible of the obliging frankness with which you communicate your objections. The less foundation I can discover for your apprehensions, the more I am convinced of the delicacy of your regard. True love is of very timid and even pusillanimous nature, and can easily transform the most harmless objects into horrid phantoms which appear to threaten the happiness of those who are dear to us. But when you have indulged the exquisite sensibility of friendship, you will, I am sure, make a proper use of your excellent understanding, and will soon smile at your own terrors. The constancy and danger of a twenty years' passion is a subject upon which I hardly know how to be serious. I am ignorant what effect that period of time has produced upon me, but I do assure you that it has committed very great ravages upon the Lady, and that at present she is very far from being an object either of desire or scandal. As a woman of talents and fortune she is at the head of the literature of Paris, the station of her husband procures her respect from the first people of the country, and the reception which I shall meet with in her house will give me advantages that have fallen to the share of few Englishmen. When I mention her *house*, I must remove the misapprehension which seems to have allarmed you. I shall *visit* but not *lodge* there. I have not the least reason to believe that they think of offering me an apartment, but if they do, I shall certainly refuse it, for the sake of my own comfort and freedom: So that the husband will be easy, the

world will be mute, and my moral character will still preserve its immaculate purity.

A moment's reflection will satisfy you that I have as little to fear from the hatred of the priests as from the love of Madame N. Whatever might be the wishes of the French Clergy, the wisdom of the Government and the liberal temper of the Nation have rendered those monsters perfectly inoffensive. Their own subjects (Voltaire for instance, who resides near Geneva, but in France) think, converse and write with the most unbounded freedom: and can you imagine that an English Protestant, a member of the British Legislature, living at Paris under the protection of his Minister, and in Society with their own, will be exposed to the smallest possible danger or even trouble for having published a profane book in a foreign language and country? When David Hume (the name, the most abhorred by the Godly) was at Paris, he was oppressed only with civilities; and the recent fame of my book is perhaps the circumstance which will introduce me with the most favour and eclat.

The scheme of passing some months at Paris (though I have patiently waited till I could execute it with prudence and propriety) has been formed many years ago. I cannot persuade myself without any reason that strikes my understanding to renounce an expedition which promises so much entertainment and information: but it will be a very considerable alloy to my satisfaction if I leave any uneasiness or apprehension on your mind. I could very much have wished to fulfil my promise of an Easter visit; but I imagined that I had already explained how closely I was confined in town by my daily attendance on Dr. Hunter's lectures. They prevent my setting out for Paris till after the 25th instant, by which time I hope we shall have paid the King's debts. You may depend on receiving regular though concise intelligence of my motions.

I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Dover, Tuesday evening, May 6th, 1777.

My expedition does not begin very auspiciously. The wind, Which for some days had been fair, paid me the compliment of changing on my arrival; and, though I immediately secured a vessel, it has been impossible to make the least use of it during the whole course of this tedious day. It seems doubtful, whether I shall get out to-morrow morning; and the Captain assures me, that the passage will have the double advantage of being both long and rough. Last night a small Privateer, fitted out at Dunkirk, with a commission from Dr. Franklin, attacked, took, and has carried into Dunkirk road, the Harwich Pacquet.[1] The King's Messenger had just time to throw his dispatches overboard: he passed through this town about four o'clock this afternoon, in his return to London. As the alarm is now given, our American friend will probably remain quiet, or will be soon caught; so that I have not *much* apprehension for my personal safety; but if so daring an outrage is not followed by punishment and restitution, it may become a very serious business, and may possibly shorten my stay at Paris.

Adieu. I shall write by the first opportunity, either from Calais or Philadelphia. I wrote last Friday to Hugonin, and announced an Epistle of instructions from you. I embrace My lady. Did your Lord and Colonel disappoint you?

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Paris, June the 16th, 1777.

I told you what would infallibly happen, and you know enough of the nature of the beast not to be surprized at it.

[1] The *Prince of Orange*, packet from Harwich to Helvetsluys, was captured by the *Surprise*, an American privateer commanded by Captain Cunningham, carrying four guns and ten swivels.

I have now been at Paris exactly five weeks, during which time I have not written to any person whatsoever within the British Dominions except two lines of notification to Mrs. Gibbon. The Daemon of procrastination has at length yielded to the Genius of Friendship, assisted indeed by the powers of fear and shame. But when I have seated myself before my table and begin to revolve all that I have seen and tasted during this busy period, I feel myself oppressed and confounded; and I am very near throwing away the pen and resigning myself to indolent despair. A compleat history would require a volume at least as corpulent as the decline and fall, and if I attempt to select and abridge, besides the difficulty of the choice there occur so many things which cannot properly be entrusted to paper, and so many others of too slight a nature to support the Journey, that I am almost tempted to reserve for our future conversations the detail of my pleasures and occupations. But as I am sensible that you are *rigid* and impatient, I will try to convey in a few words a general idea of my situation as a man of the World and as a man of Letters.

You remember that the Neckers were my principal dependance, and the reception which I have met with from them very far surpassed my most sanguine expectations. I do not indeed lodge in their house (as it might excite the jealousy of the husband and procure me a letter de cachet), but I live very much with them, dine and sup whenever they have company, which is almost every day, and whenever I like it, for they are not in the least exigeans. Mr. Walpole gave me an introduction to Madame du Deffand, an agreable young Lady of eighty-two years of age, who has constant suppers and the best company in Paris. When you see the D. of Richmond at Lewes he will give you an account of that house, where I meet him almost every evening. Ask him about Madame de Cambis. I am afraid poor Mary is entirely forgot. I have met the D. of Choiseul at his particular request, dined *by accident* with Franklin, conversed with

the Emperor, been presented at court, and gradually, or rather rapidly, I find my acquaintance spreading over the most valuable parts of Paris. They pretend to like me, and whatever you may think of French professions, I am convinced that some at least are sincere. On the other hand I feel myself easy and happy in their company, and only regret that I did not come over two or three months sooner. Though Paris throughout the summer promises me a very agreable society, yet I am hurt every day by the departure of Men and Women whom I begin to know with some familiarity, the departure of Officers for their Governments and Garrisons, of Bishops for their Dioceses, and even of country Gentlemen for their estates, as a rural taste gains ground in this Country.

So much for the general idea of my acquaintance; details would be endless yet unsatisfactory. You may add to the pleasures of Society those of the Spectacles and promenades, and you will find that I lead a very agreable life; let me just condescend to observe that it is not extravagant. After decking myself out with silks and silver, the ordinary establishment of Coach, Lodgeing, Servants, eating and pocket expences does not exceed sixty pounds pr. month. Yet I have two footmen in handsome liveries behind my Coach, and my apartment is hung with damask. Adieu for the present. I have more to say, but were I to attempt any farther progress you must wait another post, and you have already waited long enough of all conscience.

Let me just in two words give you an idea of my day. I am now going (nine o'clock) to the King's Library, where I shall stay till twelve. As soon as I am dressed I set out to dine with the Duke de Nivernois, shall go from thence to the French Comedy into the Princess de Beauvau's *loge grillée*, and am not quite determined whether I shall sup at Madame du Deffand's, Madame Necker's, or the Sardinian Embassadress's. Once more Adieu. Do not be fond of shewing

my letter: the playful effusions of friendship would be construed by strangers as gross vanity.

I embrace My lady and Bambine. I shall with chearfulness execute any of her commissions.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Hotel de Modene, Paris, July 24th, 1777.

DEAR MADAM,

If ever my negligence could be excused by your good-natured friendship, it would be from the consideration of my present circumstances, and I am sure that your regard for me is of so pure and disinterested a character that you had much rather I should be happy without hearing from me, than if you received by every post a regular succession of complaints. Happily indeed have I passed two short months since my arrival at Paris, and every circumstance of my journey has more than answered my most sanguine expectations. My connection with the Neckers, who every day acquire more power and deserve more respect, first opened the door to me, and perhaps the reputation of a popular writer has contributed a little to enlarge the entrance. I pass my time in the society of men of letters, people of fashion, the higher ranks of *the clergy*, and the foreign Ministers, and except when I wish to steal a few moments' privacy, it seldom happens to me to dine or sup at my hotel. The vacancies of my time are filled by the public libraries in the morning, and in the afternoon by the spectacles, and as part of my acquaintance begin to disperse themselves in the environs of Paris, I have contrived, though in a most unfavourable season, to make several very pleasant excursions. Such is the general idea of my life, in which I have made many acquaintance and formed some more intimate connections, from all of which I receive civilities, amusement and information. Details would be infinite, and must be reserved for

your fireside at Bath; but I cannot forbear saying something of two or three persons whom you know.

First then you will expect to hear of Mrs. Mallet. Mr. Scott had desired me to take charge of a letter, and I delivered it to her own fair hands the second day after my arrival. She received me with a shriek of joy and a close embrace, and we sat down to talk of old and new subjects. I found her exactly the same talkative, positive, passionate, conceited creature as we knew her twenty years ago. She raved with her usual indiscretion and fury of Gods, Kings and Ministers, the perfections of her favourites and the vice or folly of every person she disliked. Unfortunately she had applied to Mr. Necker for some favour, and had not been received in a manner suitable to her importance. Her resentment was expressed in such indecent language, that after repeated but ineffectual hints of my intimate connection with the person she was abusing, I was obliged to shorten my visit with a firm resolution of never returning.

Your favourite, the Duke of Richmond, has fallen in my way infinitely more than he ever did in England, and I do assure you that the air of Paris agrees perfectly well with him. He is easy, attentive and cheerful, pays his court to young and to old women, and is extremely popular and even fashionable in the Society of Paris. I have likewise seen a great deal of the Sardinian Ambassadress whom you have formerly known with Lady Cobham, under the name of Miss Speed. She keeps a very hospitable house, and has acquired the manners of the country without losing the sentiments of her own. Adieu, Dear Madam. If you can think of any commissions for me I will execute them with care and pleasure, though I have no occasion for any memento to make me often think of you.

Sir Stanier will be so good as to forward anything to me.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Paris, August the 11th, 1777.

Well, and who is the Culprit now? — Thus far I had written in the pride of my heart, and fully determined to inflict an Epistle upon you, even before I received any answer to my former; I was very near a Bull. But this forward half line lay ten days barren and inactive, till its generative powers were excited by the missive which I received yesterday.

What a wretched piece of work do we seem to be making of it in America! The greatest force which any European power ever ventured to transport into that Continent, is not strong enough even to attack the enemy; the Naval strength of Great Britain is not sufficient to prevent the Americans (they have almost lost the appellation of Rebels) from receiving every assistance that they wanted; and in the mean time you are obliged to call out the Militia to defend your own coasts against their privateers.[1] You possibly may expect from me some account of the designs and policy of the French Court, but I chuse to decline that task for two reasons: 1st, Because you may find them laid open in every newspaper; and 2ndly, Because I live too much with their Courtiers and Ministers to know anything about them. I shall only say that I am not under any immediate apprehensions of a War with France. It is much more pleasant as well as profitable to view in safety the raging of the tempest, occasionally to pick up some pieces of the Wreck, and to improve their trade, their agriculture, and their finances, while the two countries

[1] "American privateers," writes Walpole, July 17, 1777, "infest our coasts; they keep Scotland in alarms, and even the harbour of Dublin has been newly strengthened with cannon." On August 7 the crew of a privateer landed at Penzance and plundered several farmers of their live stock. It was in the following year, April, 1778, that Paul Jones first harried the English and Scottish coasts.

are *lento collisa duello*. Far from taking any step to put a speedy end to this astonishing dispute, I should not be surprized if next summer they were to lend their cordial assistance to England, as to the weaker party. As to my personal engagement with the D[uke] of R[ichmond], I recollect a very few slight skirmishes, but nothing that deserves the name of a general engagement. The extravagance of some disputants, both French and English, who have espoused the cause of America, sometimes inspires me with an extraordinary vigour. Upon the whole, I find it much easier to defend the justice than the policy of our Measures; but there are certain cases, where whatever is repugnant to sound policy ceases to be just.

The more I see of Paris, the more I like it. The regular course of the Society in which I live is easy, polite, and entertaining; and almost every day is marked by the acquisition of some new acquaintance, who is worth cultivating, or who, at least, is worth remembering. To the great admiration of the French, I regularly dine and regularly sup, drink a dish of strong Coffee after each meal, and find my stomach a citizen of the World. The Spectacles, (particularly the Italian, and above all the French Comedie) which are open the whole summer, afford me an agreeable relaxation from Company; and to shew you that I frequent them from taste only, and not from idleness, I have not yet seen the Colisee, the Vauxhall, the Boulevards, or any of those places of entertainment which constitute Paris to most of our Countrymen. Occasional trips to dine or sup in some of the thousand Country-houses which are scattered round the environs of Paris, serve to vary the scene. In the mean while the summer insensibly glides away, and the fatal month of October approaches, when I must exchange the house of Madame Necker for the house of Commons.

I regret that I could not chuse the winter, instead of the Summer, for this excursion: I should have found many

valuable persons, and should have preserved others whom I have lost as I began to know them. The Duke de Choiseul, who deserves attention both for himself, and for keeping the best house in Paris, passes seven months of the year in Touraine; and though I have been tempted, I consider with horror a journey of sixty leagues into the Country. The Princess of Beauvau (by the bye Beauveau, fine calf, is an orthography worthy of a Sussex farmer), the Princess of Beauvau, who is a most superior Woman, has been absent above six weeks, and does not return till the 24th of this month. A large body of Recruits will be assembled by the Fontainbleau journey; but in order [to] have a thorough knowledge of this splendid Country, I ought to stay till the month of January; and if I could be sure that opposition would be as tranquil as they were last year —

I think your life has been as animated, or, at least, as tumultuous, and I envy you Lady Payne, and Lady Dy, &c. much more than either the Primate,[1] or the Chief Justice.[2] Let not the generous breast of Mylady be torn by the black serpents of envy. She still possesses the first place in the sentiments of her slave: but the adventure of the fan was a mere accident, owing to Lord Carmarthen. Adieu. I think you may be satisfied. I say nothing of my terrestrial affairs. Good works are unnecessary, as I can only hope to be justified by my faith in the merit of my Redeemer John Holroyd.

TO DAVID GARRICK

It is pleasant to find one's-self mentioned with friendship by those whom posterity will mention with admiration. Foreign nations are a kind of posterity, and among them you already reap the full reward of your fame. You have reason,

[1] The Hon. Fred. Cornwallis, Archbishop of Canterbury.
[2] Lord Mansfield, Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench.

to envy me, for I can truly declare that I reckon the three months which I have now passed in Paris among the most agreeable of my life. My connection with a house, before which the proudest of the Gallic nobles bow the knee, my familiar acquaintance with the language, and a natural propensity to be pleased with the people and their manners, have introduced me into very good company; and, different in that respect from the traveller Twiss, I have sometimes been invited to the same houses a second time. If besides these advantages your partiality should ascribe any others to your friend, I am not proud enough entirely to disclaim them. I propose to stay at Paris about two months longer, to hook in (if possible) a little of the Fontainebleau voyage, and to return to England a few days before the meeting of Parliament, where I suppose we shall have some warm scenes. You cannot surely be satisfied with the beginning, or rather no beginning, of the American campaign, which seems to elevate the enemies as much as it must humble the friends of Great Britain.

At this time of year, the society of the Turk's-head can no longer be addressed as a corporate body, and most of the individual members are probably dispersed; Adam Smith in Scotland; Burke in the shades of Beaconsfield; Fox, the Lord or the devil knows where, &c., &c. Be so good as to salute in my name those friends who may fall in your way. Assure Sir Joshua, in particular, that I have not lost my relish for *manly* conversation and the society of the brown table. I hope Colman has made a successful campaign. May I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Garrick? By this time she has probably discovered the philosopher's stone; she has long possessed a much more valuable secret, — that of gaining the hearts of all who have the happiness of knowing her.

I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Hotel de Modene a Paris, September the 1st, 1777.

DEAR MADAM,

I must either write ten lines or twenty pages, and you will easily judge which I shall prefer. The various sets of company with whom I pass my time are so completely strangers to you, that before I mentioned any person of my acquaintance I must introduce them with a very tedious yet imperfect account of their birth, parentage, education and character. After all, what would principally interest the curiosity of friendship may be dispatched in two words — *I am well and happy*. Mr. Necker has not yet discovered any signs of jealousy, and I supped last night between two Archbishops who, I am persuaded, have not the least intention of solliciting a *lettre de cachet* to send me to the Bastille. I only regret that it was not possible to choose another season of the Year for my Expedition. In summer Paris is very far from being a desert like London, and I have the daily pleasure of living in a very numerous and agreeable Society, yet as there is always a considerable emigration into the provinces I am sensible that many valuable acquisitions have escaped me. In the first or second week of October the Court goes to Fontainebleau, and as it is never so full and splendid as in that place, I propose passing a few days there. I must afterwards allow myself a little space to thank and embrace my Paris friends: and shall return by the first of November to a very different scene of things in London.

You will not be sorry to hear that, though I love the French from inclination and gratitude, I have by no means lost my relish for my native country. I have spent so much time in gay dissipation, that I must set myself in good earnest to work; but you may depend on my desire to steal a few days of the Christmas recess for a Bath expedition. I fancy we

shall have a busy Session of Parliament, and unless Howe has very decisive success we shall be less unanimous for the design of conquering America. I will not trouble you with politics, but will only venture to assure you, that, in the present moment, the French Counsels are seriously inclined for peace. My friend Necker (for I now esteem and love him on his own account) is declared principal minister of the finances, and though he has great obstacles to contend with, his knowledge, his firmness, and the purity of his intentions ought to make us wish for his disgrace.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

House of Commons, Thursday, Dec. 4th, 1777.

Dreadful news indeed. You will see them partly in the papers, and we have not yet any particulars. An English army of nearly 10,000 men laid down their arms and surrendered prisoners of war, on condition of being sent to England and of never serving against America.[1] They had fought bravely, and were three days without eating. Burgoyne is said to have received three wounds. General Frazer with 2000 men, killed. Colonel Ackland likewise killed. A general cry for peace. Adieu. We have constant late days.

[1] General Burgoyne, after capturing Ticonderoga, pushed forwards towards the Hudson River, intending to invade the United States from the side of Canada. His supplies began to fail. The American forces gathered at Saratoga, and after several days' fighting, surrounded the British troops, whose strength was reduced to three thousand five hundred men. On October 17, 1777, Burgoyne surrendered to General Gates.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, December 16th, 1777.

DEAR MADAM,

I flatter myself that my long silence must have given you great satisfaction. You recollect that while I was under the tyranny of the Gout, I showed myself tolerably exact in sending you intelligence of my situation and improvement. From my silence therefore, you must have concluded that I am, now, as indeed I am, restored to public health, and once more engaged in the busy as well as idle dissipations of this great town. I jumped at once from a sick chair into the warmest debates, which I ever remember in my short parliamentary life. They have constantly been fed by our miserable news from America, and the Session after the holydays will be taken up by Committees on the state of the Nation, Enquiries into the conduct of Ministers and Generals, &c., which will at least serve to increase the public ferment. What will be the resolutions of our Governors I know not, but I shall scarcely give my consent to exhaust still further the finest country in the World in the prosecution of a war from whence no reasonable man entertains any hopes of success. It is better to be humbled than ruined.

Half my acquaintance, Lady Dy, Lady Payne, the Solicitor General, &c., are running down to Bath for the holydays. Had I no other inducement I should certainly escape from the crowd, and employ that short interval of quiet in resuming my long neglected History. Those literary occupations however I would gladly sacrifice to the pleasure of seeing you, but I apprehend I shall be engaged to prefer the Sussex to the Bath journey by some reasons which I will fairly submit to your judgement.

1. Holroyd, as you must have learned from his sister, is in a very indifferent state of health. His eyes are affected, his spirits are low, he has been disappointed of other company

and he entreats me in a very moving way not to abandon him on this occasion.

2. I wish to pass some time with him on my own account, and to consult him with regard to Buriton, which is, I fear, very indifferently treated by my tenant Winton.

3. I expect, without knowing the day, a French lady of quality, Madame de Genlis, to whom I have very great obligations. Whenever she informs me of her arrival in London, I must instantly fly (on the wings of mere friendship) to receive and attend her: now it would be somewhat vexatious to travel an hundred and ten miles, and to be called away the next day. Determine for me, my dear friend, you have every tye upon me of promise, of gratitude and of inclination. If you are not perfectly satisfied with my positive engagement to pass the Easter recess with you, depend upon it I will break through every difficulty that detains me at present. I have a thousand things to hear and say, and I know that you will enjoy, what I could not perhaps say to others without incurring the censure of vanity. If the Goulds are at Bath, I beg to be remembered to them. I see your friend Mr. Melmoth has published a translation of another piece of Tully: on a subject which you understand at least as well as either of them. It will be worth your reading, for the treatise is valuable and he is an elegant as well as faithful translator.

I am, Dear Madam,
Ever yours,
E. G.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Feb. 23, 1778.

You do not readily believe in præternatural miscarriages of letters; nor I neither. Listen, however, to a plain and honest narrative. This morning after breakfast, as I was ruminating on *your* silence, Thomas, my new footman, with confusion in his looks, and stammering on his tongue, produced a letter

reasonably soiled, which he was to have brought me the day of his arrival, and which had lain forgotten from that time in his pocket. To shorten as much as possible the continuance, I immediately inquired, whether any method of conveyance could be devised more expeditious than the post, and was fortunately informed of your Coachman's intentions. In your observations on the opposition, &c., I desiderate somewhat of your usual moderation. I suppose you imagine that a reluctant effort of reason is at once to efface past errors, to command present acquiescence, and to inspire future confidence.

You probably know the heads of the plan; an act of parliament, to declare that we never *had* any intention of taxing America: another act, to empower the Crown to name commissioners, authorized to suspend hostilities by sea and land, as well as all obnoxious acts; and, in short, to grant every thing, except Independence. Opposition, after expressing their doubts whether the lance of Achilles could cure the wound which it had inflicted, could not refuse their assent to the principles of conduct which they themselves had always recommended. Yet you must acknowledge, that in a business of this magnitude there may arise several important questions, which, without a spirit of faction, will deserve to be debated: whether Parliament ought not to name the Commissioners? whether it would not be better to repeal the obnoxious acts ourselves? I do not find that the World, that is, a few people whom I happen to converse with, are much inclined to praise Lord N.'s ductility of temper. In the service of next Friday, you will, however, take notice of the injunction given by the Liturgy: "And all the people shall say after the *minister*, Turn us again, O Lord, and so shall we be turned."

While we considered whether we shall negociate, I fear the French have been more diligent. It is positively asserted, both in private and in Parliament, and not contradicted by the Ministers, that on the 5th of this month a treaty of Com-

merce [1] (which naturally leads to a war) was signed at Paris with the Independent States of America. What do you think of the tardyness of administration? Yet there still remains a hope that England may obtain the preference. The two greatest countries in Europe are fairly running a race for the favour of America; and I fear our *Lord* has more bottom than foot. Adieu. Am not I very good? but you must not expect a repetition of such exalted Virtue. Your eyes? I embrace My lady, &c. I have written to all: no answers. I will see Cadell.

I send you a parcel, that, as a member, I have just received.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

February 28th, 1778.

DEAR MADAM,

You will think me the most impudent fellow alive: but I am really angry with *you* for not being angry with *me* on account of my long and shameful silence. We have had (I do not mean it as any excuse) the hardest work I have yet known in Parliament. You see that we are reduced to the humiliation of sueing for peace. I much fear we shall have the additional humiliation of being rejected. In the meantime a French war is every day a probable event. I have not yet seen so very black a prospect. How have you passed the winter, in health, in spirits and in amusements? For my own part I am perfectly free from the gout, and notwithstanding the hurry of business and pleasure, I steal some moments for the Roman Empire. I can assure you with the utmost truth that I look forward to Easter with such impatience I *will* write oftener.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

[1] The treaty was also one of friendship. It was signed on February 6.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Almack's, Saturday night, [February 28th, 1778].

I like your method of proceeding, and I am much relieved to find that after fighting so long with savage monsters, we have at length found a being not totally devoid of sense and feeling. Yet I fear the events which may happen before Michaelmas. With regard to your other schemes, I think them *hard:* but the times are so: and I must submit. Hugonin shall not be omitted.

As to politics, we should easily fill pages, and therefore had better be silent. You are mistaken in supposing that the Bills are opposed; some particular objections have been stated, and in the *only* division I voted with Government. Yet I still repeat that in my opinion, Lord N. does not deserve pardon for the past, applause for the present, or confidence for the future. You are, however, perfectly in the right in supposing that the most able men in the Kingdom will go to America, as a proof of which I must inform you that Lord Carlisle is certainly appointed first Commissioner.[1]

Caplin enquired about the groom. He is a drunken, worthless fellow. Adieu. I hear the bell. My Lady is a most aimiable Creature. I rejoice in her snugness.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Saturday Night, ten o'clock, 14th March, 1778.

Enclosed I send Arthur Young's character. You will judge, but I should not be satisfied with it. Your polite footman shall be sought for. This moment Beauclerck,

[1] The five commissioners, appointed on April 13, 1778, were Lord Carlisle, Lord Howe, Sir W. Howe, William Eden (afterwards Lord Auckland), and George Johnstone (ex-governor of Florida).

Lord Ossory, Sheridan, Garrick, Burke, Charles Fox and Lord Cambden (no bad set you will perhaps say) have left me. It is reported that M. de Noailles has signified to Lord Weymouth the treaty of France with the united and independent States of America, with the cold modification that it is not of a hostile character. We have had hard but dull work. Monday will be a great day, — the enquiry and the orders given by Lord George for the Canada expedition.

Dr. Robertson is in town. I shall dine with him to-morrow. Adieu. I have given directions for La Fontaine's fables.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Almack's, Saturday night, [March 21st, 1778].

As business thickens, and you may expect me to write sometimes, I shall lay down one rule; totally to avoid political argument, conjecture, lamentation, declamation, &c., which would fill pages, not to say volumes; and to confine myself to short, authentic pieces of intelligence, for which I may be able to afford moments and lines. Hear then — The French ambassador [1] went off yesterday morning, not without some slight expressions of ill humour from John Bull. Lord Stormont is probably arrived to-day. No *immediate* declaration expected on our side. A Report (but vague) of an action in the bay, between La Motte Piquet and Digby; the former has five ships and three frigates, with three large store ships under convoy; the latter has eleven ships of the line. If the Frenchman should sail to the mouth of the Delawar, he may possibly be followed and shut up. When Franklin was received at Versailles, Deane went in the same character to Vienna, and Arthur Lee to Madrid. Notwith-

[1] M. de Noailles left London at six in the morning to avoid insults. He and his wife were pelted by the mob as they passed through Canterbury; but the Government ordered a salute to be fired in his honour as he left Dover.

standing the reports of an action in Silesia, they subside;[1] and I have seen a letter from Eliot at Berlin of the tenth instant, without any mention of actual hostilities, and even speaking of the impending War as not absolutely inevitable. Last Tuesday the first payment of the loan £600,000 was certainly made; and as it would otherwise be forfeited, it is a security for the remainder. I have not yet got the intelligence you want, about former prices of stock in Critical times. These are surely such. *Dixi. Vale.* Send me some good news from Bucks; In spite of the War, I must sell. We want you in town. Frazer is impatient: but if you come without Mylady, every door will be shut.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Saturday Night, 16th May, 1778.

Before I received your letter, I had just heard from Bath! I can say nothing on the occasion. Nature and Reason have their respective provinces; and I ought not to hope either to prevent the effect of the former, or to hasten that of the latter.

I shall expect you about the end of next week, but it will be highly proper that you should give me some days either in going or returning. Notwithstanding all you may see in the Papers, you may be assured that there is not any certain intelligence of D'Estaing's squadron having passed the straights of Gibraltar.[2] A Court of Enquiry is ordered and

[1] On December 30, 1777, the Elector of Bavaria died. With him was extinguished the male line of his house. Austria took the opportunity of occupying portions of Lower Bavaria, and the King of Prussia supported against her the claims of the elector's general heir and nearest male relation, the Elector Palatine of the Rhine. War began in July, 1778; but before negotiations were abandoned, Bohemia, Silesia, and Saxony were occupied by the forces of Austria and Prussia.

[2] The Comte d'Estaing with the French fleet left Toulon on April 13, and arrived off Sandy Hook on July 8, 1778.

will sit on Monday on Bourgoyne;[1] but I am not certain whether he has been forbid Court. I attended Ireland with great alacrity;[2] but the business seems to be compromised. I do not exactly know in what manner or whether the Constituents on either side will be satisfied. The Inscriptions shall be considered. Adieu.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Almack's, Friday, [June 12th, 1778].

R. Way's letter gave me that sort of satisfaction which one may receive from a good Physician, who, after a careful examination, pronounces your case incurable. But no more of that — I take up the pen, as I suppose by this time you begin to swear at my silence. Yet litterally (a bull) I have not a word to say. Since D'Estaing's fleet has passed through the Gut (I leave you to guess where it must have got out there) it has been totally forgot, and the most wonderful lethargy and oblivion, of war and peace, of Europe and of America, seems to prevail. Lord C[hatham]'s funeral was meanly attended,[3] and Government ingeniously contrived to secure the double odium of suffering the thing to be done, and of doing it with an ill grace. The chief conversation at Almack's is about tents, drill-Serjeants, subdivisions, firings, &c. and I am revered as an old Veteran. Adieu. When

[1] General Burgoyne was refused admission to the royal presence. The Court of Enquiry was not held, as the general officers reported that they could not take cognizance of the conduct of an officer who was a prisoner on parole to the Congress. A court-martial was on similar grounds refused. Finally, on May 26, a motion was proposed for a committee of the whole House on Saratoga, which gave Burgoyne the opportunity of defending himself. The motion was opposed by the Government and rejected.

[2] Counsel and evidence were heard on Irish trade; but Lord North's projected concessions were reduced to the smallest proportions and carried without divisions.

[3] Lord Chatham died May 11, 1778, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Parliament was adjourned from June 3 to November 26.

do you return? If it suits your evolutions, aunt Kitty and myself meditate a Sussex journey next week. I embrace Mylady.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Wednesday evening, July 1st, 1778.

Your plan of operations is clear and distinct; yet, notwithstanding your zeal, and the ideas of Ducal discipline, I think you will be more and longer at S. P. than you imagine. However, I am disposed to advance my journey as much as possible. I want to see you; my martial ardour makes me look to Coxheath,[1] necessity obliges me to think of Beriton, and I feel something of a very new inclination to taste the sweets of the Country. Aunt Kitty shares the same sentiments; but various obstacles will not allow us to be with you before Saturday, or perhaps Sunday evening; I say *evening*, as we mean to take the cool part of the day, and shall probably arrive after Supper. Keppel's return[2] has occasioned infinite and inexpressible consternation, which gradually changes into discontent against him. He is ordered out again with three or four large ships as reinforcement; 2 of 90, 2 of 74, and the 50th Regiment as marines. In the mean time the French, with a superior fleet, are masters of the sea; and our homeward-bound East and West India trade is in the most imminent danger. Adieu.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Bentinck-street, July 7th, 1778.

Expect me — when you see me; and do not regulate your active motions by my uncertainty. Saturday is impossible.

[1] Summer encampments were established at Coxheath in Kent.

[2] Papers captured on a French frigate showed Keppel that a fleet superior to his own lay in Brest harbour. He therefore retired to Portsmouth. "And now," writes Walpole, July 4, 1778, "Mr. Keppel is returned, we learn that the East and West Indian fleets, worth four millions, are at stake, and the French frigates are abroad in pursuit of them."

The most probable days are, Tuesday or Friday next. I live not unpleasantly, in a round of Ministerial dinners; but I am impatient to see my white house at Brighton. I cannot find that Sheffield really has the same attractions for you. Lord North, as a mark of his gratitude, observed the other day, that your Regiment would make a very good figure in North Carolina. Adieu. I wrote two lines to Mitchel lest he should think me dead.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Tuesday evening, Sept. 20th, 1778.

The French fleet is stole back into Brest without meeting Keppel; the Fox frigate taken same day, the Captain (Windsor, Lord Plymouth's brother) killed; others add, but doubtful, that we have lost a fleet of twelve merchantmen. There is good reason to believe that we have taken the Iphigenie, a French frigate. You were hardly aware of the depth of ditch you tumbled into, and I have sent you the enclosed that you may see Hugonin's despair and reproaches. The money must be found by Saturday sennight; and the only step I could think of was a fair polite letter to Clive, who came to town yesterday, stating the business, representing the probable near conclusion of the New River sale, and begging leave to draw upon him. I know his good nature, but if he hesitates you must intercede, or help me some way or other. Adieu. How do you advance in les Travaux de Mars? The advertisements have been inserted; Hugonin has received one application from a Mr. Butler, Camberwell, Surry, to make enquiries.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Saturday night, September 25th, 1778.

No news from the fleets; we are so tired of waiting, that our impatience seems gradually to subside into a careless and

supine indifference. We sometimes yawn, and ask, just by way of conversation, Whether Spain will joyn?[1] I believe you may depend on the truth, not the sincerity, of an answer from their Court, that they will not support or acknowledge the independence of the Americans. But on the other hand, Magazines are forming, troops marching, in a style which threatens Gibraltar. Gib. is, however, a hard morsel; 5000 effectives, and every article of defence in the most compleat state. We are certainly courting Russia. So much for the Republic.

I am strangely amazed and frightened about Buriton: as I had not the least suspicion of the approaching, nay impending demand of so large a sum. How could it amount to so much, and why did Hug. stipulate so near a day? I have desired him to gain time or borrow money. They bite in the New River, and I am offered $7\frac{1}{2}$, but Newton encourages me to hold out, and thinks I may get $\frac{1}{4}$ more, which is not to be despised in certain situations ——

I have seen several servants, and like one who has lived with Mr. Milbank (Sir Ralph's eldest son), who desired his brother to give him a very good character. On a quarrel between him and the Swiss Valet de Chambre, both were dismissed, the one with honour, the other with ignominy. Something more in the Italian than the Swiss style had been designed by the Valet de Chambre, but rejected by your Candidate; yet, as he was discharged, there is something not perfectly clear. If you chuse it, you may write to Milbank, who is with his Militia in the North: but send me the letter and I will forward it. If without any farther ceremony you have a mind to try him (I mean no harm), I can order him to quarters. I am satisfied with his appearance, and he professes to understand what you require. Adieu.

[1] War was declared in June, 1779, between Great Britain and Spain.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, Sept. 29, 1778.

DEAR MADAM,

I think I grow worse and worse. I am sensible that you are acquainted with my sentiments and my faults, and that you are disposed to believe that the stream of my friendship is deep and pure, though it flows *silently*, very silently indeed. Yet my conscience whispers in my ear that I ought not to abuse the confidence which you may with justice repose in me. My conscience, likewise, informs me that as I made Sarah Holroyd the security of my promise, she has a right to complain that she became in some measure the accomplice of my quill. She has, I daresay, given you a particular account of the way I spent the greatest part of the summer; how, in the absence of the Major, I was left Governor of the Castle and Director of the fair females who inhabited it, and how I behaved myself in the execution of that important office.

I went over to Brighthelmstone, but found not much encouragement to settle, the Company was not agreeable, few of my acquaintance except the Paynes and Beauclercs; more difficulty and more expence than I expected in settling myself with any degree of comfort, and great inconvenience in being so long absent and distant from my tools. Upon mature consideration I resolved to relinquish that plan and to retire for some time to my rural retirement in Bentinck Street: the neighbourhood is not very populous at present, nor am I much interrupted by visits or invitations; yet I find as much society as I want for relaxation; and motives enough to engage me to take more exercise of a morning than I should anywhere else; besides the occasional Holydays which I sometimes allow myself to various friends who dwell in villas adjacent to town. In the meantime I have the pleasure to see the sheets of my second volume insensibly acquire a

respectable or at least a decent size; and though my progress gives me a clearer view of the difficulties of my undertaking, yet I find that gentle and steady diligence will in time carry me through it: and I still look forwards to the spring of 1780 with hope though not with confidence.

Before I left Sussex I visited, in company with the Major, Cox Heath Camp: where I was received as a Father of the Old Hampshire Militia, though few officers now remain in it, with whom I have any connection. Jolliffe was returned to his station of Ensign, with the *Cave* of General Keppel, who would not however see him or forgive his extravagant behaviour, which was much worse than anything you saw in the Papers. I am afraid you were malicious enough to rejoyce at his absurdity. While I was in the Camp, I felt my military ardour revive; but I soon recollected that, notwithstanding the pleasure of passing a part of the winter on the Down, my library is upon the whole as agreeable as a Tent, and Almack's as comfortable as a Suttling booth. What odd animals we are! I have deferred from post to post, I am afraid to think how long, a very easy and pleasing occupation, which has now made me pass a very agreeable half hour in conversing with the dearest and most valued of my friends; who will derive some pleasure from the conversation. I positively believe I shall reform. ——

Before I conclude I must add three words on a subject which is not so entertaining. You know how little I love to talk about business, but I ought not to omit what you will probably hear from some other quarter. My tenant Winton had done *some* mischief to Buriton; he threatened to injure it much more deeply, and I was persuaded by my Council to get rid of him, which I have just accomplished. Till the farm is let again, which I hope will be soon, Hugonin has undertaken the temporary administration. I have lost considerably in taking leave of my old tenant, and fear my loss in engaging a new one will be still more considerable, and I can ill support these extraordinary demands. Yet I should

consider that, if all external circumstances were as smooth and satisfactory as the temper of my own mind, my condition would be too fortunate.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

I cannot go to Port Eliot this autumn, but shall try to propose an accomodation to Madam of meeting at Bath.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

October 27th, 1778.

You are certainly right in your suspicions that I shall not again visit S. P. before the meeting of Parliament. I am perfectly well in wind and limb, but the time is so short, the derangement is so considerable, and I am so deeply engaged not in London but at Rome, that I can only regret and hope.—There is not any account of the French fleets in Europe or America. Sir Charles Hardy is sailed chiefly to protect and convoy the East Indiamen now in Ireland. I know not what to say of your countrymen, nor have I any notion of the plan (if any) of Government. The A. G.[1] came to town last night, and I am just going to sup with him. I expect a full account of the Regiment. Adieu. Denmark (inseparably connected with Russia) has behaved very handsomely in restoring two Victuallers and ordering the captor, one of Paul Jones's Squad, to quit the Harbour of Bergen. This is sure and important.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Tuesday night, November, 1778.

You sometimes complain that I do not send you early news; but you will now be satisfied with receiving a full and true

[1] Wedderburn succeeded Thurlow as Attorney-General when the latter was made Chancellor (June, 1778).

account of all the parliamentary transactions of *next* Thursday. In town we think it an excellent piece of humour (the author is one Tickell).[1] Burke and C. Fox are pleased with their own Speaches, but serious Patriots groan that such things should be turned to farce. We seem to have a chance of an additional Dutch War:[2] you may depend upon its being a very important business, from which we cannot extricate ourselves without either loss or shame. Hugonin was in town last week about his eyes. I have given him full powers, and still hope that he will agree with Hearsay on tolerable terms. Say nothing to Beauclerc and Lady Dy. I pity them both, and I pity you too, for at this time of year Brighton must be a damned place. I shall now be immersed in politics. Society and study and hardly a moment be ever found for Epistolary Commerce. Therefore be patient. *Vale.*

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Wednesday Night, December, 1778.

Good news from India, a revolution has happened among the Marattas; the French interest is destroyed, Ragged boy[3] (or some such name) is placed on the throne of that warlike people, and we have now more to hope than to fear from them. According to the Orders sent out in the Spring it is not impossible that Pondicherry, feebly garrisoned, may at this moment be in our hands. The West Indies are tolerably secure by the land and sea force which went from New York, and our operations in that part of the World may be offensive. In several places the Sky clears a little, and if we could be

[1] Gibbon refers to a pamphlet called *Anticipation*, which appeared the day before the opening of Parliament, and gave a summary of what would be said by the chief speakers. The author was Richard Tickell.

[2] The outbreak of a war with Holland at this time seemed probable.

[3] Ragoba, an exiled Peshwah of Poonah, was supported by the English, and an expedition to reinstate him was despatched by Warren Hastings in the autumn of 1778, but failed.

secure from Spain we may promise ourselves some success. You see I am less desponding than usual. But we must depend more on arms and policy than upon idle threats, which may do mischief and cannot do good. We must likewise remove a Secretary of State so universally odious to the Army, &c.

Our Admirals have had a spar or two, and Sir H. P., finding that K. did not apply for a Court Martial upon him, has this day lodged a charge of six Articles in the Admiralty and has made himself the accuser of his Commander.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Saturday Night, 1778.

Our East India Revolution has not succeeded, and Raggaboy is no longer at the head of the Marattas. In the West we much fear that D'Estaing is run down to the Islands.[1] Black again. The Court Martial would furnish volumes of opinions, but not a line of fact. In private life you see we open a lively campaign of Marchionesses, Countesses, &c. — I am sorry to find that you are so firm about Buriton. Consider the bad condition and growing expence which I am so little able to bear. The option of the term of years cannot perhaps be admitted, but otherwise I am much disposed to accept the hard conditions of Hearsay, and almost fear that our delay will lose the opportunity. I am transported to hear that you will call at Buriton in your way to Bath, and only beg, that considering my situation rather than your spirit, you will not leave the place without deciding the business. How long do you stay at Bath? Shall you not return through town? I want to see you about some things which I cannot trust to paper. Adieu.

[1] In November, 1778, the French fleet sailed for the West Indies. But St. Lucia was successfully defended by the British forces.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Almacks, Wednesday evening, 1778.

I delayed writing, not so much through indolence as because I expected every post to hear from you. The supplies are raised. Clive and Gosling allow me (very handsomely) to draw for the Barbarian tribute, and the New river (unless one of the Suitors retreats) is gone, alas gone for ever, for £7550. The state of Buriton is uncertain, incomprehensible, tremendous. It would be endless to send you the folios of Hugonin, but I have enclosed you one of his most pictoresque Epistles, on which you may meditate. Few offers; one, promising enough, came from a Gentleman at Camberwell: I detected him, with masterly skill and diligence, to be only an Attorney's clerk, without money, credit, or experience. I wrote as yet in vain to Sir John Shelley, about Hearsay; perhaps you might get intelligence about him.

I much fear that the Buriton expedition is necessary; but it has occurred to me, that if I *met*, instead of *accompanying* you, it would save me a journey of above one hundred miles. That reflection led to another of a very impudent nature; *viz.* that if I did not accompany you, I certainly could be of no use to you or myself on the spot; that I had much rather, while you examined the premises, pass the time in a horse-pond; and that I had still rather pass it in my library with the 'decline and fall.' But that would be an effort of friendship worthy of Theseus or Perithous: modern times would hardly credit, much less imitate, such exalted virtue.

No news from America, yet there are people, large ones too, who talk of conquering it next summer with the help of 20,000 Russians. I fancy you are better satisfied with private than public War. The Lisbon Packet in coming home met about forty of our privateers. Adieu. I hardly know whether I direct right to you, but I think S. P. the surest.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, Jan. 7th, 1779.

DEAR MADAM,

You will pity rather than blame me when I tell you that all last week I have been a good deal indisposed. The changes of weather brought a severe cold, accompanied with some degree of fever. I was confined to my room several days, and the state of my spirits as well as that of my health would have rendered the effort of writing very painful to me. The effort would have been still more painful with regard to the subject of your two last letters. I feel your happiness so much connected with mine, that the account of your sentiments and situation must disturb the enjoyments and encrease the anxiety of my own life. I feel it the more deeply as I am sensible that it is not in my power to remove the two causes of your present uneasiness.

I know not how to offer advice, and I am incapable of giving any efficacious help. I have easily perceived in my successive visits to Bath that a dislike of the place, of public life, and of mixed Society was insensibly gaining ground in your mind: and as I know that our happiness must always depend on our opinions and habits, I never presumed to prescribe for the constitution of another. Business and pleasure, Society or no Society, town or country, have undoubtedly their respective merits, and every one must on those subjects think and judge and act for themselves. The gay hurry of Bath or the silent retirement of Mrs. Massey's in Essex may alike be enjoyed by the mind to which they are adapted, and the only advice which I could think of offering, would be, not to engage yourself rashly in a connection of which you might afterwards repent. I have always considered marriage as a very serious undertaking, and the agreement of any friends to live together in the same house is a sort of marriage. If they have passed several years in different modes of life, their manners,

their opinions, their sentiments on almost every subject must have contracted a different colour, and every little circumstance of hours, &c., will prove the cause of mutual restraint or mutual dissatisfaction.

But I now find, what indeed I have sometimes feared, that your design of retiring from Bath is not entirely the effect of choice and inclination; that a stronger power, the power of necessity or at least of prudence, urges you to take that resolution, and that in a word you find the place too expensive. You do not explicitly say what income would support your present establishment, and I am not so stupid or so ungrateful as not to feel the generous delicacy of your behaviour. If my own circumstances were affluent, the obligations and friendship of twenty years would instantly prompt me to gratify my own inclinations in the performance of sacred duty. I am not insensible that in my present situation, you have a substantial and even legal claim upon me to a very considerable amount, and while I feel the value of your tenderness on this occasion, I must lament that it is not in my power to attain even the humble though indispensable virtue of Justice.

Without recurring to any recollections which would be painful to us both, I may appeal to the anxious regard which you have always felt and expressed for my interest. You know the distressed embarrassed situation in which my affairs were left, and though I have always been directed by the advice of Mr. H., I have hitherto been disappointed in every attempt to extricate myself by the sale of Lenborough Estate. The prospect of public affairs and the universal want of money forces me at present to suspend every idea of a sale, and all credit is so compleatly dead, that in the most pressing exigency I should be at a loss how to borrow a thousand pounds. In the mean time I have been paying five per Cent. interest on a Estate which hardly produced three per Cent.; and in the very moment when I could the least afford it, the

madness of my Buriton tenant has involved me in new scenes of vexation and expence. My desires have always been moderate and my domestic economy has been conducted with tolerable prudence. Yet my income has never been quite adequate to my expences, and those expences, unless I retired from Parliament — from London and from England — it would be impossible for me to retrench. When I look back I cannot find much to censure or regret in my own conduct, but when I look forwards, I am sometimes alarmed and perplexed. I should indeed find room to despond, if my spirits were not supported by the resources which I derive from my litterary character, and by the well grounded hopes which I build on the assistance of a tried and powerful friend.

I cannot on *this* head explain myself more particularly by letter, but I have the strongest reasons to believe that the year which we have just begun will not end without producing a material improvement in my situation. If you have not already taken any decisive steps about leaving Bath, I could wish that you would suspend them till I can have the pleasure of conversing with you in the Easter holidays. If you still persist in your design, why should you bury yourself at Mrs. Massey's? Some pleasant village retirement at a moderate distance from London, where I could frequently visit you, might be consistent with your plan of expence, and you might there find yourself at once delivered from the costly and tasteless vanities of a fashionable life. Whatever resolution you adopt, let me hear from you soon, and always believe me with the most unalterable affection,

Ever yours,

E. G.

I can say nothing of public affairs. Men of all parties — Ministers themselves — think them bad enough; but I do assure you that I have not any claims to the injurious epithet of 'a Patriot.' The apprehension of a Dutch War, though it is now blown over, was real and serious.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

London, January the 26th, 1779.

DEAR MADAM,

As we are mutually convinced of each other's sentiments, words, compliments, assurances would be as idle as they are useless: yet it would be incumbent on me to employ them, if they became either of us; since I am so unfortunate as to be reduced to those equivocal marks of regard, whilst I receive from you the most solid and substantial proofs of that friendship and real affection which I have invariably experienced above twenty years. — You ask me why I should wish you to wait till Easter, and you seem desirous of an explanation of the latter part of my letter. It is for that very purpose of an explanation that I desired that delay, as it includes a variety of circumstances which I ought not to trust to paper or to the post. I can only say in general that from the assistance of a very powerful friend I have room to hope that I may soon be placed in an honourable and advantageous post either at home or abroad, which would enable me to satisfy my duty as well as inclination by making your residence at Bath easy and comfortable to you in the manner you yourself have calculated your expences. I am not of a sanguine temper, and I am very sensible that besides the usual grounds of doubt and distrust, there are many circumstances which it is impossible for me to explain, that may either forward or delay or entirely disappoint the most rational expectations. Last week things seemed to draw so very near a crisis that I suspended my letter in hopes of making it more satisfactory to you and to myself. At present they are rather thrown back, and for aught I know the present Session of Parliament may end in darkness and uncertainty. Yet, I think the chance is worth waiting for a few months, perhaps somewhat longer; the difference of your income and expence cannot be very important, and if you do not wish me to make a difficult effort,

I cannot see any great mischief in your eating a little deeper into your principal. I am the more anxious that you should not hastily quit a place which upon the whole must suit you better than any other; not only because I hope it will not be necessary, but as I am sure in your indifferent state of health, the unpleasant removal would be attended with fatigue of body and anxiety of mind which might be very prejudicial to you.

I am much flattered by your approbation of my pamphlet.[1] It was a disagreeable but a necessary step, after which I take my absolute and final leave of controversy. My second volume advances, and I hope will be finished within the *ensuing* year (1780). You were right as to the benefit I have derived from the first; under the pressure of various difficulties, it proved a seasonable and useful friend; but if it supported, it did not enrich its author. I did not send a copy of my vindication to Port Eliot, nor indeed to any person except to yourself. Eliot must be in town in a fortnight to a very severe call of the House. I have meditated a letter to him, or rather to Mrs. E., above three months without success.

I am, Dear Madam,
Ever yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

February 6th, 1779.

You are quiet and peaceable, and do not bark, as usual, at my silence. To reward you, I would send you some news;

[1] In 1778 appeared *An Examination of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of Mr. Gibbon's History*, etc., by Henry Edward Davis, M.A., of Balliol College, Oxford. The author charged Gibbon with inaccuracy and plagiarism. He replied early in 1779 with his *Vindication of some Passages in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Chapters of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Walpole calls it "the quintessence of argument, wit, temper, spirit, and consequently of victory."

but we are asleep; no foreign intelligence, except the capture of a frigate; no certain account from the West Indies; and a dissolution of parliament, which seems to have taken place since Christmas. In the papers you will see negociations, changes of departments, &c. and I have *some* reason to believe, that those reports are not entirely without foundation. Portsmouth is no longer an object of speculation; the whole stream of all men, and all parties, runs one way. Sir Hugh is disgraced, ruined, &c. &c.;[1] and as an old wound has broke out again, they say he must have his leg cut off as soon as he has time. In a night or two we shall be in a blaze of illumination, from the zeal of Naval Heroes, Land Patriots, and Tallow-Chandlers; the last are not the least sincere. I want to hear some details of your military and familiar proceedings. By your silence I suppose you admire Davis, and dislike my pamphlet; yet such is the public folly, that we have a second Edition in the press; the fashionable style of the Clergy, is to say they have not read it. If Maria does not take care, I shall write a much sharper invective against her, for *not* answering my Diabolical book. My lady carried it down, with a solemn promise that I should receive an *unassisted* French letter. Yet I embrace the little animal, as well as Mylady, and the *spes altera Romæ*. Adieu.

E. G.

There is a buz about a peace, and Spanish Mediation.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

March 16th, 1779.

You use me very ill. — Will you never condescend to abuse, curse, damn me for not writing? There is no bearing such

[1] The court-martial held at Portsmouth entirely acquitted Admiral Keppel on February 11. The news reached London that night. It was treated as a triumph for the Opposition. Ladies appeared at the opera in caps *à la Keppel*, and blue cockades bearing the Admiral's name were worn.

treatment. Yet I have not anything particular to write except to acquaint you with the *certain* intelligence of the taking of Pondicherry, which arrived this day. You will soon hear the particulars, but the essential is that the French have not any place of arms in the East Indies. With regard to the West, there is a strong rumour of action in our favour: but at all events we are safe, and possibly successful. We have had and are like to have Parliamentary storms. There are no questions which my opposition friends think stronger, and which I think weaker than their Naval Operations. I hardly know your opinion about them. I want to hear some account of your military state and progress, but much about my Lady, Maria, &c. &c., which interest me more nearly than the Grenadier or Light Infantry Companies. I was obliged to you about your friendly hint from Bath. I had not been deficient, but from a sort of delicacy, I had satisfied myself with corresponding with Mrs. Gould and Dr. Delacour, and desired that Mrs. G. might not be informed of it. However, since your letter she is in a less dangerous way, several letters have passed between us, and we are now come to a tolerable understanding. Do you recollect that you promised me a Visit of Inspection to my Aunt? She wrote to me some time ago, I promised an account, and by this time she may be grown impatient again.

E. G.

I expect you (without a blush) to write soon.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, 21st March, 1779.

DEAR MADAM,

If your former letters made me uneasy, your last note, which I received yesterday after the hour of the post, made me quite unhappy for many reasons; but most of all because I found that you were so yourself. The delay in my answer

which has given you so much pain, was not occasioned by any avocations of business, for there could be no business which interested me half so much; nor by any carelessness or forgetfulness, for I can say with truth that there has not been any hour in the day and very few in the night in which the idea was not uppermost in my mind. Much less did it arise from any degree of resentment at any part of your behaviour. I had expressed myself with some warmth, I wrote from my feelings, and I was apprehensive of some alteration in your sentiments towards me. Had I been cold and indifferent myself, I should probably have been more cautious and respectful.

Yet unless I totally forget the language of my letter, I did not, I could not, disapprove of your consulting your own happiness, and of calling on me after so long a respite to fulfil some part of the most equitable obligation. The cause of my delay was a strong, an unjustifiable repugnance to write on a subject so foreign to our ordinary conversations. I dreaded and I delayed too long so painful an effort. As I am now sensible how uneasy that delay has made you, I have taken the shortest method of sending, that of the coach. Forgive this seeming inattention, and believe me when I say that the affectionate regard, the tender solicitude which you express, have made an essential part of the happiness, and will always contribute to the consolation of my life.

I find that I must have stated rather too strongly the difficulties of my situation so as to alarm and terrify you, both on your account and on my own. I will endeavour to represent them more clearly. I have never been extravagant; nor have I made as yet any *considerable* addition to the load of debt contracted by my father: but I have not been able to discharge it. The unhappy accidents which retarded the sale of Lenborough, have been attended, from the general hardships of the times, with the most fatal consequences, as land cannot at present be sold even on the most disadvantageous terms. In the course of seven or eight

years interest has been much higher than rent, my Expences (notwithstanding the supply of some hundred pounds from my book) have inevitably exceeded my income.

You are sensible from your own experience that any plan of economy must be regulated by place and circumstances. As long as I am in London and in Parliament, a house in Bentinck Street, a coach, such a proportion of servants, clothes, living, &c., are almost necessaries. But they are only necessaries in that situation, and I am not ignorant that a prudent man should adapt his arrangements to his fortune. Other countries of a less expensive cost, France, Switzerland, or perhaps Scotland, may afford an humble Philosophical retreat to a man of letters, nor should I suffer any accidental change of fortune, any fall in the World to affect my spirits or ruffle my tranquility. I have more than once balanced in my own mind the propriety, or indeed the necessity of such a resolution. The reason which induces me to suspend such an important and decisive measure arises from a hope which I could only insinuate and which I can at present only imperfectly explain. I can only mention that I am particularly connected with the present Attorney General, that he solicited my friendship, and offered me his services; and that if some arrangement should take place which would raise him to a much higher station, I may depend on a seat at one of the boards with an additional income of £1000 a year, which would remove every difficulty and supply every want. Without building on a doubtful foundation, inclination and even prudence recommend that I should wait some time for the event of this hope: and my only request is that you would on your side suspend any resolution of leaving Bath for some months, perhaps for a year. The difference of the expence in a year would not exceed £100, which you may command whenever (with a few days' notice) you will draw upon me.

If my expectations should deceive me (and I am never sanguine) my party is taken. I feel with gratitude and confusion your kind offer of retiring for my sake: but indepen-

dent of every other consideration, it is far more proper that the unpleasant circumstances of such a removal should fall on the person who has health and youth and spirits to support them. With regard to any further *security*, I should have imagined that in the ordinary course of credit, my Bond was a very good security to the amount of the sum: but I am ready to consent to any act which you may consider as conducive to your interest or happiness. — I much fear that the agitation of mind may have injured your health before its perfect recovery from your late accident, and if a single word which I have written has tended to produce that effect, I shall not easily forgive myself. Though I cannot bear the thought of your quitting Bath against your inclinations, I should imagine that in the summer months, the air of the country would be beneficial to you. Whether you choose Port Eliot, Sheffield, Essex, or any other place, I will, if my company can be any pleasure or relief to you, lay aside every other occupation to accompany you.

I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly and affectionately yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Wednesday night, April, 1779.

I am glad you have exerted some diligence about Mrs. G.'s Estate, but I wish you could have prevented a letter which I have just received, and which like a true coward I send you unopened. I fear it contains sharp or dry reproach for my neglect and silence. On this occasion you must step in to my assistance and in a proper letter exculpate me, and take the *whole* of the blame upon yourself. Whatever *you* do, you are always entitled to her gratitude, and cannot be afraid of her displeasure. No time should be lost, therefore return her Epistle with the aforesaid ostensible letter. I do not go

to Bath this Easter; and Mrs. Gibbon is now satisfied with my conduct and correspondence. Some journey or arrangement to see her must be thought of in the course of the summer, but at present it would be highly inconvenient, our respite is little more than a week, and besides the approaching hurry of Parliamentary business, of which there is a large provision, I am now deeply and not unsuccessfully engaged in the decline and fall; and I *do not totally despair* of bringing out the second Volume next Winter. So that upon the whole (as you do not interfere either with History or Parliament) I am ready to receive you when you please: but had much rather you would bring My Lady with you, as I very much like that sort of taste of Matrimonial life. I am not perfectly well. So — Adieu.

E. GIBBON.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Saturday night, May, 1779.

Alas! alas! fourteen Ships of the line: you understand by this time that you have not got a single long-boat. Ministry are more crestfallen than I ever knew them, with the last intelligence; and I am sorry to say, that I see a smile of triumph on some opposition faces. Though the business of the West Indies may still produce something, I am much afraid that we shall [have] a campaign of immense expence, and little or no action. The most busy scene is at present in the House of C.; and we shall be involved, during a great [part] of next month, in tedious, fruitless, but, in my opinion, proper Enquiries.

You see how difficult it would be for me to visit Brighton; and I fancy I must content myself with receiving you on your passage to Ireland. Indeed, I much want to have a *very serious* conversation with you. Another reason, which must in a great measure pin me to Bentinck-street, is the decline

and fall. I have resolved to bring out the *suite* in the course of next year; and, though I have been tolerably diligent, so much remains to be done, that I can hardly spare a single day from the Shop. I can guess but one reason which should prevent you from supposing that the picture of Leicester Fields was intended for Sheffield library;[1] *viz.* my having told you some time ago that I was under a formal engagement to Mr. Walpole. Probably I should not have been in any great hurry to execute my promise, if Mr. Cadell had not strenuously urged the curiosity of [the] public, who may be willing to repay the exorbitant price of *fifty* Guineas. It is now finished, and my friends say, that, in every sense of the word, it is a good head. Next week it will be given to Hall the Engraver, and I promise you a first Impression. If I were a rich man you should have a similar picture. Adieu. I embrace my lady, and infants.

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, July the 3rd, 1779.

DEAR MADAM,

I have the pleasure of acquainting you, that I am now appointed one of the Lords of Trade in the room of Bamber Gascoyne; Andrew Stuart has succeeded at the same time to the place of Jolliffe, and our new Colleagues do us the honour of saying that in both instances they have gained by the exchange. As the salary of this place will secure and improve my own situation, so I really set much more value upon it, as it will enable me to discharge a small part of my debt of duty and gratitude towards you. For the future you may depend on receiving the interest of the Bond (at 5 per cent.) which will make the two half yearly payments £150 instead of £100 each; and will I hope be sufficient to support

[1] Sir Joshua Reynolds, in May to July, 1779, painted a portrait of Gibbon. But the picture here referred to is probably that by Wharton.

your establishment at Bath in a manner more agreeable to you. I have only to beg a short respite, and that you would be satisfied with the usual draught at present and the double (£200) at next Christmas. At the moment my increase of fortune encreases my actual poverty. Sir Francis Wronghead was perfectly in the right when he said, "Mayhap I may not receive the first quarter of my salary this halfe yeare:" he might have added that the heavy fees of offices eat up the greatest part of it, and that a space of some months must elapse before the stream begins to flow regularly and beneficially. I am not insensible that this addition of income is of a very precarious nature, and that the event of an hour or the caprice of a man may throw me back into my former anxiety, but the alteration shall never affect your happiness or situation, and the plan of retirement into Switzerland with my friend d'Eyverdun which I had perfectly considered and digested will be a resource not unworthy of a Philosopher, which I shall always have it in my power to command.

I am now going to resume my literary employments, which have suffered a short interruption, and I shall resume them, if not with more tranquility at least with more cheerfulness of mind. I find myself however under a difficulty of reconciling two plans for this year, each of which is equally recommended by my interest, my duty and my inclination. On the one hand I anxiously desire to publish the continuation of my history about this time twelvemonth. Though much is already done, much still remains to do, and I should almost despair of being able to finish so large a task, unless I steadily proceed without losing a day, or unless I compensate any intervals of negligence by extraordinary and improper efforts of industry. This important object seems to confine me to Bentinck Street and my Library: but on the other hand I am desirous and even impatient to visit you at Bath; to carry you down to Port Eliot, where I am sure the air and society would be your best Physician, to see Mrs. Eliot, and to convince *him* of the grateful sense that

I entertain of his behaviour in consenting to my re-election,[1] which I know was highly unpleasant to him. I shall endeavour to concert measures in such a manner as to reconcile those opposite views: but I foresee that the execution of such a scheme can only become practicable towards the Autumn.

I ought to make some apology for leaving some days in anxious suspence. I can only say, that I was myself in the same condition. Every morning I expected the event of the evening, and every evening the return of the morning. Till the business was absolutely finished, a hundred accidents might have dashed the cup from my lips, and I was afraid of raising your hopes only to embitter the melancholy news which might have followed.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, October the 27th, 1779.

DEAR MADAM,

Whenever you have desired an immediate answer you have not found me very negligent; it is therefore incumbent on me to explain my *apparent* tardiness which was occasioned by a visit to Tunbridge. Your letter was sent there the day after I left it, and by some delay and some circuits it did not reach my hands till Monday last, and I had firmly resolved before I received your second Epistle to write by to-night's post.

The officious intelligence which was communicated, I suppose, from Sheffield Place to Bath, alarmed your tenderness much more than was necessary about the state of my health. A Derangement in my stomach which seemed of the bilious kind determined me to return to town in search of advice. Turton was divided for two or three days between the probability of Jaundice and Gout, but either Nature or

[1] *I.e.* as a Commissioner of Trade.

his skill preserved me from both; and I am now perfectly free from all complaints and apprehensions whatsoever. It will be an addition to my happiness if you are able to make the same declaration.

I hope you are perfectly satisfied that I had no hand in the History of the Opposition, but you will receive by the Coach (directed for fear of a mistake to Dr. Delacour's) a French pamphlet which I have not the same right to disclaim.[1] In the summer the Chancellor and Lord Weymouth were desirous of answering a very weak Manifesto of the Court of Versailles, and very politely requested me to undertake the task. Though I will never make myself the Champion of a party, I thought there was no disgrace in becoming the Advocate of my Country against a foreign enemy, and the *memoire Justificatif* which you may read was the result of that opinion. The publication was delayed for various reasons; but it has now been communicated as a State paper and in the King's [name] to all the Ministers and Courts in Europe, and as far as I can understand it has been received with some degree of approbation. Elmsley the bookseller desired to print a new Edition which he has swelled by the addition of the French Manifesto. You will easily suppose that I rather expect by such a work to *procure friends* than fame: but it may very possibly be abused in some shape or other in the approaching Session of Parliament, which will be loud and turbulent.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most affectionately yours,
E. GIBBON.

[1] In 1779 a *Mémoire Justificatif* was put forth both at Paris and Madrid to explain the zeal of two despotic monarchies for the new-born republic of the United States. Gibbon was requested by the Lord Chancellor and Lord Weymouth, then Secretary of State, to vindicate, against the French manifesto, the justice of the British arms. His *Mémoire*, written in French, was approved by the Cabinet, and delivered as a State Paper to the courts of Europe.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, Dec. 10th, 1779.

DEAR MADAM,

Nothing has given me for a long while more real uneasiness than the doubt, which I am now obliged to express, whether it will be in my power to pass my Holydays at Bath. After so long a delay and such repeated disappointments, I had promised myself much pleasure, I may say happiness, in spending some few days with you at a time when every disagreeable circumstance was removed and our domestic prospect was become more cheerful. But the advantages of office must be accepted with some inconveniences. You know how much the Irish business engages our attention and fears at this moment, and you will see by the papers that Lord North has proposed some very important alterations with regard to the commerce of that country. The bills for that purpose will pass in Parliament, but there still remains a great number of subordinate circumstances, though highly essential to be regulated, and which in some form will be referred to the Board of Trade. We shall be forced to sit almost every day during the Recess, and the absence of a *new Lord* on the occasion would be thought peculiarly improper.

There is even another motive which I cannot explain, which will I hope make my attention to this business of some future benefit to the public or at least to myself. These reasons will satisfy the delicacy of your friendship, but I beg you would keep them to yourself, as I abhor and despise above all things the seeming affectation of official importance. Only be persuaded that I feel the delay (as I fear it must prove) of my visit, not less disagreeably than you do yourself.

I have seen very little of Mrs. Williams, and am sorry, and indeed surprised to hear so bad an account of a little coquette to whom I only imputed the venial faults of vanity and affectation. I understand she is already on the Wing. Mr. Eliot

is still in town: we all try to push him down to Bath; he seems immoveable; but he appears in somewhat better health and spirits. He deplores the state of public affairs, past, present and future. With regard to the last, though from different principles, I am afraid that his apprehensions are not imaginary, and the impending dangers from war and faction are most alarming. I never knew anything equal to the violence of this Session of Parliament, which has not left me a moment of peace or leisure. Adieu! dear Madam, I do most seriously *intend* to write again very soon. Your *ordinary* remittance shall reach you on Christmas-day, and I hope that I shall be able to add the *extraordinary* or rather the new one. But my own supplies, both from Hampshire and from the Exchequer, come in so very slowly that I may be obliged to defer the second £100 till the end of January in case it should not be inconvenient to you.

I am,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO COLONEL J. B. HOLROYD

Brookes's, Saturday Night, February (12th), 1780.

I rejoyce in the successful progress, and am convinced that for the *present* at least the catastrophe will be happy. Your last was safely conveyed to Lord Charles Spencer in the few hours that he happed to be in town. Though I hate to go out in the morning I will be at the Admiralty with Lord Mulgrave, Lord Lisburn and Penton to-morrow at ten o'clock.

Burke opened his ingenious partial scheme of public economy yesterday, but I cannot give you a speech of three hours in three lines, and you will hear and see enough about it. What is of much more consequence than this Parliamentary prattle (I talk to you now as a free mason) is the business of which we have received to-day the certain though not official

information. Rodney encountered the Spanish Fleet off Cape St. Mary's; the Commodore (90 guns) blew up, three line of battle-ships taken, two more likewise taken, but so much shattered and dismasted, that they were separated and forced by an unlucky gale of wind into the Port of Cadiz. The letters from thence express despondency and fears (which for us are hopes) of several other ships. Patriots very dull, the Duke of Grafton who is now standing by the fire, looks blacker than usual. I dined with Wedderburne (at Lord Carlisle's), who was to see one of your Agents to-night; he is earnest and sanguine — God send a good deliverance to the Colonel and Secretary.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

May the 15th, 1780.

DEAR MADAM,

Your kind epistle gave me much more pleasure than pain; for I am grown callous to shame, but am not insensible of gratitude and friendship.

I have heard of you by Mrs. Sarah Holroyd, and was much pleased and edified by the zeal with which you communicated to your family the Colonel's first spirited Oration. He instantly exclaimed, 'Those are the friends I like to have.' He has not spoke since, but he is, as you may well suppose, indefatigable and eager, and it will not be long before he feels a second inspiration. I can only condole with you that a person, in whose fate and reputation you are perhaps more deeply interested, should still continue a dumb dog. He has indeed the grace to acknowledge his infirmity, and if my seat in the House of C. had not some remote connection with a more valuable seat, I should retire without any regret from that scene of noise, heat and contention. A dissolution of Parliament, though it may be delayed many months, is by many expected every hour: and I am totally ignorant of the designs of the Electors of Liskeard. My great constituent

grows warmer in patriotism, but he still expresses the same regard for me, and though I have no motives for confidence, I have not any reasons for fear. He is perfectly silent on the subject, and I am prepared for the worst. I saw my young friend John in his passage, and was indeed astonished by the sense and propriety of his behaviour without embarrassment and without forwardness. Mrs. Eliot is not in the least altered.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

June 6th, 1780.

DEAR MADAM,

As the old story of Religion has [raised] most *formidable* tumults in this town,[1] and as they will of course seem much more formidable at the distance of an hundred [miles], you may not be sorry to hear that I am perfectly safe and well: my known attachment to the Protestant Religion has most probably saved me. Measures, and effectual measures, are taken to suppress these disorders, and every street is filled with horse and foot. Mrs. and Mrs. Sarah H. went out of town yesterday morning. The Colonel shews his usual spirit.

I am sincerely Yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

London, June 8th, 1780.

DEAR MADAM,

As a M. of P., I cannot be exposed to any danger, as the H. of C. has adjourned to Monday sen'night; as an

[1] On June 2, 1780, Lord George Gordon presented the petition of the Protestant Association against the relaxation of the Penal Laws against the Roman Catholics. The "No Popery" riots took place on the 6th and 7th, when London was for some hours in the hands of the mob.

individual, I do not conceive myself to be obnoxious. I am not apt, without duty or of necessity, to thrust myself into a Mob: and our part of the town is as quiet as a Country Village. So much for personal safety; but I cannot give the same assurances of public tranquillity; forty thousand Puritans, such as they might be in the time of Cromwell, have started out of their graves; the tumult has been dreadful; and even the remedy of military force and martial law is unpleasant. But Government with 15,000 Regulars in town, and every Gentleman (but one) on their side, must extinguish the flame. The execution of last night was severe; perhaps it must be repeated to-night: Yet upon the whole the tumult subsides. Col. H. was all last night in Holbourn among the flames, with the Northumberland Militia, and performed very bold and able service.[1] I write again in a post or two.

I am, Dear Madam,
Ever Yours,
E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

June 10th, 1780.

DEAR MADAM,

I should write with great pleasure, to say that this audacious tumult is perfectly quelled; that Lord G[eorge] G[ordon] is sent to the Tower; and that instead of safety or danger, we are now at leisure to think of justice; but I am now alarmed on your account, as we have just got a report, that a similar disorder has broken out at Bath. I shall

[1] On Wednesday night, June 7, the riot was quelled by military force. The Northumberland Militia, which reached London on June 7 by a forced march of twenty-five miles, were led by Colonel Holroyd into the thick of the riot at High Holborn, to prevent the mob advancing westward, and to protect, if possible, Mr. Langdale's distillery. By Thursday morning the tumult was entirely suppressed. "To Colonel Holroyd, since deservedly raised to the British peerage as Lord Sheffield, the Country was eminently indebted for repelling the fury of the Mob at the Bank" (Wraxall's *Historical Memoirs*).

be impatient to hear from you; but I flatter myself that your pretty town does not contain much of that scum which has boiled up to the surface in this huge Cauldron.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most sincerely Yours,
E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, June 27th, 1780.

DEAR MADAM,

I believe we may now rejoyce in our common security. All tumult has perfectly subsided, and we only think of the justice which must be properly and severely inflicted on such flagitious criminals. The measures of Government have been seasonable and vigorous; and even opposition has been forced to confess, that the military force was applied and regulated with the utmost propriety. Our danger is at an end, but our disgrace will be lasting, and the month of June 1780, will ever be marked by a dark and diabolical fanaticism, which I had supposed to be extinct, but which actually subsists in Great Britain, perhaps beyond any other Country in Europe. Our Parliamentary work draws to a conclusion; and I am much more pleasantly, though laboriously engaged in revising and correcting for the press, the continuation of my history, two Volumes of which will certainly appear next winter. This business fixes me to Bentinck Street more closely than any other part of my litterary labour; as it is absolutely necessary that I should be in the midst of all the books which I have at any time used during the composition. But I feel a strong desire (irritated, like all passions, by repeated obstacles) to escape to Bath. And if the summer should pass away, the autumn shall not elapse without gratifying my wishes. As you are my sole object, it is a matter of perfect indifference whether the place is full or empty, but I should like to know your summer plan, and if you have

any design to climb the Welsh mountains. I am ashamed that Midsummer day should have passed in silence, but I am not able to get a shilling from Hampshire, and the treasury, my best support, is uncommonly backward. Next week, however, you may depend on receiving the proper line from me. I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly Yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

July 29th, 1780.

I have not heard from Way. It will be necessary that I should be provided with a Bucks Steward to make his visit soon after Michaelmas to examine the state of things and inspect the late Harris's accounts which an Attorney (Mr. Hearne) has offered for my perusal. Such extra trouble will doubtless claim an extra allowance.

We are pleased that Clinton[1] has returned to New York, as an army on the salt water is a very helpless animal. Greaves[2] has been seen on the coast with a wind fair for the northwards. He has certainly the start of Ternay, who is still invisible. I cannot send you the least account or even conjecture of Lords to be created or Commons to be dissolved. Adieu, I shall expect you about the middle of next month; and I find that it will suit me to visit the Castle within a few days of your return.

TO MR. ELIOT

August 11th, 1780.

DEAR SIR,

Before you leave town, I cannot refrain from applying to you on a very interesting subject, and I trust that you will

[1] Sir Henry Clinton had captured Charleston, May 12, 1780. Early in June, he re-embarked on Admiral Arbuthnot's fleet and returned to New York.

[2] Admiral Graves sailed, June, 1780, with six ships of the line, to reinforce

excuse either my past silence or my present importunity. The former has not been the effect of presumption, nor does the latter proceed from any want of confidence in your friendship.

It seems to be universally understood that this parliament will be dissolved in a few months and perhaps in a few days — and you are not ignorant how much the whole colour of my future life depends on your resolution. Unless I obtain a seat in the next parliament, I cannot flatter myself with a hope of remaining at the board of trade; such is the unpleasant state of my private affairs, that I must resign with my office all prospect of living in England, and the discontinuance of your favours will therefore be a sentence of banishment from my native country. My firm assurance that your kindness will allow some weight to these personal considerations will teach me to acquiesce, whatever may be your designs, with sincere and grateful resignation. I could not even lament that I was not sooner apprized of your intention to withdraw this mark of your friendship at the time when it became the most valuable. The largest notice would not perhaps have enabled me to take any other measures for the attainment of the same object, and your silence, though it may have excited some anxious thoughts or nourished some delusive hopes, has not made any real difference in my situation.

It gives me pain at the same time to mention another topic. Various circumstances of public and private distress have hitherto prevented me from disposing of my Buckinghamshire Estate, from whence I may expect to derive a considerable supply, and I shall find myself under the necessity of soliciting your indulgence till I can discharge what I shall always esteem a very small part of my obligations.

Admiral Arbuthnot at Long Island. The French fleet under d'Estaing was at the same time strengthened.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, Sept. 2nd, 1780.

DEAR MADAM,

In the general dissolution you will be anxious to know my fate, and I wish it were in my power to send you a more agreeable account. Mr. Eliot, actuated, as it should seem, by the Demon of Party, has renounced me.[1] I am not without resources; but his civil ambiguous silence, by feeding my hopes, has encreased my difficulties. I doubt whether my *real* friends will be able to serve me at so short a notice, and I think it more than probable that I shall not be in the new Parliament, at least in the beginning of it. A few days however will determine that question, and I still proceed with perfect composure to prepare for my lying-in. They will be twins, and I reckon about next February.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. G.

TO COLONEL HOLROYD

September 7th, 1780.

I shall again breathe the pestiferous air of St. Stephen's Chappel.[2] — The sagacious Eden whom I accidentally visited the day after your departure pressed and persuaded me to make a bold application to the powers above. I fairly stated my public disappointment and private difficulties, and declared to Lord N. in the most explicit terms, that notwithstanding my sincere desire to replace myself in a situation, where I may be serviceable to his Government, *small indeed* must be the effort which I shall be capable of making

[1] The Hon. Wilbraham Tollemache was elected in Gibbon's place for Liskeard.

[2] The newly elected Parliament met October 31, 1780. Gibbon was elected, at a by-election, M.P. for Lymington, June 25, 1781.

for that purpose, an idea which I explained to Robinson in a more familiar tone, by asking for an *almost* gratuitous seat. After some importunity and delay, I saw the Secretary yesterday; and he communicated Lord N.'s resolution of bringing me into Parliament, either for the first meeting, or at the Re-Elections which will immediately be occasioned by the option of those who are returned for two places. He did not mention terms; if any, they must be very light. On my return home I found a letter from Lord L[oughborough] worthy of himself, and may now remain perfectly quiet and secure. Success produces good humour; and I shall be very gentle in my answer to the Port, which I do not hurry. This event, as you will easily understand, decides in a great measure the rest of my life. You will growl if I lament in some sort that it has disconcerted a very pleasant scheme, a sweet vision of *Helvetic* retirement: I know that a prudent man ought not to make himself happy.

While I steal in through a postern, you thunder at one of the great gates: knock and it shall be opened unto you. Your victory appears certain, and it will be productive of a lasting conquest. Eden is not yet returned from Woodstock; I will confabulate with him.

The Westminster battle begins this morning; Rodney will be chose almost unanimously. It was imprudent to propose Lord Lincoln; he is disliked by the substantial tradesmen: but they *abhor* Fox, and the Patriot, after his appeal to the *People* of Westminster, must probably retire to the Duke of R.'s dependent voters of Chichester, where I am told Keppel will make room for him.

Not a word of news. Adieu.

TO MR. ELIOT

B. S., Sept. 8th, 1780.

MY DEAR SIR,

I have not attempted to shake your decided resolutions nor shall I presume to arraign the consistency of the

Electors of Leskeard, whom you so gravely introduce. You are undoubtedly free as air to confer and to withdraw your parliamentary favours, and I should despise my own ingratitude were I capable of forgetting my past obligations to you because you are not disposed to render them more perfect, or more permanent. I am still ignorant what will be the consequences of your refusal; but I declare upon my honour, at the date of my last letter that they appeared to me exactly in the light in which I represented them, that I had never formed any hopes much less any claims of ministerial support, and that I never opened my lips on the subject to the noble friend whose character seems to extort the praise of his political enemies. Since your absolute refusal, I have been encouraged to hazard an application which has been kindly entertained. If it proves unsuccessful the principal difficulty will arise from the lateness of my request. I am asked why Mr. Eliot, who re-elected a placeman last year, maintained to the last moment an ambiguous silence without condescending to inform me that I must not depend on his friendship at the General Election. I confess that I am at a loss for an answer.

I am equally at a loss how to answer the part of your letter, which in polite language represents my parliamentary conduct as the cause of your displeasure. You will not expect that I should justify the grounds of every silent vote which I have given, or that I should write a political pamphlet on the eventful history of the last six years. But I may fairly rest my apology on the truth of one single assertion, that I have never renounced any principle, deserted any connection, or violated any promise. I have uniformly asserted both in private and public the justice of the American War. I have constantly supported in Parliament the general measures of Government, except at one particular crisis while it was doubtful, after Bourgoyne's defeat whether they would offer terms to the rebels. I agreed with you in a speculative opinion,

almost equally rejected by both parties, that after the substance of power was lost, the name of independence might be granted to the Americans. I have often and severely censured the faults of administration, but I have always condemned the *system* of opposition: and your judgment will allow that in public life, every man is reduced to the necessity of choosing the side which upon the whole appears to him the least reprehensible. The mere acceptance of a seat at the board of trade does not surely convey any reproach or disgrace, since you yourself, my Dear Sir, have held the same disqualifying place under several successive Administrations, without any of those domestic reasons, which, if an excuse were necessary, might be alleged in my favour. You revive an old conversation between us concerning Mr. Peachey's election, which passed, if I am not mistaken, in the garret of the House of Commons. At that time I had never given a single vote against the actual measures of Government, and the indiscreet opinion which you urged me to declare must apply to your sentiments, not to my own. I thought and I still think, that, were I master of a Borough, I would not from motives of interest, elect a *stranger* whose political principles were repugnant to my own.

Thus far for my own honour, I have been forced into this unpleasant, though I hope not intemperate explanation, but I perfectly concur with your wish to avoid all future complaints or apologies. I most willingly embrace the offer of your private friendship, and I shall always cultivate a cordial intercourse with a person who is entitled to my esteem and gratitude.

I beg you would present my kindest wishes and compliments to Mrs. Eliot and the rest of your family. I suppose Mr. Edward will succeed me at Leskeard.

I am, &c., &c.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, October 5th, 1780.

DEAR MADAM,

I have delayed answering your kind enquiry about my seat in Parliament, till I should be able to say something satisfactory and positive. Had Mr. Eliot been explicit some months since, another arrangement would have been made without difficulty. His silence has occasioned some delay, but I have the strongest reason to believe that I shall be again in the House of Commons before Christmas. I expect the event with the most tranquil indifference: I am heartily tired of the place, and if such indulgence were compatible with my situation and prospects I should be glad to find myself released from such troublesome attendance. Your anxiety lest any coldness should arise between Mr. E. and me will, I hope, prove groundless. I have nothing to reproach myself, I do not reproach him, and from the letters which have passed between us, I should imagine that we shall meet next winter on proper terms of friendship and civility. You see by the Gazette that Langlois is dismissed; and he himself has not received any other information from Cornwall. You may easily suppose that in my present state of suspence and attendance, it is not in my power to leave town: but I am almost offended that you are not angry! I think I may venture to promise not you but myself, that no considerations human or divine shall prevent me from eating my Christmas dinner at the Belvedere.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

We need not trouble Sir Stanier; three shillings (no very considerable sum) pay twelve letters. The economy of the age on the subject of Franks and postage has always amazed me.

TO MRS. HOLROYD

(announcing that Colonel Holroyd was created Lord Sheffield[1])

Bentinck Street, Nov. 27th, 1780.

Mr. Gibbon presents his respectful compliments to Lady Sheffield and hopes her Ladyship is in perfect health, as well as the Honble. Miss Holroyd, and the Honble. Miss Louisa Holroyd. Mr. Gibbon has not had the honour of hearing from Lord Sheffield, since his Lordship reached Coventry, but supposes that the election begins this day.

Be honest? How does this read? Do you not feel some titillations of vanity? Yet I will do you the justice to believe that they are as faint as can find place in a female (you will retort, or a male) heart, on such an auspicious event. When it is revealed to the Honble. Miss, I should recommend the loss of some ounces of noble blood. You may expect, every post, a formal notification, which I shall instantly dispatch. The birds, as well as I now recollect their taste, were excellent. I hope the *Voyages* still amuse. I had almost forgot to say that my seat in parliament is deferred. Stronger and more impatient rivals have stepped before me, and I can wait with chearful resignation till another opportunity. I wish the Baron's situation (and temper) were as placid as mine. No news — we are very dull. Adieu — I shall go to Bath, about the 15th of next month — but silence.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

December the 7th, 1780.

DEAR MADAM,

My restoration to the character of a Senator has suffered some delay by the impatience of some strong competitors

[1] The *Gazette* for December, 1780, announces that the grant of the dignity of a baron of the kingdom of Ireland was conferred on John Baker Holroyd, Esq. — Baron Sheffield, of Dunamore, in the county of Meath.

who have pushed between me and the door. I have received from the fountain head every kind of apology and assurance. I believe them to be sincere, and it is a matter of perfect indifference to me whether I enter the H. of C. the beginning or the end of the winter. My journey to Bath is not an object of indifference, and as nearly as I can calculate the business (for there is business) of the board of trade, I think I shall have the pleasure of embracing you about the 23rd or 24th of this month. You mentioned a lodging near your aerial castle (my sole object at Bath), and I shall be glad if you will secure it for that time.

Poor George Scott died this morning of the consequence of falling down a flight of stairs at Lord Bathurst's. His life was long and happy, and his death was not painful. After a false alarm I was glad to hear that Dr. Delacour was not in the bosom of Abraham. The poor Colonel is fighting with the monsters of Coventry. I think he will conquer, but his victory will be dearly purchased.

I am, Dear Madam,
Ever yours,
E. GIBBON.

Young Eliot is in town and dined with me Tuesday. The kindest enquiries passed reciprocally between Port Eliot and Bentinck Street. The father does not come till after the Holydays.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

[Dec. 9th], Saturday Night, 1780.

Succeed — and may you say, such another victory would ruin us! The messenger has returned from the Bog, but Lord B[uckinghamshire] has not yet sent the necessary forms and titles for his creatures; it will not however be in his favour to delay, that or any other business much longer, and I wish your entrance into one house was as secure as the other.

An express has just arrived in nine days from Vienna; the Empress is dead,[1] and the Austrian Eagle may soar. — It is confidently said that the two great fleets are in sight, and expectation is high and eager. For my own part I do not believe that there ever can be a sea-fight.

TO J. B. HOLROYD, ESQ.

Monday Night, December, 1780.

All delays are at an end — Tuesday — to-morrow the final warrant will be signed; Friday next, you may salute the Royal paw.

Saturday the gazette will announce his Lordship, and Sunday (December 24th) I shall set out for Bath. Be resolute and conquer. We have forgot the fleets, but it is supposed that d'Estaing is in Brest. It is time that everybody should go to sleep for the Winter.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, February 24th, 1781.

DEAR MADAM,

As you have probably received my last letter of thirteen hundred pages,[2] I shall be very concise; Read, judge, pronounce: and believe that I sincerely agree with my friend Julian, in esteeming the praise of those only who will freely censure my defects. Next Thursday I shall be delivered to the World, for whose inconstant and malicious levity I

[1] The Empress Maria Theresa died November 29, 1780.

[2] The second and third volumes of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Gibbon had presented his first volume of the *Decline and Fall* to the Duke of Gloucester. When the second volume appeared, it was, in like manner, presented to the Duke, who "received the author with much good nature and affability, saying to him, as he laid the quarto on the table, 'Another d–mn'd thick, square book! Always scribble, scribble, scribble! Eh! Mr. Gibbon?'"

am coolly but firmly prepared. Excuse me to Sarah. I see more clearly than ever the absolute necessity of confining my presents to my own family; *that*, and that only, is a determined line, and Lord S. is the first to approve his exclusion. He has a strong assurance of success, and some hopes of a speedy decision. How suddenly your friend General Pierson disappeared! You thought him happy. What is happiness?

I am, My Dear Madam,
Ever Yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, April 13th, 1781.

DEAR MADAM,

I am always obliged to you for waking me by a friendly pinch from my silent lethargy, and I think it most prudent to write before I fall asleep again.

An author must always begin on the subject of his own work, the subject always most interesting to himself, but on this occasion he may assume the privilege of friendship and justly believe that it is not less interesting to you. Your praise has afforded me real satisfaction, not only because I wish to please you, but as I do not know any person (where questions of pure learning are concerned) from whose approbation I should derive more pride. To speak frankly, I am of your opinion with regard to the improvement of the style, nor is it very surprizing that my long practice should make a workman more expert and ready at his trade. I am curious to learn what passage in Prior you have in your eye: but as the works of that agreeable Poet are not extremely familiar to me, the resemblance is more probably the effect of chance than of design. The reception of these two volumes has been very unlike that of the first, and yet my vanity is so very dextrous, that I am not displeased with the difference. The

effects of novelty could no longer operate, and the public was not surprized by the unexpected appearance of a new and unknown author. The progress of these two volumes has hitherto been quiet and silent. Almost everybody that reads has purchased, but few persons (comparatively) have read them; and I find that the greater number, satisfied that they have acquired a valuable fund of entertainment, differ the perusal to the summer, the country and a more quiet period. Yet I have reason to think, from the opinion of some judges, that my reputation has not suffered by this publication. The Clergy (such is the advantage of total loss of character) commend my decency and moderation: but the patriots wish to damn the work and the author.

Mrs. Hester Gibbon is now in town and stays some weeks. Her house is repairing, and her old friend Mrs. Hutchinson is just dead, without leaving her anything, at which Hester expresses more resentment than seems becoming in the character of a Saint. She is still healthy and sensible, refuses as formerly to enter my house, but appears pleased with my attentions, and those of Mrs. and Lady Porten and of Lord and Lady Sheffield, who have all visited her in Surrey Street. She enquired civilly and even quietly into your situation, and approved the sentiments which naturally fell from me. — When I sent you my book I likewise despatched another with a very polite letter to Port Eliot — A dead silence — I accidentally called in Spring Gardens to visit the son, and heard that the father had been three weeks or a month in town. I instantly wrote a note to express my surprize and concern, — a dead silence of four days terminated only by a mute, blank, formal visit. Mrs. Eliot however (they are an odd family) has called upon me this morning to announce her arrival; and I shall return her visit this evening.

My health this winter has been perfect, without the slightest attack of the gout, and I rejoyce to hear that you revive with the Spring. A friend like Mrs. P. was a real loss, and

I think with you that in such an intimate connection the heart is of much more importance than the head. Embrace in my name Sara and the tame cat. I hope the former is not offended with, and I am persuaded that the latter adores, me, but am much disappointed that her Bath residence has not produced any shining adventures: a pair of small, neat horns might peep very gracefully out of a laurel crown, which her husband well deserves, though I think with you that his effusions are too frequent and precipitate. Adieu, dear Madam. I am still ignorant and indeed indifferent about the precise moment of my parliamentary beatification. Lord S. is chaired next Monday at Coventry; but it is needless to mention that family, as you hear the earliest and most copious accounts of them. Once more, Adieu!

I am, dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

June 16th, 1781.

DEAR MADAM,

I take the earliest opportunity of informing you that in the course of next week I shall be elected for the borough of Lymington in Hampshire. You may be sure of hearing from me before the end of the month.

I am,
Ever yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, July 3rd, 1781.

DEAR MADAM,

Though your kind impatience might make the time appear tedious, there has been no other delay in my business, than the necessary forms of Election. My new constituents of

Lymington obligingly chose me in my absence. I took my seat last Wednesday, and am now so old a member that I begin to complain of the heat and length of the Session. So much for Parliament. With regard to the board of trade, I am ignorant of your friend's meaning, and possibly she may be so herself. There has not been (to my knowledge) the most distant idea of my leaving it, and indeed there are few places within the compass of any rational ambition that I should like so well.

In a few days, as soon as we are relieved from public business, I shall go down to my Country house for the summer. Do not stare. I say my Country house. Notwithstanding Caplin's very diligent enquiries, I have not been able to please myself with anything in the neighbourhood of London, and have therefore hired for three months a small pleasant house at Brighthelmstone. I flatter myself that in that admirable sea-air, with the vicinity of Sheffield place, and a proper mixture of light study in the morning and good company in the evening, the summer may roll away not disagreably. — As I know your tender apprehensions, I promise you not to bathe in the sea without due preparation and advice.

Mrs. Porten has chosen, not for health but pleasure, a different sea-shore: she has been some weeks at Margate, and will scarcely return to town before my departure. I sincerely sympathize in all the melancholy scenes which have afflicted your sensibility, and am more particularly concerned about poor Miss Gould, to whom I wish to express the thoughts and hopes of friendship on this melancholy occasion. Lady Miller's sudden death has excited some attention even in this busy World, her foibles are mentioned with general regard. Adieu, Dear Madam, and do not let Mrs. Ravaud tempt you into Elysium: we are tolerably well here.

I am

Ever yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Brighthelmstone, July 26th, 1781.

DEAR MADAM,

After a short visit to Sheffield I came to this place last Sunday evening, and think it will answer my expectations. My house, which is not much bigger than yours, has a full prospect of the sea and enjoys a temperate climate in the most sultry days. The air gives health, spirits and a ravenous appetite. I walk sufficiently morning and evening, lounge in the middle of the day on the Steyne, booksellers' shops, &c., and by the help of a pair of horses can make more distant excursions. The society is good and easy, and though I have a large provision of books for my amusement, I shall not undertake any deep studies or laborious compositions this summer. You will rejoyce, I am sure, in hearing so favourable an account of my situation, and I wish I could propose to you to share it with me.

I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Friday, two o'clock, 7th Sept., 1781.

Lord Hillsborough tells me that himself and Co. believe that the combined fleets are gone into Brest. Expresses that left Bristol yesterday, and Plymouth, Wednesday, cannot give the least account of them, and a Portuguese ship from Lisbon the 23rd last month, beat several days between Scilly and the Land's end without seeing or hearing of them. However, at all events more than twenty-five swift sailing vessels had been sent out to meet and warn the West India fleets. Adieu.

We shall meet at Brighton on Monday.

E. G.

TO LADY SHEFFIELD

Bentinck Street, Friday evening, ten o'clock, 1781.

Oh, ho! I have given you the slip; saved thirty miles, by proceeding directly this day from Eartham to town, and am now *comfortably* seated in my library, in *my own* easy chair, and before *my own* fire; a style which you understand, though it is unintelligible to your Lord. The town is empty; but I am surrounded with a thousand old acquaintance of all ages and characters, who are ready to answer a thousand questions which I am impatient to ask. I shall not easily be tired of their Company; yet I still remember, and will honourably execute, my promise of visiting you at Brighton about the middle of next month. I have seen nobody, nor learned anything, in four hours of a town life; but I can inform you, that Lady —— [erased] is now the declared mistress of Prince Henry of Prussia, whom she encountered at Spa; and that the Emperor has invited this amiable Couple to pass the winter at Vienna; fine encouragement for married women who behave themselves properly! I spent a very pleasant day in the little paradise of Eartham, and the hermit expressed a desire (no vulgar compliment) to see and to know Lord S. Adieu. I cordially embrace, &c.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Bentinck Street, November 20th, 1781.

I came yesterday from Jenkinson's (near Croydon), where I had spent two very agreeable days. We all tremble on the edge of a precipice, and whatever may be the event, the American war seems now to be reduced to very narrow compass both of time and place.

This morning Caplin was sent to reconnoitre: he reports

that the *stables* are empty, but as the *coach-house* is full, the close alliance between carriage and horses will render the former circumstance of little avail. Nothing can be had in Parliament Street or the large streets adjoining except one whole house at four Guineas per week. In Fludyer and Downing-streets several indifferent and gloomy lodgings are at your service, but as I should prefer a Pall Mall, &c. situation, Caplin has paused till you send him more peremptory commands. — Your Monday dinner will be ready at five, and Adam, perhaps Batt, will be of the party.

Your Greeks were not carried from Brighton through carelessness, but as you are *seriously* absurd about lending books, I have directed Caplin to send them to S. P. per coach. By way of revenge I may inform you that I have now purchased a copy of Stephen's Greek Poets compared to which yours is very little more than waste paper. Adieu.

I embrace my Lady. I do not approve of her being called *Cat.*

E. G.

TO LADY SHEFFIELD

Bentinck Street, Dec. 29, 1781.

As Sheffelina has modernized herself by securing an unknown Cicisbeo, I have a great mind to propose a partie quarrée which might be easily furnished from Ickworth. If that project is rejected and I must make a solitary visit, I shall still obey the gracious mandate, but instead of the third day of the year (may it be more auspicious) 1782, I must delay my attendance till about the 8th or even the tenth, which will still allow me eight or ten days of fresh air and friendly converse, before I again descend into the noise and nonsense of the Pandemonium. At present we are as quiet in London as you can be in Sussex. Mrs. Stuart's shocking adventure is the only event that enlivens conversation; the family whisper insanity (a terrible resource), and strive without success to

persuade that the whole scene passed only in her imagination — yet she certainly passed the whole night abroad. I did suppose that the Baron would be tired of his home in a week, but as this visit to the Regiment will abridge the remaining interval he may possibly support it. I hear nothing more of the house in D. S., but still believe that the minister will retire before your superior majesty; the last time I saw him he expressed great apprehension of your displeasure. I too am in pursuit of a house, in Harley Street, somewhat further in the country than my own: it has but one fault, a steep narrow staircase, but where must we seek (except at ——) either a house or a wife without *one* fault? I embrace the Angels, Princesses, &c. I believe the elder had rather be a Princess than an Angel. Adieu.

LE GRAND GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

March 2nd, 1782.

DEAR MADAM,

I am much afraid that I have lost all credit by repeated promises and repeated neglects, yet I still persuade myself that you are glad to hear, though in two lines, of my health and good spirits, and that you will postpone more ample conversations to the Easter Holydays, when I can talk more in an hour than I could write in a month. Perhaps I should even have delayed this scrap of an Epistle, were I not apprehensive that the parliamentary events of this week would have given you some uneasiness both on a private and public account. Though I am not in the secret, especially of the adverse party, yet I know more than it is proper to trust to paper.

The situation of the administration, though dangerous, is not *absolutely* desperate, and with some concessions I still think that Lord N. may survive the impending storm of the

next fortnight.[1] At all events, if we fall (for, inconsiderable as I am, I am sure of being one of the first victims) I shall meet my fate with resolution. — I remember you asked me an age ago about a report of my having got a house in Harley Street and a wreck of wine on the Coast of Sussex: the former was a fruitless negociation, the latter related to my aunt's manor of Newhaven, but the wine is contested by the King's officers, and the litigation, if pursued, may cost her more than the object is worth. Adieu. My Dear Madam, on every account I am impatient for the Easter holydays.

I am
Ever yours,
E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

March 20th, 1782.

My Dear Madam,

All is now over, and Lord North is no more. This day when the armies in the H. of C. were ready to engage, he gave solemn notice that the whole administration was dissolved, and the House has adjourned till Monday next to allow time for the new arrangements. Complaints are vain and useless for the past, and futurity is dark and dismal. It is my intention, unless I should be detained either by *serious* business, or by some threatening symptoms of the Gout, to visit Bath about Sunday sennight, when we may discuss freely and fully the strange events of the times. Till then Adieu. Remember me to Mrs. Hayley. The Eliots whom I see *sometimes* are well, and as you may suppose triumphant.

I am, Dear Madam,
Ever yours,
E. G.

[1] Lord North resigned on March 20, and the new ministry, with the Marquis of Rockingham as first Lord of the Treasury, was finally settled on Sunday, March 24.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

May 4th, 1782.

DEAR MADAM,

The thunder-bolt has fallen, and I have received one of the circular letters from Lord Shelburne to inform me that the board of trade will be suppressed and that his Majesty has no further occasion for my services. I have been prepared for this event and can support it with firmness. I enjoy health, friends, reputation, and a perpetual fund of domestic amusement: I am not without resources, and my best resource, which shall never desert me, is in the chearfullness and tranquillity of a mind which in any place and in any situation can always secure its own independent happyness. The business of the House of Commons still continues, and indeed encreases, and though I am heartily tired of the scene, some serious reasons prevent me from retiring at the present season. Yet I still cast a longing eye towards Bath, and though I find it difficult, or rather impossible, to fix the moment of my summer visit, I can most sincerely promise that it will be the first use which I shall make of my freedom. As I have only *one* object, it will be perfectly indifferent to me whether the place be full or empty, dully or lively. Mrs. Holroyd, I suppose, has found, and Mrs. Hayley has left, you. Are you acquainted with Lady Eliza Foster,[1] a bewitching animal? You have heard of my Gouts, they are vanished, and I feel myself five and twenty years old. Can you say as much? I hope you can. Adieu. Recommend me to the Goulds.

I am

Most truly yours,

E. G.

[1] Lady Elizabeth Foster, writes Miss Burney, "has the character of being so alluring, that Mrs. Holroyd told me it was the opinion of Mr. Gibbon no man could withstand her, and that, if she chose to beckon the Lord Chancellor from his woolsack, in full sight of the world, he could not resist obedience."

Next Wednesday I conclude my forty-fifth year, and in spite of the changes of Kings and Ministers, I am very glad that I was born.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, May 29th, 1782.

DEAR MADAM,

From the very strong expressions of *anxious expectation* and frequent disappointments, I must think that I am much more guilty than I conceived myself to be on account of my silence. Your apparent indulgence had taught me to believe that you were accustomed to my faults, that you kindly forgave them, and that without the aid of the pen or the post your own heart would inform you of the sentiments of mine. Since my last letter nothing has happened, indeed nothing can happen to affect my situation: in the midst of a plague (such is the present influenza) my health and spirits are perfectly good, and in that tranquil state Saturdays and *Mondays* pass away without waking me from my gentle slumber. Even my curiosity is not excited, as I have frequent opportunities of hearing circumstantial and impartial accounts of the only object that interests me at Bath.

You ask with some anxiety when you may hope to see me. I know not what to say. Though I always foresee and recollect with heartfelt satisfaction the time which I spend at the Belvidere, yet the convenient season of my visit seems to retire before me. Public events have immoderately protracted the present session of Parliament; it will certainly continue the whole of June and a considerable part of July, and as it was my intention to attend it to the last, I began to think that you would excuse me if I delayed my journey (which would suit me far better) till the beginning of Autumn. But if you have any particular reasons that make you wish to see me sooner, say it in ten lines, and I will set off in ten days. I rejoyce in every subject of your joy both private and public,

and I am better pleased to hear that you are free from pain than that Rodney has destroyed a French fleet.[1] Alas! had he done it two months sooner our poor administration would have stood. Every person of every party is provoked with our new Governors for taking the truncheon from the hand of a victorious Admiral, in whose place they have sent a Commander without experience or abilities.[2] To-morrow they will be exposed to a small fire in the H. of C. on that popular topic. Adieu, Dear Madam, in this sickly season all my acquaintance (masters, mistresses and servants) are laid up except *young* Mrs. Porten and myself.

I am

Most truly yours,

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

July 3rd, 1782.

DEAR MADAM,

I hope you have not had a moment's uneasiness about the delay of my Midsummer letter. Whatever may happen, you may rest fully secure, that the materials of it shall always be *found*. But on this occasion I have missed four or five posts; postponing, as usual, from morning to the evening bell, which now rings, till it has occurred to me, that it might not be amiss to inclose the two essential lines, if I only added that the Influenza has been known to me only by the report of others. Lord Rockingham is at last dead; a good man, though a feeble minister: his successor is not yet named, and divisions in the Cabinet are suspected. If Lord Shelburne should be the Man, as I think he will, the friends

[1] On April 12, 1782, Admiral Sir George Rodney "broke the line," and defeated the French under the Comte de Grasse in the West Indies. "The late Ministry are thus robbed of a victory that ought to have been theirs; but the mob do not look into the almanac" (Walpole to Sir H. Mann, May 18, 1782).

[2] Rodney was superseded by Admiral Pigot, who was one of the Lords of the Admiralty in the new administration.

of his predecessor will quarrel with him before Christmas. At all events, I foresee much tumult and strong opposition, from which I should be very glad to extricate myself, by quitting the H. of C. with honour and without loss. Whatever you may hear, I believe there is not the least intention of dissolving Parliament, which would indeed be a rash and dangerous measure.

I hope you like Mr. Hayley's poem;[1] he rises with his subject, and since Pope's death, I am satisfied that England has not seen so happy a mixture of strong sense and flowing numbers. Are you not delighted with his address to his mother? I understand that She was, in plain prose, every thing that he speaks her in verse. This summer I shall stay in town, and work at my trade, till I make some Holydays for my Bath excursion. Lady S. is at Brighton, and he lives under tents, like the wild Arabs; so that my Country house is shut up. Kitty Porten is gone on a fortnight's frolick to lodge at Windsor.

I am, Dear Madam,
Ever yours.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD, AT COXHEATH CAMP

Saturday night, Bentinck Street, 1782.

I sympathise with your fatigues; yet Alexander, Hannibal, &c. have suffered hardships almost equal to yours. At such a moment it is disagreeable (besides laziness) to write, because every hour teems with a new lye. As yet, however, only Charles[2] has formally resigned; but Lord John, Burke, Keppel, Lord Althorpe, &c. certainly follow; your Commander-in-chief stays, and they are furious against the Duke

[1] The poem to which Gibbon alludes is the *Essay on Epic Poetry in five Epistles to the Rev. Mr. Mason* (London, 1782).

[2] On the death of Lord Rockingham, Fox endeavoured to force on the King, as the new Premier, the Duke of Portland, "a dull man, but a convenient block to hang Whigs on." Failing in his attempt, he resigned.

of Richmond. Why will he not go out with Fox? said somebody; because, replies a friend, he does not like to *go out* with any man. In short, three months of prosperity has dissolved a Phalanx, which had stood ten years' adversity. Next Tuesday, Fox will give his reasons, and possibly be encountered by Pitt, the new Secretary, or Chancellor, at three and twenty. The day will be rare and curious, and, if I were a light Dragoon, I would take a gallop on purpose to Westminster. Adieu. I hear the bell. How could I write before I knew where you dwelt?

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

August 10th, 1782.

DEAR MADAM,

A person whom you would scarcely suspect, General Conway as commander in Chief, is the real author of my silence, which as usual has insensibly lasted far beyond my first intentions. Lord Sheffield is a slave, his master's resolutions are obscure and fluctuating, and I have waited from post to post till he could mark some week for our meeting in Sussex, which might leave the rest of my time at liberty for my Bath expedition. Though I can obtain no satisfaction from him, I must not suffer another *Monday* to slide away without saying that I am alive, well, and unless the Arab should seize (*he* has no choice) that particular moment, in full expectation of gratifying my wishes by a visit to Bath about the 20th of next month. I flatter myself that I shall find you not affected by the long winter which we still feel, though a friend of mine, an Astronomer, assured me that yesterday was the last of the dog days.

It is impossible to know what to say of our public affairs, and the most knowing are only such by the knowledge of their ignorance. The next session of Parliament will be the warmest and most irregular battle that has ever been fought in that place, and each man (except some leaders) is at the moment

uncertain of the party which inclination, opinion, or connection will prompt him to embrace. You see that Mr. Eliot, or at least his family, are become courtiers; his son (a very unmeaning youth) is a Lord of the Treasury, an office which was formerly the reward of twenty years' able and faithful service. The Minister has not lost, for he never possessed, the public confidence, and Lord N[orth], if he chuses to act, has the balance of the country in his hands. A propos of the Eliots they are still in town. We meet seldom, but with the utmost propriety and equal regard.

My private life is a gentle and not unpleasing continuation of my old labours, and I am again involved, as I shall be for some years, in the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Some fame, some profit, and the assurance of daily amusement encourage me to persist. I am glad you are pleased with Mr. Hayley's poem; perhaps he might have been less diffuse, but his sense is fine and his verse is harmonious. — Mrs. Porten is just returned from a six weeks' excursion in lodgings at Windsor, which she enjoyed (the Terrace, the Air, and the Royal family) with all the spirit of youth. Her elder brother is quiet in his new employment and apartments in Kensington palace. I envy him the latter, and had there been no Revolution I might have obtained a similar advantage. At present I am on the ground, but the weather may change, and compared with recent darkness, the clouds are beginning to break away.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

September 29th, 1782.

I should like sometimes to hear whether you survive the scenes of action and danger in which a Dragoon is continually involved. What a difference between the life of a Dragoon and that of a Philosopher! and I will freely own that I (the

Philosopher) am much better satisfied with my own independent and tranquil situation, in which I have always something to do, without ever being obliged to do any thing. The Hampton Court Villa has answered my expectation, and proved no small addition to my comforts; so that I am resolved next summer to hire, borrow, or steal, either the same, or something of the same kind. Every morning I walk a mile or more before breakfast, read and write *quantum sufficit*, mount my chaise and visit in the neighbourhood, accept some invitations, and escape others, use the Lucans as my daily bread, dine pleasantly at home or sociably abroad, reserve for study an hour or two in the evening, lye in town regularly once a week, &c. &c. &c. I have anounced to Mrs. G. my new Arrangements; the certainty that October will be fine, and my encreasing doubts whether I shall be able to reach Bath before Christmas. Do you intend (but how can you *intend* any thing?) to pass the winter under Canvas? Perhaps under the veil of Hampton Court I may lurk ten days or a fortnight at Sheffield, if the enraged Lady or cat does not shut the doors against me.

The Warden passed through in his way to Dover. He is not so fat, and more chearful than ever. I had not any private conversation with him; but he clearly holds the balance; unless he falls asleep and lets it fall from his hand. The Pandæmonium (as I understand) does not meet till the 26th of November. I feel with you that a nich is grown of higher value, but think *that* only an additional argument for disposing of it. And so by this time Lord L[oughborough] is actually turned off. Do you know his partner (Miss Courtenay, the Lord's sister), about thirty, only £4000, not handsome, but very pleasant. I am at a loss where to address my condoleance, I would say congratulation. Town is more a desert than I ever knew it. I arrived yesterday, dined at Sir Joshua's with a tolerable party; the chaise is now at the door; I dine at Richmond, lye at Hampton, &c. Adieu.

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD AT COXHEATH CAMP

Bentinck Street, October 14th, 1782.

On the approach of winter, my paper house of Hampton becomes less comfortable; my visits to Bentinck Street grow longer and more frequent, and the end of next week will restore me to the town, with a lively wish, however, to repeat the same, or a similar experiment, next Summer. I admire the assurance with which you propose a month's residence at Sheffield, when you are not sure of being allowed three days. Here it is currently reported, that Camps will not separate till Lord Howe's *return* from Gibraltar, and as yet we have no news of his arrival. Perhaps, indeed, you have more intimate correspondence with your old school-fellow, Lord Shelburne, and already know the hour of your deliverance. I should like to be informed. As Lady S. has entirely forgot me, I shall have the pleasure of forming a new acquaintance. I have often thought of writing, but it is now too late to repent.

I am at a loss what to say or think about our Parliamentary state. A certain late Secretary of Ireland, the husband of Polly Jones, reckons the House of Commons thus: Minister 140, Reynard 90, Boreas 120, the rest unknown, or uncertain. The last of the three, by self or agents, talks too much of absence, neutrality, moderation. I still think he will discard the game.

I am not in such a fury with the letter of American independence;[1] but it seems ill-timed and useless; and I am much entertained with the Metaphysical disputes between Government and secession about the meaning of it. Lord Lough-[borough] will be in town Sunday sen-night. I long to see

[1] The reference probably is to the letter which Fox, before his resignation, wrote to the American agents in Paris, offering "*to recognise the independence of the United States in the first instance, and not to reserve it as a condition of peace.*"

him and Co. I think he will take a very decided part. If he could throw aside his Gown, he would make a noble Leader. The East India news are excellent; the French gone to the Mauritius, Heyder desirous of peace, the Nizam and Mahrattas our friends, and 70 Lack of Rupees in the Bengal treasury, while we were voting the recall of Hastings. Adieu. Write soon.

E. G.

TO LADY SHEFFIELD

Bentinck Street, October 31st, 1782.

Although I am provoked (it is always right to begin first) with your long and unaccountable silence, yet I cannot help wishing (a foolish weakness) to learn whether you and the two infants are still alive, and what have been the summer amusements of your widowed and their orphan state. Some indirect intelligence inclines me to suspect that the Baron himself has quitted before this time a house of Canvas for one of brick, and that he enjoys a short interval between the fatigues of War and those of Government. Should he happen to find himself in your neighbourhood you may inform him that Hugonin (good creature) came to town purposely on my business and passed three hours with me this morning. Harris has resigned his Case of the conflagration, and either by a sale to Lord Stawell or by a new Tenant we shall make it rather a profitable affair.

You have doubtless received very accurate accounts of my proceedings from the Cambridges by which channel I have likewise obtained very frequent narratives of your life and conversation, and this mutual Gazette has contributed not a little to stifle the reproaches of my conscience. In my excursions round the Hampton neighbourhood, I have often visited and dined with them, and found him properly sensible of his happyness in the absence of his wife: indeed I never saw a man more improved by any fortunate event.

My campaign, and it has been a pleasant one, is now closed, but in the time which remains before the opening of our Pandemonium, I should not dislike to breathe for a week or ten days the air of Sheffield Place, and as the Lord will be accessible in town before Christmas, my attack (according to modern rules) will be chiefly designed for the Lady. About Wednesday or Thursday next would be the day that I should think of moving, but I wish to be informed how far such a plan may consist (as the Scotch say) with other arrangements. Adieu. Is not Elliot [1] a glorious old fellow? We suspend our judgment of Lord Howe, yet I like the prospect.

I embrace, &c.,

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

November 7th, 1782.

DEAR MADAM,

Last week I finished my Hampton Court expedition, and think myself obliged to the person and to the accident which have thrown that unexpected but not unpleasing variety into my Summer life. I am now fixed in town till Christmas, or if Lord Sheffield who has quitted his camp should drag me into Sussex, it can be only for three or four days.

The Parliamentary campaign is approaching very fast,[2] and a very singular one it must be from the conflict of *three* parties, each of which will be exposed in its turn to the direct or oblique attacks of the other two. As a matter of curiosity I shall derive some gratification from my silent seat, but at present I do not perceive its use in any other light. From

[1] Sir George Augustus Eliott, created Lord Heathfield for his defence of Gibraltar.

[2] Parliament, which had been prorogued to November 26, was further prorogued to December 5, in order that the negotiations for peace might be completed. Peace was provisionally signed with the United States at Paris on November 30, 1782.

honour, gratitude and principle I am and shall be attached to Lord N., who will lead a very respectable force into the field, but I much doubt whether matters are ripe for either conquest or coalition, and the havock which Burke's bill has made of places, &c., encreases the difficulties of a new arrangement. However a month or two may change the face of things, and the faces of men.

Among those men surely Will Pitt the second is the most extraordinary. I know you never liked the father, and I have no connection public or private with the son. Yet we cannot refuse to admire a youth of four and twenty whom eloquence and real merit have already made Chancellor of the Exchequer without his promotion occasioning either surprize or censure.

We are much indebted to your Bath Theatre for Mrs. Siddons:[1] two years ago, and in the part of Lady Townley, she did not strike me: but I saw her last night with the most exquisite pleasure. She gave sense and spirit to a wretched play (the Fatal Marriage), and displayed every power of voice, action, and countenance to a degree which left me nothing to wish. To-morrow I promise myself still more satisfaction from Jane Shore, as the character is more worthy of her talents. Adieu, Dear Madam. Inform me that the beginning of the winter has not affected your health. Whatever may be the state of my namesake, I hope at Christmas to bring you a sound body, and a mind not dissatisfied with external things, because it is not dissatisfied with itself.

I am
Ever yours,
E. G.

[1] Mrs. Siddons first appeared on the London stage in December, 1775, when she acted Portia at Drury Lane. She gained no great success, and in June, 1776, received her dismissal from the managers. In the provincial theatres, and especially at the Bath Theatre, then managed by Palmer, she became famous.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Tuesday evening, 1782.

I have designed writing every post. — The air of London is admirable; my complaints have vanished, and the Gout still respects me. Lord L., with whom I passed an entire day, is very well satisfied with his Irish expedition, and found the barbarous people very kind to him: the castle is strong, but the volunteers are formidable. London is dead, and all intelligence so totally extinct, that the loss of an army would be a favourable incident. We have not even the advantage of Shipwrecks, which must soon, with the society of Ham-[ilton] and Lady Shelley, become the only pleasures of Brighton. My lady is precious, and deserves to shine in London, when she regains her palace. The workmen are slow, but I hear that the Minister talks of hiring another house after Christmas. Adieu, till Monday seven-night. Shall Caplin get you a lodging?

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

January 17th, 1783.

As I arrived about five o'Clock on Wednesday last, we were some time in town in mutual ignorance. Unlucky enough: yet our loss will be speedily repaired. Your reason for not writing is worthy of an Irish Baron. You thought Sarah might be at Bath, because you directed letters to her at Clifton, near Bristol; where indeed I saw her in a delightful situation, swept by the winter winds, and scorched by the summer sun. A nobler reason for your silence would be the care of the public papers, to record Your steps, words, and actions. I was pleased with your Coventry oration: a panegyric on the Hertford family is a subject entirely new, and which no orator before yourself would have dared to undertake. You have acted with prudence and dignity in casting away the military yoke, yet even if I *had* a right I should try to

moderate my indignation. This next summer you will sit down (if you can sit) in the long-lost character of a country Gentleman.

For my own part, my late journey has only confirmed me in the opinion, that No. 7 Bentinck-street is the best house in the World. I find that peace and war alternately, and daily, take their turns of conversation, and this (Friday) is the pacific day. Next week we shall probably hear some questions on that head very strongly asked, and very foolishly answered. I embrace, &c. Give me a line by return of post, and possibly I may visit Downing-street on Monday evening; late, however, as I am engaged to dinner and cards. Adieu.

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Feb. 19th, 1783.

DEAR MADAM,

On Monday or rather Tuesday last we gave the first blow to Lord S.'s Government by a majority of sixteen in the House of C. on the Peace, which will be followed by new and decisive attacks.[1] The victory was obtained by the union of Lord North with Fox and the Rockingham party. — You would have blamed me for going, or rather being carried, down with flannels and crutches, and sitting all night till past eight in the morning: but I have the pleasure of assuring you that the heat and fatigue have done me no harm, that I have already changed my two crutches into a single stick, which I hope to throw away in three or four days. This fit of the Gout, though severe, has been short, regular, and I think beneficial. Adieu.

I am

Ever yours,

E. GIBBON.

[1] The preliminaries of peace were signed at Versailles with France and Spain, January 20, 1783, and Parliament met, after the Christmas recess, January 21.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

March 29th, 1783.

DEAR MADAM,

Will you credit and excuse the cause of my delay? I came home late and found your letter on my table: meaning to read it the next morning, I slipt it into my drawer, and till this moment it escaped my memory and my eye. — I would not bribe you to prefer my silence, yet you may always take it as an assured proof that the body Gibbon is in a perfect state of health and spirits, as it is most truly at the present moment, and since the entire retreat of my Gout. The state of public affairs is Anarchy without example and without end,[1] and if the King does not decide before Monday, the consequences to the House of Commons will be fatal indeed. Every day produces its own lye, and nothing that is probable is true. Yet I believe that Pitt will not accept, and that the Coalition must succeed.

I am, Dear Madam,
Ever yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

March 31st, 1783.

DEAR MADAM,

In my last, written like this in a very great hurry, I used (if I am not mistaken) an expression which at a distance might alarm you too much. The *fatal* Monday is past without any *fatal* consequences, yet no Administration is appointed; but as Pitt has formally resigned, the K. will probably yield without expecting a second and more serious address on Thursday. — I rejoyce to hear that you have surmounted your complaint, and hope you will feel every day the genial influence of the spring. I am

Ever yours,
E. G.

[1] On February 24, 1783, Lord Shelburne resigned office; and Pitt, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, publicly stated that he only retained his post till his successor was appointed.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

May 5th, 1783.

DEAR MADAM,

My cousin Robert Darrel gave me great pleasure by the information that he thought you perfectly recovered from your late indisposition. I depend on his testimony, which removed all my doubts and suspicions of your giving too favourable an account of yourself. For my own part, after paying my annual tribute to the gout, I find myself in the same even course of health and spirits which I have enjoyed for many years. The business of the house of Commons has been postponed by waiting first for peace and afterwards for Government; the long hot days will be crowded, and we shall wrangle with a strong June sun shining through the windows to reproach our folly. I have already made one short visit to my Cottage at Hampton Court; I propose every week to steal away like a Citizen from Saturday till Monday, and persuade myself that I shall be revived by such excursions. You express a kind indignation against the persons for whose sake I acted the devil upon two sticks. Notwithstanding their apparent neglect I have reason to think them well inclined towards me, and have even received some assurances, but as every thing that depends on ministers is precarious and uncertain, I would not raise too much either your hopes or my own. If any situation permanent and proper could be obtained, incompatible with a seat in parliament, I should retire from that Assembly without the least reluctance.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

July 10th, 1783.

You will read the following lines with more patience and attention than you would probably give to a hasty conference,

perpetually interrupted by the opening of the door, and perhaps by the quickness of our own tempers. I neither expect nor desire an answer on a subject of extreme importance to myself, but which friendship alone can render interesting to you. We shall soon meet at Sheffield.

It is needless to repeat the reflections which we have sometimes debated together, and which I have often seriously weighed in my silent solitary walks. Notwithstanding your active and ardent spirit, you must allow that there is some perplexity in my present situation, and that my future prospects are distant and cloudy. I have lived too long in the world to entertain a very sanguine idea of the friendship or zeal of Ministerial patrons; and we are all sensible how much the powers of patronage are reduced.

The source of pensions is absolutely stopped, and a double list of candidates is impatient and clamourous for half the number of desirable places. A seat at the board of customs or excise was certainly the most practicable attempt, but how far are we advanced in the pursuit? Could we obtain (it was indeed unprecedented) an extraordinary commission? Have we received any promise of the *first* vacancy? how often is the execution of such a promise delayed to a second or third opportunity? When will those vacancies happen? Incumbents are sometimes very tough. Of the Excise I know less, but I am sure that the door of the Customs (except when it was opened for Sir Stanier by a pension of *equal* value) has been shut, at least during the last three years. In the meanwhile I should be living in a state of anxiety and dependence, working in the illiberal service of the House of Commons, my seat in Parliament sinking in value every day and my expenses very much exceeding my annual income. At the end of that time, or rather long before that time (for their lives are not worth a year's purchase), our ministers are kicked down stairs, and I am left their disinterested friend to fight through another opposition, and to expect the fruits of another revolution.

But I will take a more favourable supposition, and conceive myself, in six months, firmly seated at the board of Customs; before the end of the next six months, I should infallibly hang myself. Instead of regretting my disappointment, I rejoyce in my escape; as I am satisfied that no salary could pay me for the irksomeness of attendance, and the drudgery of business so repugnant to my taste, (and I will dare to say) so unworthy of my character. Without looking forwards to the possibility, still more remote, of exchanging that laborious office for a smaller annuity, there is surely another plan, more reasonable, more simple, and more pleasant; a temporary retreat to a quiet and less expensive scene. In a four years' residence at Lausanne, I should live within my income, save, and even accumulate, my ready money; finish my history, an object of profit as well as fame, expect the contingencies of elderly lives, and return to England at the age of fifty, to form a lasting independent establishment, without courting the smiles of a minister, or apprehending the downfall of a party. Such have been my serious sober reflections.

Yet I much question whether I should have found courage to follow my reason and my inclination, if a friend had not stretched his hand to draw me out of the dirt. The twentieth of last May I wrote to my friend Deyverdun, after a long interval of silence, to expose my situation, and to consult in what manner I might best arrange myself at Lausanne. From his answer, which I received about a fortnight ago, I have the pleasure to learn, that his heart and his house are both open for my reception; that a family which he had lodged for some years is about to leave him, and that at no other time my company would have been so acceptable and convenient. I shall step, at my arrival, into an excellent apartment and a delightful situation; the fair division of our expences will render them very moderate, and I shall pass my time with the companion of my youth, whose temper and studies have always been congenial to my own. I have given him my word of honour to be at Lausanne in the begin-

ning of October, and no power or persuasion can divert me from this IRREVOCABLE resolution, which I am every day proceeding to execute.

I wish, but I scarcely hope, to convince you of the propriety of my scheme; but at least you will allow, that when we are not able to prevent the *follies* of our friends, we should strive to render them as easy and harmless as possible. The arrangement of my house, furniture and books will be left to meaner hands, but it is to your zeal and judgment alone that I can trust the more important disposal of Lenborough and Lymington. On these subjects we may go into a Committee at Sheffield-place, but you know it is the rule of a Committee not to hear any arguments against the *principle* of the bill. At present I shall only observe, that neither of these negociations ought to detain me here; the former may be dispatched as well, the latter much better, in my absence. *Vale.*

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Bentinck Street, July 26th, 1783.

MY DEAR MADAM,

You have so long been acquainted with my indifference or rather dislike to the house of Commons, that you will not be much surprized, that I should entertain a thought or indeed a resolution of vacating my seat. Your vain hope (a kind and a friendly vanity) of my making a distinguished figure in that assembly has long since been extinct, and you are now convinced by repeated experience that my reputation must be derived solely from my pen. A seat in parliament I can only value as it is connected with some official situation of emolument: that connection which has fortunately subsisted about three years is now dissolved, and I do not see any probability of its being *speedily* restored. Whatever may be the wishes or sentiments of my political friends, their patronage has been extremely circumscribed by the double list of

candidates, the reduction of places and the suppression of pensions. The most solid and attainable things (at the boards of Customs or Excise) are incompatible with a seat in Parliament, and my prævious retreat (by taking from them a motive of delay) will promote rather than obstruct the accomplishment of my hopes and their promises. Thus restored for some time to the enjoyment of freedom, I propose to spend it in the society of my friend Deyverdun at Lausanne, who presses me in the kindest manner to visit him in the house and garden which he possesses in the most beautiful situation in the World.

I intend going about the middle of September, and though it is not possible to define precisely the time of my absence, it is not likely that I shall pass less than a year in Switzerland. I shall exchange the most unwholesome air (that of the house of Commons) for the purest and most salubrious, the heat and hurry of party for a cool litterary repose; and I have little doubt that this excursion, which will amuse me by the change of objects, will have a lasting and beneficial effect on my health. The lease of my house expires next Christmas, and I shall take the opportunity of disengaging myself from an useless expence, and of removing to a hired room my books, and such part of my furniture as may be worth keeping. You will be pleased to hear that the faithful Caplen accompanies me abroad.

Such is the light in which my journey should be represented to those friends to whom it may be advisable to say any thing of my motive. Every circumstance which I have already stated is strictly true, but you will too easily conceive that it is not the *whole truth:* that this step is dictated by the hard law of æconomy or rather of necessity, and that the moment of my return will not entirely depend on my own choice. You have not forgot how a similar intention some years ago was superseded by my appointment to the board of trade. Perhaps it would have been wiser if I had left England immediately after the loss of my place, and the sense of

this imprudent delay urges me more strongly every day to avoid the difficulties of a still longer procrastination. By this resolution I shall deliver myself at once from the heavy expence of a London life, my friend Deyverdun and myself shall join in a moderate though elegant establishment at Lausanne; and I can wait without inconvenience for one of the events, which may enable me to revisit with pleasure and credit my country, and the person, whom in that country, I most value, I mean yourself. Allow me to add (though I know such thoughts will be absorbed in your mind by higher and more tender sentiments), yet allow me to add that at the stated days of Midsummer and Christmas, you may regularly draw for your half year's annuity on Messieurs Gosling in Fleet Street, and that effectual steps shall be taken to secure you from a possibility of disappointment. It would not be my absence, but my stay in England that could create any delay or difficulty on that subject.

And now, my dear madam, let me submit to your consideration and final decision, a question which for my own part I am unable to determine, whether I shall visit Bath before I leave England. If I consulted only my wishes, the mere expence and trouble of the journey would be obstacles of small account, but I much fear, that on this occasion, prudence will dissuade what inclination would prompt, and that a meeting of three or four days (for it could be no more) would tend rather to embitter than to alleviate our unavoidable separation. If you decide for my coming down, it will probably take place between the 20th and 30th of next month, and I must beg that little, or nothing, may be said on the subject of my approaching journey, and that we may (silently) turn our thoughts to the happiness of seeing each other, after an interval of time, less considerable perhaps than those which commonly elapse between my Bath expeditions.

I am, my Dear Madam,
Ever most truly yours,
E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Thursday night, 1783.

Elmsley [1] and self have been hard at work this afternoon, and about ten quintals are preparing for foreign service. Can you save me ten pounds per annum, such is the rent of a good and safe room in the Strand? You offered me a room in Downing Street (did you mean an entire room?) for plate, china, &c. Is it the apartment on the ground floor from whence you was expelled by odours? If you can lodge my books you must give me a line per Saturday's coach, with a mandate to the maid that she may not scruple to shew and receive. Time presses and Elmsley is on the wing. Pelham is appointed Irish Secretary in the room of Wyndham who pleads bad health, but who had written very indiscreet letters at the general election. Adieu. I want to hear of My Lady, her tender frame has been too much agitated.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Sheffield-place, August 8th, 1783.

DEAR MADAM,

Your truly *maternal* letters (which I have repeatedly perused) have agitated my mind with a variety of pleasing and painful sensations. I am grieved that you should contemplate my departure in so melancholy a light, but I shall always revere the affection which prompts your anxiety, and magnifies the evil. I receive with more gratitude than surprise your generous offer of devoting yourself and so large a portion of your income to my relief, and I am concerned to

[1] Peter Elmsley, a bookseller opposite Southampton Street, in the Strand. His special department was the importation of foreign books. He was a man of great general knowledge, and possessed a remarkable knowledge of the French literature and language. Gibbon died at his house, 76, St. James's Street.

find on calmer reflection that such a project is attended with insuperable difficulties. After the mutual and unpleasant sacrifice of our habits and inclinations, I could not, even with your assistance, reduce the expence of a London life to the level of my present income, and the two hundred a year which you so nobly propose would be exhausted by the single article of a Coach.

With regard to the delays which you suggest, you may be assured that I shall take no material step without consideration and advice. Had I staid in London, I should have removed from Bentinck Street. On my return another house may at any time be procured, and I shall carefully preserve the most valuable part of my furniture, plate, linnen, china, beds, &c. My seat in Parliament cannot be vacated till the next Session, and I shall leave the disposal of it to our friend Lord Sheffield, in whose zeal and discretion we may safely confide. On his own account he regrets my departure, but he has been forced to give a full though reluctant approbation to my design. I wish it were in my power to remove all your kind apprehensions which relate to the length of my absence and the choice of my residence. I certainly do not entertain a very sanguine idea of political friendship, but I am convinced that such persons as really wish to serve me will not be discouraged by my temporary retreat to Switzerland. In the leisure and quiet which I shall enjoy at Lausanne, I shall prosecute the continuation of my history, and the care of publishing a work, from whence I may expect both honour and advantage, will secure, within a reasonable space, my return to England. Your idea of the climate of Switzerland is by many degrees too formidable; the air though sometimes keen, is pure and wholesome, the Gout is much less frequent on the Continent than in our Island, and the provoking luxury of London dinners is much more likely to feed that distemper, than the temperance and tranquillety of Lausanne. In the society of my friend Deyverdun, I hope to spend some time with comfort and propriety, but my

affections are still fixed in England, and it will be my wish and endeavour to shorten the term of this necessary separation, and in the meanwhile you may depend on the most regular communication of every circumstance that affects my health and happiness.

I am, my Dear Madam,
Ever yours,
E. G.

I have some questions to ask you about the disposal of certain pieces of furniture, such as the Clock and Carpet, but I would not mix those trifles with the more serious purpose of this letter.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Monday, August 18th, 1783.

In the preparations of my journey I have not felt any circumstance more deeply than the kind concern of Lady S[heffield], and the silent grief of Mrs. Porten. Yet the age of my friends makes a very essential difference. I can scarcely hope ever to see my aunt again; but I flatter myself, that in less than two years, my *sister* [1] will make me a visit, and that in less than four, I shall return it with a chearful heart at Sheffield-place. Business advances; this morning my books were shipped for Rouen, and will reach Lausanne almost as soon as myself. On Thursday morning the bulk of the library moves from Bentinck-street to Downing-street. I shall escape from the noise to Hampton Court, and spend three or four days in taking leave. I want to know your precise motions, what day you arrive in town, whether you visit Lord Beauchamp before the races, &c. I am now impatient to be gone, and shall only wait for a last interview with you. Your medley of Judges, Advocates, politicians, &c., is rather *useful* than pleasant. Town is a vast solitude. Adieu.

[1] Meaning Lady Sheffield.

TO LADY SHEFFIELD

Bentinck Street, August 30th, 1783.

My dear Friend,

For the names of Sheffelina, &c. are too playful for the serious temper of my mind. In the whole period of my life I do not recollect a day in which I felt more unpleasant sensations, than that on which I took my leave of Sheffield-place. I forgot my friend Deyverdun, and the fair prospect of quiet and happiness which awaits me at Lausanne. I lost sight of our almost certain meeting at the end of a term, which, at our age, cannot appear very distant; nor could I amuse my uneasiness with the hopes, the more doubtful prospect, of your visit to Switzerland. The agitation of preparing every thing for my departure has, in some degree, diverted these melancholy thoughts; yet I still look forwards to the decisive day (to-morrow Se'nnight) with an anxiety of which yourself and Lord S. have the principal share.

Surely never any thing was so unlucky as the unseasonable death of Sir John Russell, which so strongly reminded us of the instability of human life and human expectations. The inundation of the Assize must have distressed and overpowered you; but I hope and I wish to hear from yourself, that the air of your favourite Brighton, the bathing, and the quiet society of two or three friends, have composed and revived your spirits. Present my love to Sarah, and compliments to Miss Carter, &c. Adieu. Give me a speedy and satisfactory line.

I am
Most truly yours,
E. Gibbon.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Downing Street, September 8th, 1783.

As we are not unconscious of each other's feelings, I shall only say, that I am glad you did not go alone into Sussex.

An American rebel to dispute with, gives a diversion to uneasy spirits, and I heartily wished for such a friend or adversary during the remainder of the day. No letter from Deyverdun; the post is arrived, but two Flanders mails are due. Æolus does not seem to approve of my designs, and there is little merit in waiting till Friday. I should wait with more reluctance, did I think there was much chance of success. I dine with Craufurd,[1] and if anything is decided will send an extraordinary Gazette. You have obliged me beyond expression, by your kindness to Aunt Kitty; she will drink her afternoon tea at Sheffield next Friday. For my sake, Lady S. will be kind to the old Lady, who will not be troublesome, and will vanish at the first idea of Brighton; has not that salubrious air already produced some effects? Peace will be proclaimed to-morrow;[2] odd! as War was never declared. The buyers of stock seem as indifferent as yourself about the definitive Treaty. Tell Maria, that though you had forgotten the *Annales de la Vertu*, I have directed them to be sent, but know nothing of their plan or merit. Adieu. When you see Mylady, say everything tender and friendly to her. I did not know how much I loved her. She may depend upon my keeping a separate, though not, perhaps, a very frequent account with her. *Apropos*, I think aunt Kitty has a secret wish to lye in my room; if it is not occupied, she might be indulged. Once more, adieu.

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Tuesday Night [September 9], 1783.

It is singular, or rather it is natural that we should both entertain the same idea, for I give you my word that I was

[1] Probably "Fish" Crauford, a friend of C. J. Fox.

[2] The treaties of peace with the United States, France, Spain, and Holland were signed at Versailles, September 2, 1783.

very near running down to Sheffield and staying there till Wednesday. Another day, and no letter from Deyverdun; indeed the two Flanders mails are still due. I have written to him this post. To-morrow Crauford dines again with the Secretary, and the business is to be decided.[1] I find Storer is now likely to succeed not so much from the zeal and activity of Lord N.'s friendship, as because he could resign a place which Fox wants for Colonel Stanhope, to whom however he has given Thomas's company in the Guards. I will write another line to-morrow. Adieu.

E. G.

Newton, I think with reasons postpones any special power of Attorney till we are farther advanced, either with Cromwell's Client or some other purchaser: he says there will be sufficient time to send and return one while the title is under examination.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Thursday, September 11th, 1783.

The scheme (which you may impart to My lady) is compleatly vanished, and I support the disappointment with Heroic patience. Crauford goes down to Chatsworth to-morrow, and Fox does not recommend my waiting for the event; yet the appointment is not yet declared, and I am ignorant of the name and merits of my successful competitor. Is it not wonderful that I am still in suspense, without a letter from Deyverdun? No, it is not wonderful, since no Flanders mail is arrived: to-morrow three will be due. I am therefore in a miserable state of doubt and anxiety; in a much better house indeed than my own, but without books, or business, or society. I send or call two or three times each day to Elmsley's, and can only say that I shall fly the next day, Saturday, Sunday, &c. after I have got my *quietus*.

[1] Gibbon hoped that he might be appointed either a Commissioner of Excise, or secretary to the British Legation at Paris.

Aunt Kitty was delighted with Mylady's letter; at her age, and in her situation, every kind attention is pleasant. I took my leave this morning; and as I did not wish to repeat the scene, and thought she would be better at Sheffield, I suffer her to go to-morrow. Your discretion will communicate or withhold any tidings of my departure or delay as you judge most expedient. Christie writes to you this post; he talks, in his rhetorical way, of many purchasers. Do you approve of his fixing a day for the Auction? To us he talked of an indefinite advertisement.

No news, except that we keep Negapatnam. The other day the French Ambassador mentioned that the Empress of Russia, a precious B——, had proposed to ratify the principles of the armed neutrality, by a definitive treaty, but that the French, obliging creatures! had declared that they would neither propose nor accept an article so disagreable to England. Grey Elliot was pleased with your attention, and says you are a perfect master of the subject. Adieu. If I could be sure that no mail would arrive to-morrow, I would run down with my aunt. My heart is not light. I embrace My lady with true affection, but I need not repeat it.

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Downing Street, Saturday, September 13th, 1783.

Enfin la Bombe a crevê. — The three Flanders mails are arrived this day, but without any letters from Deyverdun. Most incomprehensible! After many adverse reflections, I have finally resolved to begin my journey on Monday; a heavy journey, with much apprehension, and much regret. Yet I consider, 1st, That if he is alive and well, (an unpleasant *if*,) scarcely any event can have happened to disappoint our mutual wishes; and, 2dly, That, supposing the very worst, even that worst would not overthrow my general plan of living abroad, though it would derange my hopes of a

quiet and delightful establishment with my friend. Upon the whole, without giving way to melancholy fears, my reason conjectures that his indolence thought it superfluous to write any more, that it was my business to act and move, and his duty to sit still and receive me with open arms. At least he is well informed of my operations, as I wrote to him (since his last) July 31st, from Sheffield-place; August 19th; and this week, September 9th. The two first have already reached him.

As I shall not arrive at, or depart from, Dover till Tuesday night, (alas! I may be confined there a week,) you will have an opportunity, by dispatching a parcel *per* post to Elmsly's, to catch the Monday's post. Let us improve these last short moments: I want to hear how poor Kitty behaves. I am really impatient to be gone. It is provoking to be so near, yet so far from, certain persons. London is a desert. I dine to-morrow with the Paynes, who pass through. Lord Loughborough was not returned from Buxton yesterday. Sir H[enry] C[linton] found me out this morning; with very little trouble My Lady might rival Betsy; he talks with rapture of visits to be made at Sheffield, and returned at Brighton. I envy him those visits more than the red ribbon or the glory of his American campaigns. Adieu.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Dover, Wednesday, September 17th, 1783,
Ten o'clock in the morning.

The best laws are useless without proper guardians. Your letter *per* Sunday's post is not arrived, (as its fate is uncertain, and irrevocable, you must repeat any material article,) but that *per* Monday's post reached me last night. Oliver[1] is more insolent than his grandfather; but you will cope with

[1] Mr. Oliver Cromwell, a solicitor with whom Gibbon and Lord Sheffield had business transactions.

one, and would not have been much afraid of the other. Last night the wind was so high, that the vessel could not stir from the harbour; this day it is brisk and fair. We start about one o'clock, are flattered with the hope of making Calais harbour by the same tide, in three hours and a half; but any delay will leave the disagreable option of a tottering boat or a tossing night. What a cursed thing to live in an island! this step is more awkward than the whole journey. The Triumvirate of this memorable embarkation will consist of the grand Gibbon, Henry Laurens, Esquire, President of Congress, and Mr. Secretary, Colonel, Admiral, Philosopher Thompson, attended by three horses, who are not the most agreeable fellow-passengers. If we survive, I will finish and seal my letter at Calais. Our salvation shall be ascribed to the prayers of My lady and Aunt; for I do believe they both pray.

Boulogne, Thursday morning, ten o'clock.

Instead of Calais, the wind has driven us to Boulogne, where we landed in the evening, with much noise and difficulty. The night is passed, the Customhouse is dispatched, the post-horses are ordered, and I shall start about eleven o'clock. I had not the least symptom of sea sickness, while my companions were spewing round me. Laurens has read the pamphlet,[1] and thinks it has done much mischief — a good sign! Adieu, the Captain is impatient. I shall reach Lausanne by the end of next week, but may probably write on the road.

[1] *Observations on the Commerce of the American States.* The pamphlet was written by Lord Sheffield, but published anonymously (London, 1783, 8vo). It reached a sixth edition in 1784, and was translated into both French and German. In it Lord Sheffield opposed Pitt's plan of relaxing the navigation laws in favour of America.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Langres, September 23rd, 1783.

Let the Geographical Maria place before you the map of France, and trace my progress as far as this place, through the following towns: Boulogne, (where I was forced to land,) St. Omer, (where I recovered my road,) Aire, Bethune, Douay, Cambray, St. Quentin, La Fère, Laon, Rheims, Chalons, St. Dizier, and Langres, where I have just finished my supper. The Inns, in general, more agreable to the palate, than to the sight or smell. But, with some short exceptions of time and place, I have enjoyed good weather and good roads, and at the end of the ninth day, I feel so little fatigued, that the journey appears no more than a pleasant airing. I have generally conversed with Homer and Lord Clarendon, often with Caplin and Muff; sometimes with the French postillions — of the above-mentioned animals the least rational. Tomorrow I lye at Besançon, and, according to the arrangement of post or hired horses, shall either sup at Lausanne on Friday, or dine there Saturday. I feel some suspense and uneasiness with regard to Deyverdun; but in the scale both of reason and constitution, my hopes preponderate very much above my fears. From Lausanne I will immediately write. I embrace my lady. If Aunt Kitty's gratitude and good breeding have not driven her away upon the first whisper of Brighton, she will share this intelligence; if she is gone, a line from you would be humane and attentive. "*Monsieur, les Chevaux seront prêts à cinq heures.*" — Adieu. I am going into an excellent bed, about six feet high from the ground.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, September 30th, 1783.

I arrived safe in harbour last Saturday, the 27th instant, about ten o'Clock in the morning; but as the post only goes out twice a week, it was not in my power to write before this day. Except one day, between Langres and Besançon, which was laborious enough, I finished my easy and gentle airing without any fatigue, either of mind or body. I found Deyverdun well and happy, but much more happy at the sight of a friend, and the accomplishment of a scheme which he had so long and impatiently desired. His garden, terrace, and *park*, have even exceeded the most sanguine of my expectations and remembrances; and you yourself cannot have forgotten the charming prospect of the Lake, the mountains, and the declivity of the Pays de Vaud. But as human life is perpetually checquered with good and evil, I have found some disappointments on my arrival. The easy nature of Deyverdun, his indolence, and his impatience, had prompted him to reckon too positively that his house would be vacant at Michaelmas; some unforeseen difficulties have arisen, or have been discovered when it was already too late, and the consummation of our hopes is (I am much afraid) postponed to next spring. At first I was knocked down by the unexpected thunderbolt, but I have gradually been reconciled to my fate, and have granted a free and gracious pardon to my friend. As his own apartment, which afforded me a temporary shelter, is much too narrow for a settled residence, we hired for the winter a convenient ready furnished apartment in the nearest part of the Rue de Bourg, whose back door leads in three steps to the terrace and garden, as often as a tolerable day shall tempt us to enjoy their beauties; and this arrangement has even its advantage, of giving us time to deliberate and provide, before we enter on a larger and more regular establishment.

But this is not the sum of my misfortunes; hear, and pity! The day after my arrival (Sunday) we had just finished a very temperate dinner, and intended to begin a round of visits on foot, *chapeau sous le bras*, when, most unfortunately, Deyverdun proposed to show me something in the Court; we boldly and successfully ascended a flight of stone steps, but in the descent I missed my footing, and strained, or sprained, my ancle in a painful manner. My old latent Enemy, (I do not mean the Devil,) who is always on the watch, has made an ungenerous use of his advantage, and I much fear that my arrival at Lausanne will be marked with a fit of the Gout, though it is quite unnecessary that the intelligence or suspicion should find its way to Bath. Yesterday afternoon I lay, or at least sat, in state to receive visits, and at the same moment my room was filled with four different nations. The loudest of these nations was the single voice of the Abbé Raynal, who, like your friend, has chosen this place for the azylum of freedom and history. His conversation, which might be very agreable, is intolerably loud, peremptory, and insolent; and you would imagine that he alone was the Monarch and legislator of the World.

Adieu. I embrace My lady, and the infants. Inform Maria that my accident has prevented me from looking out for a proper spot for my interment. With regard to the important transactions for which you are constituted Plenipotentiary, I expect with some impatience, but with perfect confidence, the result of your labours. You may remember what I mentioned of my conversation with Charles Fox about the place of Minister at Bern: I have talked it over with Deyverdun, who does not dislike the idea, provided this place was allowed to be my Villa, during at least two-thirds of the Year; but for my part, I am sure that a thousand guineas is worth more than Ministerial friendship and gratitude; so I am inclined to think, that they are preferable to an office which would be procured with difficulty, enjoyed with

constraint and expence, and lost, perhaps, next April, in the annual Revolutions of our domestic Government. Again Adieu.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Lausanne, September 30th, 1783.

DEAR MADAM,

As I know you prefer a speedy to a long letter, I write by the first post to inform you that after an easy and pleasant journey of thirteen days, I arrived here on Saturday the 27th instant in perfect health both of mind and body. You will not expect that I should inform you how far my expectations are answered in any or in every respect. The very novelty and beauty of the scene would give a pleasing colour to every object, and the satisfaction of meeting and conversing with an old friend like Deyverdun is alone worth a journey of six hundred miles. He has not forgot his obligations to you, and begs me in his name to say everything that is kind and grateful. We have been so compleatly taken up and satisfied with each other that as yet I have scarcely stirred from home, and as this is the season of the vintage the town is remarkably empty. But the weather is good, and our terrace now affords such a prospect of the lake and mountains, as cannot perhaps be equalled in the World. I most sincerely wish that you were walking there, and you would soon forget the more humble beauties of your Belvidere. But I must content myself with the hope, and not a distant hope, of seeing you again on the hills, not of Switzerland but of Bath.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

That we may never resume the indelicate subject, I shall say once for all that every Christmas and Midsummer Day, without expecting any draught from me, you need only send your commands to Messrs. Gosling, Bankers in Fleet Street,

as thus, Pay to Mr. —— the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds, and place to the account of E. G., Esq., for D. G. They are properly instructed.

TO LADY SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, October 28th, 1783.

The progress of my Gout is in general so regular, and there is so much uniformity in the history of its decline and fall, that I have hitherto indulged my laziness, without much shame or remorse, without supposing that you would be very anxious for my safety, which has been sufficiently provided for by the triple care of my friend Deyverdun, my humbler friend Caplin, and a very conversable Physician (not the famous Tissot), whose ordinary fee is ten Batz, about fifteen pence English. After the usual encrease and decrease of my member (for it has been confined to the injured foot), the Gout has retired in good order, and the remains of weakness, which obliged me to move on the rugged pavement of Lausanne with a stick, or rather small crutch, are to be ascribed to the sprain, which might have been a much more serious business.

As I have now spent a month at Lausanne, you will inquire with much curiosity, more kindness, and some mixture of spite and malignity, how far the place has answered my expectations, and whether I do not repent of a resolution which has appeared so rash and ridiculous to my ambitious friends? To this question, however natural and reasonable, I shall not return an immediate answer, for two reasons: 1. *I have not yet made a fair tryal.* The disappointment and delay with regard to Deyverdun's house, will confine us this winter to lodgings, rather convenient than spacious or pleasant. I am only beginning to recover my strength and liberty, and to look about on persons and things; the greatest part of those persons are in the Country taken up with their

Vintage: my books are not yet arrived, and, in short, I cannot look upon myself as settled in that comfortable way which you and I understand and relish. Yet the weather has been heavenly, and till this time, the end of October, we enjoy the brightness of the sun, and somewhat gently complain of its immoderate heat. 2. If I should be too sanguine in expressing my satisfaction in what I have done, you would ascribe that satisfaction to the novelty of the scene, and the inconstancy of man; and I deem it far more safe and prudent to postpone any positive declaration, till I am placed by experience beyond the danger of repentance and recantation.

Yet of one thing I am sure, that I possess in this Country, as well as in England, the best cordial of life, a sincere, tender, and sensible friend, adorned with the most valuable and pleasant qualities both of the heart and head. The inferior enjoyments of leisure and society are likewise in my power; and in the short excursions which I have hitherto made, I have commenced or renewed my acquaintance with a certain number of persons, more especially women (who, at least in France and this country, are undoubtedly superior to our prouder sex), of rational minds and elegant manners. I breakfast alone, and have declared that I receive no visits in the morning, which you will easily suppose is devoted to study. I find it impossible, without inconvenience, to defer my dinner beyond two o'Clock. We have got a very good Woman Cook. Deyverdun, who is somewhat of an Epicurean Philosopher, understands the management of a table, and we frequently invite a guest or two to share our luxurious, but not extravagant repasts. The afternoons are (and will be much more so hereafter) devoted to society, and I shall find it necessary to play at cards much oftener than in London: but I do not dislike that way of passing a couple of hours, and I shall not be ruined at Shilling whist. As yet I have not supped, but in the Course of the winter I must sometimes sacrifice an evening abroad, and in exchange I

hope sometimes to steal a day at home, without going into Company.

As every idea which relates to you and yours is always uppermost in my mind, I have not forgot our schemes to finish in this School of freedom and equality the education of the future Baroness of Roscommon, and Deyverdun agrees with me in thinking that a couple of years spent at Lausanne would be of infinite service to her. But as I am convinced that she has attained the age in which it would be the most beneficial and the least dangerous, I would recommend speedy and decisive measures. If you could be satisfied with an ordinary plan (I hate the name and idea of a boarding school) Maria might be entrusted to a Madame Ostervald (Lord S. knew and liked her under the name of Mademoiselle Bourgeois), who educates with reputation and success several young ladies of fashion. But as your daughter deserves a special and superior guide, we have cast our eyes (without knowing whether she would accept it) on a lady, who, by her birth, station, connections, understanding, knowledge, and temper, appears, in the judgment of Deyverdun, her particular friend, to be not unworthy to supply your place. She lives next door to us, and *our* eyes and ears (two pair) would be continually open. If you found an opportunity of sending Maria in the spring with any proper travellers, We would meet her at Geneva, Lyons, &c. With such a hostage, I should be sure of seeing Lord S. and yourself, and a year's trial would determine you to leave or remove her. If you listen seriously to this idea, I will send you more particular accounts, and take every proper step. If you cannot resolve, accept this *bavardage* as a proof of love and solicitude.

I have all this time been talking to Lord S.; I hope that he has dispatched my affairs, and it would give me pleasure to hear that I am no longer member for Lymington, nor Lord of *Lenborough*. Adieu. I feel every day that the distance

serves only to make me think with more tenderness of the persons whom I love.

On reading what I have written, I must laugh at my sudden and peremptory recommendations about Maria, yet I coolly think it the best scheme. You oblige me beyond expression by your kindness to Aunt Kitty. N.B. I always desire double letters. — I find I shall have some commissions for you (Sheffelina), but I do not suppose you in town till after Christmas.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, November 14th, 1783.

Last Tuesday, November 11th, after plaguing and vexing yourself all the morning about some business of your fertile creation, you went to the House of Commons, and passed the afternoon, the evening, and perhaps the night, without sleep or food, stifled in a close room by the heated respiration of six hundred politicians, inflamed by party and passion, and tired of the repetition of dull nonsense, which, in that illustrious assembly, so far outweighs the proportion of reason and eloquence. On the same day, after a studious morning, a friendly dinner, and a chearful assembly of both sexes, I retired to rest at eleven o'Clock, satisfied with the past day, and certain that the next would afford me the return of the same quiet and rational enjoyments. *Which has the better bargain?*

Seriously, I am every hour more grateful to my own judgment and resolution, and only regret that I so long delayed the execution of a favourite plan, which I am convinced is the best adapted to my character and inclinations. Your conjecture of the revolutions of my face, when I heard that the house was for this winter inaccessible, is probable, but false. I bore my disappointment with the temper of a Sage, and only use it to render the prospect of next year still more pleasing to my imagination. You are likewise mistaken, in imputing

my fall to the awkwardness of my limbs. The same accident might have happened to Slingsby himself, or to any *Hero* of the age, the most distinguished for his *bodily activity*. I have now resumed my entire strength, and walk with caution, yet with speed and safety, through the streets of this mountainous city. After a month of the finest autumn I ever saw, the *Bise* made me feel my old acquaintance; the weather is now milder, and this present day is dark and rainy, not much better than what you probably enjoy in England. The town is comparatively empty, but the Noblesse are returning every day from their Chateaux, and I already perceive that I shall have more reason to complain of dissipation than of dulness.

As I told Lady S., I am afraid of being too rash and hasty in expressing my satisfaction; but I must again repeat, that appearances are extremely favourable. I am sensible that general praise conveys no distinct ideas, but it is very difficult to enter into particulars where the individuals are unknown, or indifferent to our correspondent. You have forgotten the *old* Generation, and in twenty years a new one is grown up. Death has swept many from the World, and chance or choice has brought many to this place. If you enquire after your old acquaintance Catherine Crousaz, you must be told, that she is solitary, uggly, blind, and universally forgotten. Your later flame, and our common Goddess, the Eliza,[1] passed a month at the Inn. The greatest part of the time either in fit or taking the air on horseback. She came to consult Tissot, and was acquainted with Cerjat, but she appears to have made no conquests, and no fountain has been dedicated to her memory.

And now to business. By this time those who would give me nothing else have nobly rewarded my merit with the Chiltern Hundreds. I retire without a sigh from the Senate, and am only impatient to hear that you have received the sum, which your *modesty* was content to take for my seat. Sir

[1] Lady Elizabeth Foster. See letter May 4, 1782.

Andrew[1] is an honourable man, yet I am satisfied that you have not neglected any of the necessary precautions. It will be advisable to have the odd hundred in Gosling's shop and to pay the thousand to Messrs. Darrel, Winchester Street, who will vest it for me in the three per cent. We must take advantage of this stupendous fall of the Stocks, which amazes and frightens many poor souls here who apprehend that poor old England is on the brink of ruin. But this same circumstance is equally hostile to the sale of Lenborough, and though £200 or 300 a year and some part of my tranquillity depend on being released from the claws of my Mortgagee, yet I am much afraid that in the present state of things an *equal* purchaser will not easily be found. But your native vigour excited by friendship will remove mountains and perform impossibilities. My salvation would be more assured if I had half as much faith in any body else.

With regard to meaner cares, these are two, which you can and will undertake. 1. As I have not renounced my Country, I should be glad to hear of your Parliamentary squabbles, which may be done with small trouble and expence. After an interesting debate, Miss Firth or My lady in due time may cut the speeches from Woodfall. You will write or dictate any curious anecdote, and the whole, inclosed in a letter, may be dispatched to Lausanne. 2. A set of Wedgewood China, which we talked of in London, and which would be most acceptable here. As you have a *sort* of a taste, I leave to your own choice the colour and the pattern; but as I have the inclination and means to live very handsomely *here*, I desire that the size and number of things may be adequate to a plentiful table.

If you see Lord North, assure him of my gratitude; had he been a more successful friend, I should now be drudging

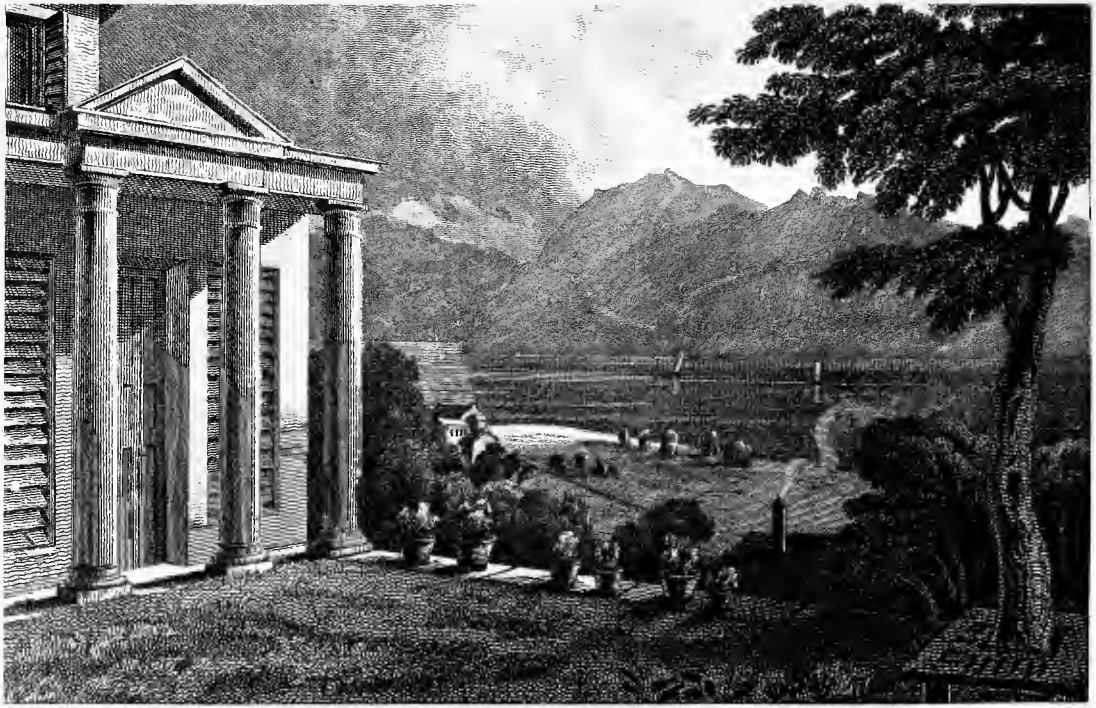
[1] Sir Andrew Snape Hamond, R.N., created a baronet in December, 1783, for his services in the American War, was apparently treating for the seat of Lymington.

at the board of Customs, or vexed with business in the amiable society of the Duke of M[anchester]. To Lord Loughborough present a more affectionate sentiment; I am satisfied with his intention to serve me, if I had not been in such a fidget. I am sure you will not fail, while you are in town, to visit and comfort poor Aunt Kitty. I wrote to her on my first arrival, and she may be assured that I will not neglect her. Any occasional hints from Bath will be wellcome, but nothing from hence must ever transpire. To My lady I say nothing; we have now our private Correspondence, into which the eye of an husband should not be permitted to intrude. I am really satisfied with the success of the Pamphlet; not only because I have a sneaking kindness for the author, but as it shows me that plain sense, full information, and warm spirit, are still acceptable to the World. You talk of Lausanne as a place of retirement; yet from the situation and freedom of the Pays de Vaud, all nations, and all extraordinary characters, are astonished to meet each other. The Abbé Raynal, the grand Gibbon, and Mercier, author of the Tableau de Paris, have been in the same room. The other day, the Prince and Princess de Ligne, the Duke and Dutchess d'Ursel, &c. came from Brussels on purpose (literally true) to act a comedy at d'Hermanches's, in the Country. He was dying, and could not appear; but we had Comedy, ball, and supper. The event seems to have revived him; for that great man is fallen from his ancient glory, and his nearest relations refuse to see him. I told you of poor Catherine's deplorable state; but Madame de Mesery, at the age of sixty-nine, is still handsome. Adieu.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, December 20th, 1783.

I have received both your Epistles; and as any excuse will serve a man who is at the same time very busy and very idle,



I patiently expected the second, before I entertained any thoughts of answering the first.

And so poor Lenborough is at length sold; poor indeed I may call, for I must confess that I am most woefully disappointed in the price. Without going back to the Golden Age in which we looked down with disdain on the round twenty, you may remember that even this summer we scarcely allowed our most timid expectations to sink below seventeen, and this sum for which it is now sold falls £1400 short of that amount, without deducting the promised gratuity to Christie.

You might indeed reckon on my impatience to be delivered from a heavy burden both of fortune and of mind which I have often deplored with so much energy, but that burthen was much alleviated by my *rational* retreat from a scene of tumult and expence, and I always understood that we should take the chance of the winter and of the rise of stocks before we tryed the decisive and almost irrevocable measure of an auction. However the blow is struck, and I have already reconciled my mind to this new loss. I should have been afraid of writing thus much to Hugonin, but your nerves are more firmly strung, and through these expressions of disappointment, you discern, that instead of being displeased with your conduct, however inadequate to my hopes, I feel myself inexpressibly obliged to your pure fervent and persevering friendship. You will watch over the conclusion of this business, and whatever steps on my side may be necessary shall be diligently executed as soon as you send me the proper papers and instruction. When the money is paid (in February) you will leave the residue, a wretched fragment, in the hands of the Goslings on my account. I have not absolutely determined how I shall employ it. Something must be done in the way of annuity, and the French funds which are very fashionable in this country are wonderfully tempting to a poor man by the high interest, but I am aware of their slippery foundation, and you may be assured that I shall do noth-

ing of that kind without full and mature and even cautious investigation. For the same reason, instead of paying the money to Darrel, I could wish that the £1100 or £1000 for Lymington (for we must not haggle about trifles) may likewise slumber for a little while in the shop in Fleet Street. Yet I should not be sorry to hear that the direction comes too late and that they are already more actively employed.

Sure I have been particularly unfortunate in my connections of business, for in good truth, Winton, Lovegrove, and Sir H. Burrard are more than should fall to the share of one man.

Yet the last mentioned beast is no fool, and when that affectionate kinsman has squeezed the Minister to the utmost, he will be satisfied with *all* that he can get, and will not suffer his farm to lye fallow without being of any value either to landlord or tenant. I therefore conclude, on every principle of common sense, that, before this moment, his own interest and that of the Government, stimulated by your active zeal, have already expelled me from the House, to which, without regret, I bid an everlasting farewell. The agreeable hour of five o'Clock in the morning, at which you commonly retire, does not tend to revive my attachment; but if you add the soft hours of your morning committee, in the discussion of taxes, customs, frauds, smugglers, &c., I think I should beg to be released and quietly sent to the Gallies, as a place of leisure and freedom. Yet I do not depart from my general principles of toleration; some animals are made to live in the water, others on the Earth, many in the air, and some, as it is now believed, even in fire. Your present hurry of Parliament I perfectly understand; when opposition make the attack —

—— Horæ
Momento cita mors vedit, aut victoria læta.

But when the Minister brings forward strong and decisive measure, he at length prevails; but his progress is retarded

at every step, and in every stage of the bill, by a pertinacious, though unsuccessful, minority. I am not sorry to hear of the splendour of Fox; I am proud, in a foreign Country, of his fame and abilities, and our little animosities are extinguished by my retreat from the English Stage. With regard to the substance of the business, I scarcely know what to think: the vices of the Company,[1] both in their persons and their constitution, were manifold and manifest; the danger was imminent, and such an Empire, with thirty millions of subjects, was not to be lost for trifles. Yet, on the other hand, the faith of Charters, the rights of property! I hesitate and tremble. Such an innovation would at least require that the remedy should be as certain as the evil, and the proprietors may perhaps insinuate, that *they* were as competent Guardians of their own affairs, as either George North or L. Lewisham. Their acting without a salary seems childish, and their not being removable by the Crown is a strange and dangerous precedent.

But enough of politics, which I now begin to view through a thin, cold, distant cloud, yet not without a reasonable degree of curiosity and patriotism. From the papers (especially when you add an occasional slice of the Chronicle) I shall be amply informed of facts and debates; from you I expect the causes rather than the events, the true springs of action, and those interesting anecdotes which seldom ascend the garret of a Fleet-Street editor.

You say that many friends (alias acquaintance) have expressed curiosity and concern; I should not wish to be immediately forgot. That others (you once mentioned Gerard Hamilton) condemn Government for suffering the departure of a man who might have done them some credit and some service, perhaps as much as Antony Storer himself. To you, in the confidence of friendship, and without either pride or resentment, I will fairly own that I am somewhat of Gerard's

[1] The East India Company.

opinion; and if I did not compare it with the rest of his character, I should be astonished that Lord N[orth] suffered me to depart, without even a civil answer to my letter. Were I capable of hating a man, whom it is not easy to hate, I should find myself most amply revenged by the insignificance of the creature in this mighty revolution of India, his own peculiar department. But the happy Souls in paradise are susceptible only of love and pity, and though Lausanne is not a paradise, more especially in Winter, I do assure you, in sober prose, that it has hitherto fulfilled, and even surpassed, my warmest expectation. Yet I often cast a look toward Sheffield-place, where you now repose, if you can repose, during the Christmas recess.

Embrace My Lady, the young Baroness, and the gentle Louisa, and insinuate to your silent Consort, that separate letters require separate answers. Had I an air balloon, the great topic of modern Conversation, I would call upon you till the meeting of parliament. *Vale.*

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Lausanne, December 27th, 1783.

DEAR MADAM,

Were we strangers to each other, I might amuse myself with deducing the causes of my silence; the long expectation of your answer and the propriety of taking a clear view of the ground on which I stood before I could transmit a just and satisfactory account of my situation. But it will be better to acknowledge that the old man, my ancient and habitual enemy, touched me with his wand, and that I am just awakening from the enchanted slumber. My silence however may be fairly interpreted as an evidence of content. Indeed, my Dear Madam, I *am* happy, with as few exceptions as the condition of human Nature will allow, and among the first of these exceptions I reckon the interval of time and space which separates me from Bath.

Since I formed and executed this plan of retiring into Switzerland I have not once repented, I have not felt a single moment of disappointment, and my only regret is the having so long neglected to obey the dictates of my reason; a more early obedience would have saved me some years of dependance, of anxiety, and of indiscretion. I have always valued far above the external gifts of rank and fortune two qualities for which I stand indebted to the indulgence of Nature, a strong and constant passion for letters, and a propensity to view and to enjoy every object in the most favourable light. The first has composed the daily happiness of my life and ensured the perpetual enjoyment of the most pleasing labours; the success of my works has given me a pure and extensive, perhaps a permanent reputation, and if the more substantial rewards have too easily slipped through my hands, I must ascribe their loss to the obstinacy with which I struggled to support a style of life to which the remains of my fortune were no longer adequate.

My propensity to be happy has been exercised on the most unfavourable materials; you have commonly seen a smile on my conversation and my letters, and as you never distrusted the sincerity of my professions you must have been surprized at the success of my endeavours. Yet what could be more adverse to my character than the life which for some years past I have led in London. With the warmest love of independence I have stooped the slave of Ministers. Without talents, or at least without resolution for a public life, I have consumed days and nights a silent spectator of noisy and factious debates. Conscious that true happiness is founded on œconomy, the disorderly state of my affairs has never allowed me to measure my income and my expence, and I have never dared to cast my eyes on the disbursment of the past or the supplies of the future year. How different is the prospect which I now enjoy. I find myself in a state of perfect independence and real affluence, and if I continue

to enjoy a tolerable state of health, I cannot easily discover what event is capable of disturbing my tranquillity.

Among the ingredients of happiness you will agree with me in giving the preference to a sincere and sensible friend; and though you are not acquainted with half his merit, you will believe that Deyverdun answers that description. Perhaps two persons so perfectly fitted for each other were never created by Nature and education. Our studies, occupations, and reflexions have been sufficiently various to ensure a constant fund of entertainment; the lights and shades of our respective characters are happily blended; freedom and confidence are the basis of our union, and a friendship of thirty years has taught us to enjoy and to support each other. You have often read and heard the descriptions of this delightful Country, the banks of the lake of Geneva, and indeed it surpasses all description. A stranger is struck with surprize and admiration, and it is endeared to me by the remembrance of my youth and the lively attachment which I have always retained for the place and the people. Our autumn has been beautiful, and the winter has not hitherto been severe, but the season of rural enjoyments is for some time suspended and our comforts are confined to the fireside. M. Deyverdun's house is spacious and convenient, and his garden, which spreads over a various and extensive spot, unites every beauty and advantage both of town and country. But into this paradise we are not yet introduced; the family to whom he had lent or let the larger part of the house have started some difficulties about the time of their removal, and till the month of March or April we are obliged to content ourselves with a convenient ready furnished lodging. When to this disappointment I add that my boxes of books which were sent through France still loiter on the road, you will confess that my felicity in the approaching year is more likely to encrease than to diminish.

With regard to the daily enjoyments of life, which rolls

away in a quiet uniform tenor, they are made to be felt rather than to be related. I rise before eight, and our mornings are commonly invisible to each other. At two (an hour somewhat too early) we dine, one, two, or three agreably very often enliven our board, which is served with decent elegance. From four to between six and seven we read some amusing book, play at chess, retire to our rooms, look into the Coffee-house, or make visits. The assemblies are numerous, and I play my three rubbers at shilling or half-crown whist with tolerable pleasure. They end between nine and ten, and a bit of bread and cheese, with some friendly converse, sends us to bed about eleven. This sober plan is indeed interrupted by too frequent suppers, which I want resolution to refuse, though I behave with exemplary temperance. Instead of lolling in a coach I walk the streets at all hours wrapped in a fur Cloak — the exercise is wholesome, and in my life I never enjoyed more perfect health and spirits. May you be able to say as much! If vanity and Deyverdun do not deceive me, I am already a general favourite, and as likings or dislikes are commonly mutual, I am pleased with the manners of the place, and the worthy and amiable characters of many individuals of both sexes.

Believe me, My dear Madam, I never cast a look on the politics or the amusements of London. The mob of political connections of casual acquaintance are unworthy of the regret of a rational mind. But in the midst of a very pleasant life and society I am not insensible of my separation from yourself, the Sheffields, and two or three real friends. If their zeal should succeed in procuring me any adequate office which I could accept with propriety and exercise without disgust, if Government should find any situation in which I could do them service and myself credit, I would quit (perhaps with a sigh) this agreable retreat, and obey without hesitation the calls of friendship, of honour, and of my Country.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, January 24th, 1784.

Within two or three days after your last *gracious* Epistle, your Complaints were silenced, and your enquiries were satisfied, by an ample dispatch of four pages, which overflowed the inside of the cover, and in which I exposed my opinions of things in general, public as well as private, as they existed in my mind, in my state of ignorance and error, about the eighteenth or twentieth of last month. Within a week after that date I epistolised, in the same rich and copious strain, the two venerable females of Newman-street and the Belvidere,[1] whose murmur must now be changed into songs of gratitude and applause. My correspondence with the holy Matron of Northamptonshire [2] has been less lively and loquacious. You have not forgotten the Atheist's vindication of himself from the foul calumnies of pretended Christians; within a fortnight after his arrival at Lausanne, he communicated the joyful event to Mrs. G. She answered *per* return of post, both letters at the same time, and in very dutiful language, almost excusing her advice, which was intended for my spiritual, as well as temporal, good, and assuring me that *nobody should be able to injure me with her.* Unless the Saint is an hypocrite, possible enough, such an expression must convey a favourable and important meaning: at all events, it is worth giving *ourselves* some trouble about her, without indulging any sanguine expectations of inheritance.

So much for my females. With regard to my male Correspondents, you are the only one to whom I have given any signs of my existence, though I have formed many a generous resolution. Yet I am not insensible of the kind and friendly manner in which Lord Loughborough has distinguished me:

[1] His aunt, Miss Porten, and his stepmother.
[2] His aunt, Miss Hester Gibbon.

he could have no inducements of interest, and now that I view the distant picture with an impartial eye, I am convinced that (for a Statesman) he was sincere though not earnest in his wishes to serve me. When you see *him*, the Paynes, Eden, Crauford, &c., tell them that I am well, happy, and ashamed. On your side, the zeal and diligence of your pen has surprized and delighted me, and your letters, at this interesting moment, are exactly such as I wished them to be — authentic anecdotes, and rational speculations, worthy of a man who acts a part in the great theatre, and who fills a seat, not only in the general Pandæmonium, but in the private council of the princes of the infernal Regions. With regard to the detail of Parliamentary operations, I must repeat my request to you, or rather to Miss Firth, who will now be on the spot, that she will write, not with her pen, but her Scissars, and that, after every debate which deserves to pass the Sea and the Mountains, she will dissect the faithful narrative of Woodfall,[1] and send it off by the next post, as an agreeable supplement to the meagre accounts of our weekly papers.

The wonderful revolutions of last month have sounded to my ear more like the shifting scenes of a Comedy or Comic Opera, than like the sober events of real and modern history; and the irregularity of our winter posts, which sometimes retarded, and sometimes hastened, the arrival of the dispatches, has encreased the confusion of our ideas. Surely the Lord has blinded the eyes of Pharaoh and of his servants; the obstinacy of the last spring was nothing compared to the headstrong and headlong madness of this Winter. I expect with much impatience the first days of your meeting: the purity and integrity of the Coalition will suffer a fiery tryal; but if they are true to themselves and to each other, a Majority of the House of Commons must prevail; the rebellion of the young Gentlemen will be crushed, and the Masters will

[1] William Woodfall, editor of the *Morning Chronicle*.

resume the Government of the School. After the address and answer, I have no conception that Parliament can be dissolved during the Session; but if the present Ministry can outlive the storm, I think the death Warrant will infallibly be signed in the summer. *Here* I blush for my Country, without confessing her shame. Fox acted like a man of Honour, yet surely his union with Pitt affords the only hope of salvation. How miserably are we wasting the season of peace!

I have written three pages before I come to my own busyness and feelings. In the first place, I most sincerely rejoyce that I left the ship, and swam ashore on a plank; the daily and hourly agitation in which I must have lived would have made me truly miserable, if I had obtained a place during pleasure, Storer's for instance. On the first news of the dissolution, I considered my seat as so totally and irrecoverably gone, that I have been less affected with Sir Harry's obstinacy. Yet his absolute refusal to treat throws us at least for the present into a very uncomfortable situation, and besides the danger of shipwreck, every day's voyage diminishes the value of the ship and cargo. You say you are schemeless. I can think only of two expedients.

1. You know or can know Sir Andrew Hammond, who is a fair and honourable character. Talk over the business and kinsman fairly with him, and tempt him to exert himself by the lowness of the price. I should consider even five or six hundred pounds as so much saved out of the fire, and a part of that sum would be most deliciously employed in the embellishment of my new habitation.

2. The other scheme is somewhat more delicate, yet I cannot esteem myself as bound to sacrifice my essential interest to that motley crew surnamed a Coalition, nor does this superiority in Parliament depend on the loss of *half-a-vote*. Perhaps the new Minister would give Sir Harry for his relations those scandalous jobs which our late friends

more conscientiously refused, and many a Candidate would purchase their effectual recommendation by giving me the £1000 or £1200. On this occasion remember you are acting for a *poor* friend; dismiss a little of the spirit of faction and patriotism, and stoop to a prudential line of conduct, which in your own case you might possibly disdain. If you attempt the negociation you will easily find the proper instruments, but I should think James Grenville, the Lord of the Treasury, a safe and convenient channel, and I am persuaded that he would embrace the opportunity of serving his party and obliging *me* at the same time. In the business of Lenborough you may be active, but I can only be passive to convey a fair Estate, and to receive a miserable pittance of three thousand and some pounds. I hope nothing will happen to perplex the title or to delay the payment, and that the sum will be safely lodged for my account and in Gosling's hands before the end of February.

Perhaps you will abuse my prudence and patriotism, when I inform you, that I have already vested a part (30,000 Livres, about £1300) in the new loan of the King of France. I get eight per Cent. on the joint lives of Deyverdun and myself, besides thirty tickets in a very advantageous Lottery, of which the highest prize is an annuity of 40,000 Livres (£1700) a year. At this moment, the beginning of a peace, and probably a long peace, I think (and the World seems to think) the French funds at least as solid as our own. I have empowered my Agent, M. de Lessart, a capital banker at Paris, to draw upon Gosling for the money two months hence; and to avoid all accidents that may result from untoward delays, and mercantile churlishness, I expect that you will support my credit in Fleet-street with your own more respectable name. Moreover when Lenborough purchase money is paid, I wish it were possible to withhold £1000 or 1500 of their mortgage on our joint bond; I could employ it to my satisfaction at present, and should certainly repay it in three or

four years on the conclusion of my History. Perhaps you will be better reconciled to my pecuniary arrangements by the proposal which I seriously make of purchasing Lee's farm at Buriton, if it can be obtained for 25 years' purchase after deducting the Land Tax. My interest without principal will be compensated by principal without interest (you remember Soame Jenyns's definition), and whatever becomes of my French Creditor, my Hampshire acres will be safe, compact, and in due time clear of all incumbrances. You may consult with Hugonin, propose and conclude.

What say you now? Am I not a wise Man? My letter is enormous, and the post on the wing. In a few days I will write to my Lady herself, and enter something more into the details of domestic life. Suffice it to say, that the scene becomes each day more pleasant and comfortable, and that I complain only of the dissipation of Lausanne. In the course of March or April we shall take possession of Deyverdun's house. My books, which by some strange neglect, did not leave Paris till the 3rd of this Month, will arrive in a few weeks; and I shall soon resume the continuation of my history, which I shall prosecute with the more vigour, as the completion affords me a distant prospect of a visit to England. A-propos, if the box which I left in Downing Street for the Swiss Carrier be not already departed, I hope Elmsley and yourself will give it a speedy and vigorous shove; when you see Elmsley ask him whether he has answered my letters: he is almost as lazy as myself. To my Lady's taste I shall entrust the Wedgewood's ware, which in the course of the spring or summer may accompany some other boxes of plate, linnen, books which I shall probably invoke. Adieu. I embrace my Lady and Infants.

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, February 2nd, 1784.

BARON! —

After my last enormous dispatch, nothing can remain, except some small gleanings, or occasional hints; and thus in order: I am not conscious that any of your valuable MSS. have miscarried, or that I have omitted to answer any essential particulars. They stand in my Bureau carefully arranged, and docketed under the following dates; September 23, October 23, November 18, December 2, December 15, December 19, December 23, December 29, January 16, which last I have received this day, Febr. 2nd. For greater perspicuity, it will not be amiss (on either side) to number our future Epistles, by a conspicuous Roman character inscribed in the front, to which we may at any time refer. But instead of writing by Ostend, the shorter and surer way, especially on all occasions that deserve celerity, will be to direct them to my Banker, M. de Lessert, at Paris, who will forward them to me. Through Germany the passage by Sea is more uncertain, the roads worse, and the distance greater: we often complain of delay and irregularity at this interesting moment.

By your last I find that you have boldly and generously opened a treaty with the Enemy, which I proposed with fear and hesitation. I impatiently expect the result; and again repeat, that *whatever* you can obtain for the seat, I shall consider it as so much saved out of the fire, &c. &c. I shall then have completely secured a tranquil though humble station, and my personal happiness will no longer hang in suspense upon every change of Ministry, and every vote of Parliament. I am not surprized that you grow sulky: your free and liberal spirit must disdain a set of Men, whose aim is their own restoration to power, and whose means may affect the principles of the Constitution. Do you remember

Dunning's motion (in the year 80) to address the Crown against a dissolution of Parliament? a simple address we rejected, as an infringement on the prerogative; yet how far short of these strong Democratical measures, for which you have probably voted, as I should probably have done: such is the contagion of party. Fox drives most furiously, yet I should not be surprized if Pitt's moderation and character should insensibly win the Nation, and even the house, to espouse his cause.

Lenborough is a melancholy and unpleasant subject. I am grateful for your endeavours, and lament that your reflexions on the value of land and money are but too true and sensible. Greatly as I have been disappointed in the price, I should now be sorry that anything should happen to break the bargain or to delay the payment. The surmise of such a possible event obliged me to repeat my commands that you would instruct Gosling (in your own name) to accept M. de Lessert's draught on the 20th of March for 30,000 French Livres (about £1300). Whatever you may think of my economical measures, the deed is done, and my honour is now pledged for the performance. The other sum, £1000 or 1500 of the Lenborough price which I wished to deduct from the mortgage, is a more indifferent speculation, which should only take place as far as it is agreable to all parties.

Unless when I look back on England with a selfish or a tender regard, my hours roll away very pleasantly, and I can again repeat with truth, that I have not regretted a single moment the step which I have taken. We are now at the height of the Winter dissipation, and I am peculiarly happy when I can steal away from great assemblies, and suppers of twenty or thirty people, to a more private party, of some of those persons whom I begin to call my friends. Till we are settled in our house little can be expected on our side; yet I have already given two or three handsome dinners; and though everything is grown dearer, I am not alarmed at the general view of my expence. Deyverdun salutes you; and

we are agreed that few married Couples are better entitled to the flitch of bacon than we shall be at the end of the year. When I had written about half this Epistle my books arrived; at our first meeting all was rapture and confusion, and two or three posts, from the 2nd to this day, the fourteenth, have been suffered to depart unnoticed. Your letter of the 27th of January, which was not received till yesterday, has again awakened me, and I thought the surest way would be to send off this single sheet without any farther delay.

I sincerely rejoice in the stability of Parliament; and the first faint dawn of reconciliation, which must however be effected by the equal balance of parties, rather than by the wisdom of the Country Gentlemen.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, April 31st, 1784.

Not a post has elapsed without my thinking of Sheffelina and intending her separate letter. This day which had been peremptorily fixed is now so far advanced that I have barely time to relieve my mind from some anxious *English* thoughts, the only ones that disturb the tranquil, chearful scenes of my well-judged retreat. — I have this moment perused the last English papers of the 20th instant, which contain by the bye your smart and as it seems successful dispute with the Minister.

Your adversaries (I fear they are the King, Lords and People) have now conquered, but at this distance I cannot discern the consequences of their victory, whether it will lead to treaty or dissolution. If the latter, adieu once more to my poor seat and all my little hopes of compensation. Can nothing, nothing be done in any way by direct or indirect, by humble or strenuous measures? Upon my soul, I should consider my election dinner, £100, or 200 pounds as a tolerable conclusion of my cursed political life. But in this

business perhaps you can do nothing. I therefore turn to another, which would seriously alarm me, had I less confidence in your friendship. You know (and the Goslings are apprized) that on the 20th of April M. de Lessert of Paris will draw upon them for 30,300 French Livres, and I should feel the deepest shame and affliction if his draught in my name should meet with an unfavourable reception. I am in your hands, and can say no more. Perhaps I have been too hasty, yet you cannot forget that I might reasonably act on your assurance of the Lenborough purchase money being paid before the end of February. Since that notice you have never said a word on the subject. Is the business concluded? what occasions a delay? Have any difficulties arisen? Adieu. You grow an idle correspondent. The winter has been long but not extremely rigorous.—The person who occupies Deyverdun's house is an invalid; yet I think we shall migrate before my birthday, the 8th of May.

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, May 11th, 1784.

Alas! alas! alas! We may now exchange our mutual condolence, and encourage each other to support with becoming fortitude the stroke of fate. Last Christmas, on the change of administration, I was struck with the thunderbolt of the unexpected event, and in the approaching dissolution I foresaw the loss of the little but precious stock which I had so foolishly embarked in the parliamentary bottom. The long continuance and various changes of the tempest rendered me by degrees callous and insensible: when the art of the Mariners was exhausted, I felt that we were sinking; I expected the ship to founder; and when the fatal moment arrived, I was even pleased to be delivered from hope and fear, to the calmness of despair.

I now turn my eyes, not on the past, but on the present and

the future; what is lost I try to consider as if it never had existed; and every day I congratulate my own good fortune, let me say my prudence and resolution, in migrating from your noisy stage to a scene of repose and content. But even in this separate state, I was still anxious for my friend upon English Earth, and at first was much delighted with your hint, that you were setting off for Coventry, without any prospect of an opposition. Every post, Wednesdays and Saturdays, I eagerly looked for the intelligence of your victory; and in spite of my misbehaviour, which I do not deny, I must abuse *My Lady*, rather than you, for leaving me in so painful a situation. Each day raised and increased my apprehension; the Courier de l'Europe first announced the contest, the English papers proclaimed your defeat, and your last letter, which I received four days ago, showed me that you exerted first the spirit, and at last the temper, of a hero. Lord B[eauchamp] behaved as I should have expected, and I am not much surprized that you should have been swept away in the general unpopularity, since even in this quiet place, your friends are considered as a factious crew, acting in direct opposition both to the King and People.

For yourself I am at a loss what to say. If this repulse should teach you to renounce all connexion with Kings and Ministers, and patriots, and parties, and parliaments; for all of which you are by many degrees too honest; I should exclaim, with Teague, your respectable countryman, "By my Shoul, Dear Joy, you have *gained* a loss." Private life, whether contemplative or active, has surely more solid and independent charms; you have *some* domestic comforts; Sheffield is still susceptible of useful and ornamental improvements, (alas! how much better might even the last £1500 have been laid out!) and if these cares are not sufficient to occupy your leisure, I can trust your restless and enterprizing spirit to find new methods of preserving yourself from the insipidity of repose. But I much fear your discontent and regret at being excluded from that Pandæmonium which we

have so often cursed, as long as you were obliged to attend it. The leaders of the party will flatter you with the opinion of their friendship and your own importance; the warmth of your temper makes you credulous and unsuspicious; and, like the rest of our species, male and female, you are not absolutely blind to your own merit, or deaf to the voice of praise. Some place will be suggested, easy, honourable, certain, where nothing is wanted but a man of character and spirit to head a superior interest; the opposition, if any, is contemptible, and the expence cannot be large. You will go down, find almost every circumstance falsely stated, repent that you had engaged yourself, but you cannot desert those friends who are firmly attached to your cause; besides, the Money you have already spent would have been thrown away; another thousand will compleat the business: deeper and deeper will you plunge, and the last evil will be worse than the first.

You see I am a free-spoken Counsellor; may I not be a true prophet! Did I consult my own wishes, I should observe to you, that as you are no longer a Slave, you might soon be transported, as you seem to desire, to one of the Alpine hills. The purity and calmness of the air is the best calculated to allay the heat of a political feaver; the education of the two princesses might be successfully conducted under your eye and that of my Lady; and if you had resolution to determine on a residence, not a visit, at Lausanne, your worldly affairs might repose themselves after their late fatigues. But you know that *I* am a friend to toleration, and am always disposed to make the largest allowance for the different natures of animals; a lion and a lamb, an eagle and a Worm. I am afraid we are too quiet for you; here it would not be easy for you to create any business; you have for some time neglected books, and I doubt whether you would not think our suppers and assemblies somewhat trifling and insipid.

For myself I am happy to tell, and you will be happy to hear, that this place has in every respect exceeded my best and most sanguine hopes. How often have you said, as often

as I expressed any ill-humour against the hurry, the expence, and the precarious condition of my London life, "Ay, that is a nonsensical scheme of retiring to Lausanne that you have got into your head — a pretty fancy; you remember how much you liked it in your youth, but you have now seen more of the World, and if you were to try it again, you would find yourself most woefully disappointed"? I had it in my head, in my heart; I have tryed it; I have not been disappointed; and my knowledge of the World has only served to convince me, that a Capital and a Crowd may contain much less real society, than the small circle of this gentle retirement. The winter has been longer, but, as far as I can learn, less rigorous than in the rest of Europe. The spring in all its glory is now bursting upon us, and in our garden it is displayed in all its glory. I already occupy a temporary apartment, and we live in the lower part of the house; before you receive this our lodgers will be gone and we shall be in full possession. We have much to enjoy and something to do, which I take to be the happiest condition of human life.

Now for business, the kind of subject which I always undertake with the most reluctance, and leave with the most pleasure. I do not thank you for standing between me and Gosling, you would despise my thanks. I know your sentiments, and you are not ignorant of mine. But the step on your side was necessary: even with your security Gosling has not done the thing in a graceful way, and even the letter which informs me that he will honour M. de Lessert's draught is written with unnecessary pertness. In a post or two I shall probably hear the payment acknowledged from Paris. The Goose hopes he shall soon be reimbursed: so do I likewise, and as no difficulties can arise with regard to the title, I should imagine that before you leave town the business, that is the payment, may be finally concluded.

Of the persons who already cast a Hawk's eye on the poor surplus. There is one Harris whose bond, since he calls for it, must undoubtedly be discharged, though I should be glad

if you could persuade him to be contented with the interest, and trust me some time longer with the principal. I write to Whitehead, the hirer of horses, by this post, and suppose you will hear no more of him. But I must confess that Richard Way's demand of one hundred Guineas fills me with surprize and indignation, and, unless you are decidedly of a contrary opinion, I do most absolutely refuse it. Had he only been useless something might be pleaded; but if you recollect that his entire service was the recommending me to Lovegrove, it would not be easy to compute the damages (for thousands) for which I might equitably sue that Land Jobber. Though I am not very favourably disposed to the Goslings, the surplus money, when the just demands are cleared, must be left in their hands, till I can employ it, but I am serious in my hint about Lee's farm, and wish you would correspond with Hugonin in the summer; by the bye, he has not pressed my tenants this winter. A Swiss Carrier by name Pache will call in a few days to send away the boxes of plate, linnen, china, which are probably packed for foreign service. The ornamental China was never intended to be sent.

Postscript.

I cannot as yet hear anything of a certain box left at my departure in Downing-place, and repeatedly and vainly demanded; by this time I hope that it is on the road. Elmsley, to whom it was peculiarly committed, is an ingenious, an honest, but a very idle fellow. The box contains some absolute necessaries, such as paper in particular, and you are a sufferer by the delay, as you will pay a double letter for the value, or at least the size, of a single one. The stationer's paper here is so extremely thin that I turned over two leaves at once, and the error is now irreparable. Adieu.

And now, My Lady.

Let me approach your gentle, not grimalkin, presence, with deep remorse. You have indirectly been informed of my state of mind and body; (the whole winter I have not had the slightest return of the Gout, or any other complaint

whatsoever;) you have been apprized, and are now apprized, of my motions, or rather of my perfect and agreeable repose; yet I must confess (and I *feel*) that something of a direct and personal exchange of sentiment has been neglected on my side, though I still *persuade* myself that when I am settled in my new house I shall have more subject, as well as leisure to write. Such tricks of lazyness your active spirit is a stranger to, though Mrs. Frazer complains that she has never had an answer to her last letters. That aforesaid little Donna Catharina arrived here three or four days with her sister Miss Bristow: the widow is impatient to reach England: the maiden, who is much better, proposes staying here the whole summer with her dear Doctor Tissot, and returning on the approach of Winter to pass another season at Nice. Poor Lady Pembroke! *you* will feel for her; after a cruel alternative of hope and fear, her only daughter, Lady Charlotte, died at Aix at Provence; they have persuaded her to come to this place, where she is intimately connected with the Cerjat family. She has taken an agreeable house, about three miles from the town, and lives retired. But I have seen her; her behaviour is calm, but her affliction ——

I accept with gratitude your friendly proposal of Wedgewood's ware, and should be glad to have it bought and packed, and sent without delay through Germany. To you I leave the absolute and *sole* command, but if you have a mind to consult the Baron with regard to the ornamental, the creature is not totally devoid of taste: the number, choice, pattern, sizes, &c. you will determine, and I shall only say, that I wish to have a very compleat service for two courses and a desert, and that our suppers are numerous, frequently fifteen or twenty persons. Adieu. I do not mean this as your letter. You are very good to poor Kitty. With you I do not condole about Coventry.

May 11th, 1784. I wrote the first page of my letter last week.

TO LADY SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, October 22nd, 1784.

A few weeks ago, as I was walking on our Terrace with Mr. Tissot, the celebrated Physician, Mr. Mercier, the author of the Tableau de Paris; the Abbé Raynal, Mr., Madame, and Mademoiselle Necker, the Abbé de Bourbon, a natural son of Lewis the fifteenth, the hereditary prince of Brunswick, Prince Henry of Prussia, and a dozen Counts, Barons, and extraordinary persons, among whom was a natural son of the Empress of Russia ——

Are you satisfied with this list? which I could enlarge and embellish, without departing from truth; and was not the Baron of Sheffield (profound as he is on the subject of the American trade) doubly mistaken with regard to Gibbon and Lausanne? Whenever I used to hint my design of retiring, that illustrious Baron, after a proper effusion of damned fools, condescended to observe, that such an obscure nook in Switzerland might please me in the ignorance of youth, but that after tasting for so many years the various society of Paris and London, I should soon be tired with the dull and uniform round of a provincial town. In the winter, Lausanne is indeed reduced to its native powers; but during the summer, it is possibly, after Spa, one of the most favourite places of general resort. The voyage of Switzerland, the Alps, and the Glaciers, is become a fashion; Tissot attracts the Invalids, especially from France; and a Colony of English have taken up the habit of spending their winters at Nice, and their summers in the Pays de Vaud. Such are the splendour and variety of our summer Visitors; and *you* will agree with me more readily than the Baron, when I say that this variety, instead of being a merit, is, in my opinion, one of the very few objections to the residence of Lausanne. After the dissipation of the winter, I expected to have enjoyed, with more freedom and solitude, myself, my

friend, my books, and this delicious paradise; but my position and character make me here a sort of a public character, and oblige me to see and be seen. However, it is my firm resolution for next summer to assume the independence of a Philosopher, and to be visible only to the persons whom I like.

On that principle I should not, most assuredly, have avoided the Neckers and Prince Henry. The former have purchased the Barony of Copet near Geneva; and as the buildings were very much out of repair, they passed this summer at a country-house at the gates of Lausanne. They afford a new example, that persons who have tasted of greatness, can seldom return with pleasure to a private station. In the moments when we were alone he conversed with me freely, and I believe truly, on the subject of his administration and fall; and has opened several passages of modern history, which would make a very good figure in *the* American book. If they spent the summers at the Castle of Copet, about nine leagues from hence, a fortnight's or three weeks' visit would be a pleasant and healthful excursion; but, alas! I fear there is little appearance of its being executed. *Her* health is impaired by the agitation of her mind: instead of returning to Paris, she is ordered to pass the winter in the southern provinces of France, and our last parting was solemn; as I very much doubt whether I shall ever see her again. They have now a very troublesome charge, which you will experience in a few years — the disposal of a Baroness. Mademoiselle Necker, one of the greatest heiresses in Europe, is now about eighteen — wild, vain, but good-natured, and with a much larger provision of wit than beauty; what encreases their difficulties is their Religious obstinacy of marrying her only to a Protestant. It would be an excellent opportunity for a young Englishman of a great name and a fair reputation. Prince Henry must be a man of sense; for he took more notice, and expressed more esteem for me, than any body else. He is certainly (without touching his military character) a very

lively and entertaining companion. He talked with freedom, and generally with contempt, of most of the princes of Europe; with respect of the Empress of Russia; but never mentioned the name of his brother, except once, when he hinted that it was *he himself* that won the battle of Rosbach.

His nephew, and our nephew, the hereditary prince of Brunswick, is here for his education, a soft and heavy piece of German dough. Of the English, who have lived very much as a national colony, you will like to hear of Mrs. Fraser and *one* more. Donna Catherina pleases every body by the perfect simplicity of her state of Nature, and I am glad to see that her giddyness is often checked by a sad remembrance of the General. You know she has had resolution to return from England (where she told me she saw you) to Lausanne, for the sake of Miss Bristow, who is in a very bad way, and in a few days they set off for Nice. *The other* is the Eliza; she passed through Lausanne, in her road from Italy to England; poorly in health, but still adorable, (nay, do not frown!) and I enjoyed some delightful hours by her bedside. She wrote me a line from Paris, but has not executed her promise of visiting Lausanne in the month of October.

My pen has run much faster, and much farther, than I intended on the subject of others; yet, in describing them, I have thrown some light over myself and my situation. A Year, a very short one, has now elapsed since my arrival at Lausanne; and after a cool review of my sentiments, I can sincerely declare, that I have never, during a single moment, repented of having executed my *absurd* project of retiring to Lausanne. It is needless to dwell on the fatigue, the hurry, the vexation which I must have felt in the narrow and dirty circle of English Politics. My present life wants no foil, and shines by its own native light. The chosen part of my library is now arrived, and arranged in a room full as good as that in Bentinck Street, with this difference indeed, that instead of looking on a stone Court, twelve feet square, I

command, from three windows of plate glass, an unbounded prospect of many a league of vineyard, of fields, of wood, of lake, and of mountains; a scene which Lord S. will tell you is superior to all you can imagine. The climate, though severe in Winter, has perfectly agreed with my constitution; and the year is accomplished without any return of the gout. An excellent house, a good table, a plesant garden, are no contemptible ingredients in human happiness. The general style of society hits my fancy; I have cultivated a large and agreeable circle of acquaintance, and am much deceived if I have not laid the foundations of two or three more intimate and valuable connections; but their names would be indifferent, and it would require pages, or rather volumes, to describe their persons and characters.

With regard to my standing dish, my domestic friend, I could not be much disappointed, after an intimacy of eight and twenty years. His heart and his head are excellent; he has the warmest attachment for me, he is satisfied that I have the same for him: some slight imperfections must be mutually supported; two bachelors, who have lived so long alone and independent, have their peculiar fancies and humours, and when the mask of form and ceremony is laid aside, every moment in a family life has not the sweetness of the honeymoon, even between the husbands and wives who have the truest and most tender regard for each other.

Should you be very much surprized to hear of my being married? Amazing as it may seem, I do assure you that the event is less improbable than it would have appeared to myself a twelfthmonth ago. Deyverdun and I have often agreed, in jest and in earnest, that a house like ours would be regulated, and graced, and enlivened, by an agreeable female Companion; but each of us seems desirous that his friend should sacrifice himself for the public good. Since my residence here I have lived much in women's company; and, to your credit be it spoken, I like you better the more I see of you. Not that I am in love with any particular person.

I have discovered about half a dozen *Wives* who would please me in different ways, and by various merits: one as a Mistress (a Widow, vastly like *the* Eliza: if she returns I am to bring them together); a second, a lively entertaining acquaintance; a third, a sincere good-natured friend; a fourth, who would represent with grace and dignity at the head of my table and family; a fifth, an excellent economist and housekeeper; and a sixth, a very useful nurse. Could I find all these qualities united in a single person, I should dare to make my addresses, and should deserve to be refused.

In the meanwhile I have experienced a separation from a more humble companion with whom I expected to pass the remainder of my life: in a few days Caplin departs for England. He had long complained of his health, and though he made some progress in French, he could not reconcile himself to the people and country, and his personal attachment to me was less forcible than gratitude perhaps would have required. As he has saved some money in my service he proposes to set up in London in the Upholstery business, and will be a very useful correspondent, as he has been a very able assistant here in my first arrangements. I shall advise him to go down to Sheffield, and you may question him about a thousand little particulars. It is an heavy loss, yet I have the good luck to procure in his place a Valet de Chambre, a man of substance and reputation of this Country, but who has lived some years at Paris: he has passed three months in the school of Caplin, and as I am assured of his honesty and diligence I have very good hopes of his address and intelligence.

You hint in some of your letters, or rather postcripts, that you consider me as having renounced England, and having fixed myself for the rest of my life in Switzerland, and that you suspect the sincerity of any vague or insidious schemes of purchase or return. To remove, as far as I can, your doubts and suspicions, I will tell you, on that interesting subject, fairly and simply as much as I know of my own intentions.

There is little appearance that I shall be suddenly recalled by offer of a place or pension. I have no claim to the friendship of your young Minister, and should he propose a Commissioner of the Customs, or Secretary at Paris, the former objects of my low ambition, Adam in Paradise would refuse them with contempt. *Here* therefore I shall certainly live till I have finished the remainder of my history; an arduous work, which does not proceed so fast as I expected amidst the avocations of Society, and miscellaneous Study. As soon as it is compleated, most probably in three or *four* years, I shall infallibly return to England, about the month of May or June; and the necessary labour of printing with care two or three quarto Volumes, will detain me till their publication, in the ensuing Spring. Lord Sheffield and yourself will be the loadstone that most forcibly attracts me; and as I shall be a vagabond on the face of the earth, I shall be the better qualified to domesticate myself with you, both in town and country. Here, then, at no very extravagant distance, we have the certainty (if we live) of spending a year together, in the peace and freedom of a friendly interest; and a year is no very contemptible portion of this mortal existence.

Beyond that period (I mean of the year, not of the existence, though it be true enough of that likewise) all is dark, but not gloomy. Whether, after the final completion of my history, I shall return to Lausanne, or settle in England, must depend on a thousand events which lye beyond the reach of human foresight, the state of public and private affairs, my own health, the health and life of Deyverdun, the fate of two elderly Ladies, the various changes which may have rendered Lausanne more dear, or less agreeable, to me than at present. But without losing ourselves in this distant futurity, which perhaps we may never see, and without giving any positive answer to Maria's parting question, whether I should be buried in England or Switzerland, let me seriously and earnestly ask you, whether you do not mean to visit me next summer? The defeat at Coventry would, I should think, facili-

tate the project; since the Baron is no longer detained the whole winter from his domestic affairs, nor is there any attendance on the house that keeps him till Midsummer in dust and dispute. I can send you a pleasant route, through Normandy, Paris, and Lyons, a visit to the Glaciers, and your return down the Rhine, which would be commodiously executed in three or four months, at no very extravagant expence, and would be productive of health and spirits to you, of entertainment to you both, and of instruction to the Baronessa. Without the smallest inconvenience to myself, I am able to lodge Yourselves and family, by arranging you in the winter apartment, which in the summer season is not of any use to us. I think you will be satisfied with your habitation, and already see you in your dressing-room; a small but pleasant room, with a delightful prospect to the West and South. If poor Aunt Kitty (you oblige me beyond expression by your tender care of that excellent Woman) if she were only ten years younger, I would desire you to take her with you, but I much fear we shall never meet again.

You will not complain of the brevity of this Epistle; I expect, in return, a full and fair account of yourself, your thoughts and actions, soul and body, present and future, in the safe, though unreserved, confidence of friendship. The Baron in two words hinted but an indifferent account of your health; you are a fine machine; but as he was absent in Ireland, I hope I understand the cause and the remedy. Next to yourself, I want to hear of the two Baronesses. You must give me a faithful picture (and though a mother you can give it) of their present external and internal forms; for a year has now elapsed, and in *their* lives a year is an age. Has the gentle Louisa (though you had discovered some marks of fire) expanded as much as you could expect in knowledge and understanding? I see Maria an accomplished and elegant young Woman, and only wish to know whether you have smoothed away some of the asperities of that fine diamond. Adieu.

Remember me to Miss Firth: My Wedgewood's China. But Caplin will put everything in motion.

Ever yours,
E. GIBBON.

I hear from Mrs. Frazer but an indifferent account of Mrs. Holroyd of Bath. I want to have a *cool* and faithful state of Mrs. G., her health and spirits: our correspondence is languid, but indeed it is rather her fault than mine.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, March 13th, 1785.

My long silence (and it has been long) must not, on this occasion, be imputed to lazyness, though that little Devil may likewise have been busy. But you cannot forget how many weeks I remained in suspence, expecting every post the final sentence, and not knowing what to say in that passive uncertainty. It is now something more than a fortnight since your last letter, and that of Gosling informed me of the event. I have intended every day to write, and every day I have started back with reluctance and disgust, from the consideration of the wretched subject. Lenborough irrecoverably gone, for three-fourths of its real, at least of its ancient, Value; my seat in Parliament (for the subject now presses home upon me) sunk without the smallest equivalent in the abyss of your cursed politics, and a balance neatly cyphered and summed by Gosling, which shews me a very shallow purse, in which others have a clearer right to dip than myself.

March 21st.

Another week has now elapsed, and though nothing is changed in this too faithful state of my affairs, I feel myself able to encounter them with more spirit and resolution; to look on the future, rather than the past; on the fair, rather than on the foul side of the prospect. I shall speak in the

confidence of friendship, and while you listen to the more doleful tale of my wants and wishes, You will have the satisfaction of hearing some circumstances in my present situation of a less unpleasing nature.

1. In the first place, I most heartily rejoyce in the sale, however unfavourable, of the Bucks Estate. Considering the dullness of the times, and the high interest of money, it is not a little to obtain even a tolerable price, and I am sensible how much your patience and industry have been exercised to extort the payment from a knavish or obstinate purchaser. Without supposing a shilling of balance in Gosling's hands, my circumstances are improved by the sale to the annual amount of £150; of £50 which I was obliged to add for the interest of the mortgage, of £100 which I received from my French annuity.

2. Your resistance to my Swiss expedition was more friendly than wise. Had I yielded, after eighteen months of suspense and anxiety, I should now, a still poorer man, be driven to embrace the same resource, which has succeeded according to, or even beyond, my most sanguine expectation. I do not pretend to have discovered the terrestrial paradise, which has not been known in this World since the fall of Adam; but I can truly declare, (now the charms of novelty are long since faded,) that I have found the plan of life the best adapted to my temper and my situation. I am now writing to you in a room as good as that in Bentinck Street, with three large windows of plate glass which command the country, the lake, and the mountains, and the opening prospect of the spring. The aforesaid room is furnished without magnificence, but with every conveniency for warmth, ease, and study, and the walls are already covered with more than two thousand volumes, the choice of a chosen library. I have health, friends, an amusing society, and perfect freedom. (A Commissioner of the Excise! the idea makes me sick). Even in Trifles, though it is not a Trifle, I have been singularly lucky, and you will conceive an high opinion of Blondel, my

new Valet de Chambre, when I assure you that, except in the knowledge of books and the Upholstery business, I no longer regret Caplen. He probably related all the minute circumstances of my state, and I find, that without any prejudice for the Country and people, he has not represented them in an unfavourable light. If you ask me what I have saved by my retreat to Lausanne, I will fairly tell you (in the two great articles of a Carriage and a house in town, and breathing place at Hampton Court, both which were indispensable, and are now annihilated, with the difference of Clubs, public places, servants' wages, &c.) about four hundred pounds, or Guineas, a year; no inconsiderable sum, when it must be annually found as addition to an expence which is somewhat larger than my present revenue.

3. "What is then," you will ask, "my present establishment?" This is not by any means a cheap Country; and, except in the article of wine, I could give a dinner or make a coat, perhaps for the same price in London as at Lausanne. My chief advantage arises from the things which I do not want; and in some respects my style of living is enlarged by the encrease of my relative importance — an obscure batchelor in England, the master of a considerable house at Lausanne. Here I am expected to return entertainments, to receive Ladies, &c. and to perform many duties of society, which, though agreeable enough in themselves, contribute to inflame a Housekeeper's bills. From the disbursements of the first year I cannot form any just estimate; the extraordinary expences of the journey, carriage of heavy goods from England, the acquisition of many books, which it was not expedient to transport, the purchase of furniture, wine, fitting up my library, and the irregularity of a new Ménage, have consumed a pretty large sum. But in a quiet, prudent, regular course of life, I think I can support myself with comfort and honour for six or seven hundred pounds a year, instead of a thousand or eleven hundred in England. I can look forward with strong and rational hope. The departure

of the two matrons, or not to build on the ice, the mere suppression of the Bath jointure will give me more than that income, which may even be enlarged by turning Buriton into an annuity.

Besides these uncertainties, (uncertain at least as to the time,) I have a sure and honourable supply from my own pen. I continue my history with pleasure and assiduity; the way is long and laborious, yet I see the end, and I can almost promise to land in England next September twelfthmonth, with a Manuscript of the current value of three thousand pounds, which will afford either a small income or a large capital. It is in the meanwhile that my situation is somewhat painful and difficult. From the French and English funds and the various produce on my Copper share, I receive between two or three hundred pounds: the rent of Buriton is between six and seven hundred, but when you have deducted taxes, repairs, Mrs. G.'s jointure (£300 clear) &c., weigh the residue; it will not break down the scale. It happens unluckily enough that this year there will be an extraordinary deduction (at least one hundred guineas) of the fine which is paid every seven years for the renewal of Horn farm. Since my arrival here, I have never received a line from Hugonin, to whom I wrote a long letter last summer, and I fear his eyes and infirmities disqualify him a little for business. The sums which he has remitted to Gosling the last and the present winter fall below the most moderate computation, and I see no reason or account of the deficiency. I wish you would write to him in my name or your own, and make yourself master of that same part of my affairs. Richard Andrews, an honest attorney of Petersfield, is allowed my quitrents for holding my courts, and he might surely, without more trouble or wages, receive and remit the rents of three or four farms.

Such are the services and revenues of the year; proceed we now, in the style of the budget, to the ways and means of extraordinary supplies. Payne's valuation of the remaining

part of my library has not perfectly answered my expectation. Yet it is approved by my friend, Elmsley, who offers on his own account to change the pounds into Guineas, and as I want the money, and esteem his integrity, I shall signify my acceptance if he will allow me to make another moderate draft from the Catalogue. That transaction (all accounts settled) will put some money in my pocket: but as I understand that kind of business I will not trouble you or myself with any farther details. A circumstance which surprized me in Gosling's account is the last six months from Lady day to Michaelmas last, during which I pay interest for the Mortgage without receiving rent from the Estate: surely that is not just or reasonable. If that half year is properly excepted in the Conveyance, you my omnipotent Attorney may draw it from the tenants, and it will serve at least to discharge Harris's bond. If it is not, I must submit with a sigh to this new deduction of two or three hundred pounds from the poor price of poor Lenborough. But this deficiency must somewhere be supplied: as I now pay interest to the *Job* for my horses, I can make the man wait a Couple of years till my return. But this cursed account of Newton! He is pathetic, you say, on the score of money advanced; a draft for £200 which I send you inclosed would surely discharge that advance, and you will try to manage him to stay till my labours are finished for the payment of his own. Yet perhaps the clearest and most honourable way would be to borrow £500 of the Goslings on my account and your own bond. I will not affront your friendship, by observing that you will incur little or no risk on this occasion. Read, consider, act, and write.

It is the privilege of friendship to make our friend a patient hearer, and active Associate in our own affairs; and I have now written five pages on my private affairs, without saying a word either of the public, or of yourself. Of the public I have little to say; I never was a very warm Patriot, and I grow every day a Citizen of the World. The scramble

for power and profit at Westminster or St. James's, and the names of Pitt and Fox, become less interesting to me than those of Cæsar and Pompey. You are not a friend of the young Minister, but he is a great favourite on the Continent, as he appears to be still; and you must own that the fairness of his character, his eloquence, his application to business, and even his youth, must prepossess at least the ignorant in his favour. Of the merit or defects of his administration I cannot pretend to speak; but I find, from the complaints of some interested persons, that his restraints on the smuggling of tea have already ruined the East India Companies of Antwerp and Sweden, and that even the Dutch will scarcely find it worth their while to send any ships to China. Your Irish friends appear to be more quiet, at least the Volunteers and national Congress seem to subside. How far that tranquillity must be purchased on our side, by any pernicious sacrifices, you will best decide; and from some hints in your last letters, I am inclined to think that you are less affected than might be supposed with national or local prejudice. Your introduction I have attentively read; the matter, though most important in itself, is out of the line of my studies and habits, and the subordinate beauties of style and arrangement you disclaim. Yet I can say with truth, that I never met with more curious and diligent investigation, more strong sense, more liberal spirit, and more cool and impartial temper in the same number of pages.[1]

By this time you have probably read Necker's book on the Finances. Perhaps for you there is too much French enthusiasm and paint; but in many respects you must have gained a knowledge of his country, and on the whole, you must have been pleased with the picture of a great and benevolent mind. In your attack on Deyverdun for my picture I cannot promise you much success; he seems resolved to maintain his right of possession, and your only

[1] Lord Sheffield published, in 1785, his *Observations on the Manufactures, Trade, and Present State of Ireland.*

chance would be a personal assault. The next summer (how time slips away!) was fixed for your visit to Lausanne. We are prepared at all points to receive *you*, My lady, and a princess or two, with their train; and if you have a proper contempt for St. Stephen's chappel, you are perfectly free, and at leisure (can you ever be at leisure?) for the summer season. As you are now in a great measure disengaged from my affairs, you may find time to inform me of your proceedings and your projects. At present I do not even know whether you pass the winter at Sheffield-place or in Downing-street. My lady revenges herself of my long silence. Yet I embrace her and the Infants. In a few weeks we expect Miss Bristow and Mrs. Fraser from Nice. Adieu. You have deranged the decline and fall this morning. I have finished my Epistle since dinner, and am now going to a pleasant party and good supper.

I send you enclosed a promissory note for £500. If you do not borrow the money of Gosling, you may throw it into the fire; if you do, in case of death it will serve as a remembrance. You will find that before and since the receipt of their balance I have drawn this year for £300. The change is most amazingly in my favour, and a banker of credit and substance at Lausanne allows me 4 per Cent. for all the money I leave on his hands.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Lausanne, July 15th, 1785.

Indeed and indeed, my Dear Madam, I will never go to sleep again; my next letter shall be short and speedy, and I will not always put myself under the shameful necessity of employing the first page in worthless Apologies. On the present occasion I will not excuse myself by saying (what is true enough) that I waited week after week in hopes of hearing from you. As our last letters crossed each other, you

might reasonably entertain the same expectation, and thus it is that poor miserable mortals try to provide a decent colour for their own lazyness. You will expect some account of the time of silence, and that account will be short and satisfactory. I am no longer in the illusions of the Honey-moon, when every deformity is concealed, and a smooth deceitful gloss is given to every object.

In the space of two and twenty months, the Climate and Society of Lausanne, my own situation and expence, the character of my companion and of my looser connections of both sexes are perfectly understood. The Climate in these two Winters has shewn itself to all Europe, more strongly perhaps to us, under the most hideous form, severe cold, and a continuance or repetition of snow till the middle of April. In general my health has perfectly sustained the rigour of the season; good spirits, good appetite, good sleep are my habitual state, and though verging towards fifty I still feel myself a young man. I was in hopes that my old Enemy the Gout had given over the attack, but the Villain, with his ally the winter, convinced me of my error, and about the latter end of March I found myself a prisoner in my library and my great chair. I attempted twice to rise, he twice knocked me down again, and kept possession of both my feet and knees longer (I must confess) than he had ever done before. My recovery has been proportionably tedious, and I am hardly yet in possession of my full strength; this admonition calls for some extraordinary care, and without running into sudden extremes, I consult both my reason and my taste by abstaining at night from wine and meat, and contenting myself with a bason of milk.

Such are the drawbacks on the comforts of life, yet I am pleased to think that my gout, though it has adhered somewhat longer than usual, is neither sharp nor frequent, and respectfully confines itself to the lower extremities of the Machine. Of the Country I must not complain, this dry climate is particularly favourable to gouty constitutions;

Dr. Tissot and my own observation inform me that it is rare among the natives, and among my acquaintance I can only name one old Gentleman, who by free living acquired it about the age of three score. My unpleasant and sometimes painful confinement was soothed not only by the mercenary aid of Servants and Physicians (the fee of a visit is about half a crown), but by the assiduous offices of my friends, and instead of the lonesome time an invalid who has not a family must pass amidst the crowds of London, I had the frequent visits of agreable men and women and a party of cards every evening that I chose it.

I do not suppose that real affection, especially to a stranger, is a very plentiful commodity, but here there are much fewer avocations of business or pleasure, and my style of living, my house, my table, &c., make me a man of mark and consequence. With the recovery of my strength, I now return civilities, relax my studies, and visit my acquaintance who are not gone; but so well do I like this habitation, and such is my sedentary disposition, that I have not yet lain from Home, nor gone five miles from Lausanne. You will give me credit when I say, that, though a lover of society, my library is the room to which I am the most attached. I almost hesitate whether I shall tell you that the prospect and furniture are equally agreable, that a reasonable number of my books is arrived from England, and that my whole establishment is formed upon a comfortable yet œconomical plan: in the single articles of house-rent, carriage, servants' wages, clubs, and public places I save between four and five hundred a year. And let me appeal to your reason and spirit whether such a saving be not as real and a much more honourable addition of income, than a pityful, precarious place or pension to be held or lost by the caprice of a Minister or the Revolutions of politics. When I was flattered with a *distant* hope of a seat at the boards of customs or excise, I was told that I need not work above five days in the week, and that I should sometimes enjoy the respite of Holydays

and Vacations. Without any attendance or obligation I have given myself a state of leisure and independence, in which my labour is only employed on litterary pursuits, the objects of my choice and the foundation of my fame.

As every white spot in this life is clouded with a shade of black, I can only lament that this state is so far remote from the best and most faithful of my friends, so faithful and so true that they will enjoy my happiness though they cannot be witnesses or partakers of it. On my side, I think *of* them much oftener than I write *to* them, and warmly cherish the hope of an English Journey to them; the time must depend on the completion of my history, and I am sorry to observe that as I advance on my Journey "New Alps on Alps arise;" and I know not when I shall reach the shelter of my Inn.

After yourself and Mrs. Porten, Lord and Lady Sheffield are the persons whom I most desire to see. Among my companions of the World are undoubtedly several whom I regard and of whose good wishes I am persuaded; yet those slighter tyes are insensibly relaxed by the distance of time and place, by the interposition of new objects. My political connections have undergone such astonishing changes, a new Parliament, a new Administration, Patriots whom I left Ministers, Ministers whom I left Boys, the whole Map of the Country so totally altered, that I sometimes imagine I have been ten years absent from England. That incessant hurry of Politicks was indeed one of the things which disgusted the most, and there is nothing pleases me so much in this country as to enjoy all the blessings of a Good Government without ever talking or thinking of our Governors. In my domestic Government a great though not unexpected Revolution has happened. Caplen, unable to accustom himself to the language or manners of this country, resigned his employments and returned to England the beginning of last winter. You may easily conceive my loss and apprehension, and you will rejoyce in my good fortune that I was able to fill his place with no unworthy successor; a servant of this

country, but who had lived with a Lady at Paris till her death — a man of substance and reputation, and who on the tryal of some months appears to deserve my confidence and good opinion. We are already thoroughly accustomed to each other. Adieu. My Dear Madam, may our correspondence be more frequent, and may I find you on my return in the possession of every blessing.

Most truly yours,

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, September 5th, 1785.

Extract from a weekly English paper, September 5th, 1785. — "It is reported, but we hope without foundation, that the celebrated Mr. Gibbon, who had retired to Lausanne in Switzerland to finish his valuable history, lately died in that city."

The hope of the News writer is very handsome and obliging to the historian; yet there are several weighty reasons which would incline me to believe that the intelligence may be true. *Primo*, It must one day be true; and therefore may very probably be so at present. *Secundo*, We may always depend on the impartiality, accuracy, and veracity of an English newspaper. *Tertio*, which is indeed the strongest argument, we are credibly informed that for a long time past the said celebrated historian has not written to any of his friends in England; and as that respectable personnage had always the reputation of a most exact and regular correspondent, it may be fairly concluded from his silence, that he either is, or ought to be, dead. The only objection that I can foresee, is the assurance that Mr. G.—— himself read the article as he was eating his breakfast, and laughed very heartily at the mistake of his brother historian; but as he might be desirous of concealing that unpleasant event, we shall not insist on his apparent health and spirits, which might be affected by that

subtle politician. He affirms, however, not only that he is alive, and was so on the fifth of September, but that his head, his heart, his stomach, are in the most perfect state, and that the Climate of Lausanne has been congenial both to his mind and body. He confesses, indeed, that after the last severe winter, the Gout, his old enemy, from whom he hoped to have escaped, pursued him to his retreat among the mountains of Helvetia, and that the siege was long, though more languid than in his precedent attacks; after some exercise of patience he began to creep, and gradually to walk; and though he can neither run, nor fly, nor dance, he supports himself with grace and firmness on his two legs, and would willingly kick the impertinent Gazetteer; impertinent enough, though more easily to be forgiven than the insolent Courier du Bas Rhin, who about three years ago amused himself and his readers with a fictitious Epistle from Mr. Gibbon to Dr. Robertson.

Perhaps now you think, Irish Baron, that I shall apologize in humble style for my silence and neglect. But, on the contrary, I do assure you that I am truly provoked at your Lordship's not condescending to be in a passion. I might really have been dead, I might have been sick; if I were neither dead nor sick, I deserved a volley of curses and reproaches for my infernal laziness, and you have defrauded me of my just dues. Had I been silent till Christmas, till Doomsday, you would never have thought it worth your while to abuse me. "Why, then," (let me ask in your name and language, 'you damned beast'), "did you not write before?" That is indeed a very curious question of natural and moral Philosophy. Certainly I am not lazy; elaborate quartos have proved, and will abundantly prove my diligence. I *can* write; spare my modesty on that subject. I like to converse with my friends by pen or tongue, and as soon as I can set myself a going, I know no moments that run off more pleasantly. I am so well convinced of that truth, and so much ashamed of forcing people that I love to forget me,

that I have now resolved to set apart the first hour of each day for the discharge of my obligations; beginning *comme de raison*, with yourself, and regularly proceeding to Lord Loughborough and the rest. May Heaven give me strength and grace to accomplish this laudable intention! Amen.

Certainly (yet I do not know whether it be so certain) I should write much oftener to you, if we were not linked in business, and if my business had not always been of the unpleasant and mortifying kind. Even now I shove the ugly monster to the end of this epistle, and will confine him to a page by himself, that he may not infect the purer air of our correspondence. Of my situation here I have little new to say, except a very comfortable and singular truth, that my passion for my wife or mistress (Fanny Lausanne) is not palled by satiety and possession of two years. I have seen her in all seasons and in all humours, and though she is not without faults, they are infinitely overbalanced by her good qualities. Her face is not handsome, but her person, and every thing about her, has admirable grace and beauty: she is of a very chearful, sociable temper; without much learning, she is endowed with taste and good sense; and though not rich, the simplicity of her education makes her a very good economist; she is forbid by her parents to wear any expensive finery; and though her limbs are not much calculated for walking, she has not yet asked me to keep her a Coach.

Last spring (not to wear the metaphor to rags) I saw Lausanne in a new light, during my long fit of the Gout; and must boldly declare, that either in health or sickness I find it far more comfortable than your huge metropolis. In London my confinement was sad and solitary; the many forgot my existence when they saw me no longer at Brookes's; and the few, who sometimes cast a thought or an eye on their friend, were detained by business or pleasure, the distance of the way, or the hours of the house of commons; and I was proud and happy if I could prevail on Elmsley to enliven the

dullness of the Evening. Here the objects are nearer, and more distinct, and I myself am an object of much larger magnitude. People are not kinder, but they are more idle, and it must be confessed that, of all nations on the globe, the English are the least attentive to the old and infirm; I do not mean in acts of charity, but in the offices of civil life. During three months I have had round my chair a succession of agreeable men and women, who came with a smile, and vanished at a nod; and as soon as it was agreeable I had a constant party at cards, which was sometimes dismissed to their respective homes, and sometimes detained by Deyverdun to supper, without the least trouble or inconvenience to myself. In a word, my plan has most compleatly answered; and I solemnly protest, after two years' tryal, that I have never in a single moment repented of my transmigration.

The only disagreeable circumstance is the encrease of a race of animals with which this country has been long infested, and who are said to come from an island in the Northern Ocean. I am told, but it seems incredible, that upwards of 40,000 English, masters and servants, are now absent on the continent; and I am sure we have our full proportion, both in town and country, from the month of June to that of October. The occupations of the Closet, indifferent health, want of horses, in some measure plead my excuse; yet I do too much to please myself, and probably too little to satisfy my Countrymen. What is still more unlucky is, that a part of the Colony of this present year are really good company, people one knows, &c.; the Astons, Hales, Hampdens, Trevors, Lady Clarges and Miss Carter (*her Sappho*), Lord Northington, &c. I have seen Trevor several times, who talks of you, and seems to be a more exact correspondent than myself. *His wife* is much improved by her diplomatic life, and shines in every company, as a woman of fashion and elegance. But those who have repaid me for the rest were Lord and Lady Spencer. I saw them almost

every day, at my house or their own, during their stay of a month; for they were hastening to Italy, that they might return to London next February. He is a valuable man, and where he is familiar, a pleasant Companion; she a charming woman, who, with sense and spirit, has the simplicity and playfulness of a child. You are not ignorant of her talents, of which she has left me an agreable specimen, a drawing of the Historic muse, sitting in a thoughtful posture to compose.

So much of self and Co. Let us now talk a little of your house and your two Countries. Does my Lady ever join in the abuse which I have merited from you? Is she satisfied with her own behaviour, her unpardonable silence, to one of the prettiest, most obliging, most entertaining, most &c. Epistles that ever was penned since the Epistles of Paul of Tarsus? Will she not *mew* one word of reply? I want some account of her spirits, health, amusements, of the womanly accomplishments of Maria, and the opening graces of Louisa: of yourself I wish to have some of those details which she is much more likely to transmit. Are you patient in your exclusion from the House? Are you satisfied with legislating with your pen? Do you pass the whole winter in town? Have you resumed the pursuits of farming, &c.? What new connexions, public or private, have you formed? A tour to the Continent would be the best medicine for the shattered nerves of a soldier and politician. By this expression you will perceive that your letter to Deyverdun is received; it landed last post, after I had already written the two first pages of this composition. On the whole, my friend was pleased and flattered: but instead of surrendering or capitulating, he seems to be making preparations for an obstinate defence. He already talks of the right of possession, of the duties of a good Citizen, of a writ *ne exeat Regno*, and of a vote of the two hundred, that whosoever shall, directly or indirectly, &c., is an Enemy to his Country. Between you be the strife, while I sit with my scales in my hand, like Jupiter on Mount Ida.

I begin to view with the same indifference the combat of Achilles Pitt and Hector Fox; for such as it should now seem, must be the comparison of the two Warriors. Lord Northington, who is firm in his party, assures me that the popularity of the young Minister, and even the opinion of his abilities, have considerably diminished; but he confesses that such, or much greater, diminution will not weaken his influence in the Parliament, and must tend to promote his favour and confidence in a certain place. At this distance I am much less angry with bills, taxes, and propositions, than I am pleased with Pitt for making a friend and a deserving man happy, for releasing poor Batt from the shackles of the law, and for enhancing the gift of a secure and honourable competency, by the handsome unsolicited manner in which it was conferred. This I understand to be the case, from the unsuspicious evidence of Lord N. and Chief Baron Skinner; and if I can find time (*resolution*) I will send him a hearty congratulation; if I fail, you may at least communicate my intentions. Of Ireland I know nothing, and while I am Writing the decline of a great Empire, I have not leisure to attend to the affairs of a remote and petty province. I see that your friend Foster [1] has been hooted by the Mob, and unanimously chosen Speaker by the House of Commons. How could Pitt expose himself to the disgrace of withdrawing his propositions after a public attempt? Have ministers no way of computing beforehand the sense or nonsense of an Irish parliament? I am quite in the dark; your pamphlet, or book, would probably have opened my eyes; but whatever may have been the reason, I give you *my word of honour* that I have never seen nor heard of it. Here we are much more engaged with Continental politics. In general we hate the emperor,[2] as the enemy of peace, without daring to make

[1] John Foster, Lord Oriel (1740–1828).

[2] The Emperor Joseph II. His attempted reforms in the Low Countries created a revolution against Austria.

War. The old Lyon of Prussia[1] acts a much more glorious part, as the Champion of public tranquillity, and the independence of the German states.

And now for the bitter and nauseous pill of pecuniary business, upon which I shall be as concise as possible in the two articles of my discourse, land and money. And concise indeed I may be according to the slender proportion of either that is now left. You sometimes accuse me of not reading or remembering the most important points of your despatches: may I not equally complain that you pass in silence all my enquiries and requests on the subject of Buriton? In the space of two years I have never received a line of intelligence from Hugonin concerning the state of that last and dearest possession. And as far as I can judge from Gosling's confused account, which records only dates and names, a portion, not a very small one, of the rent remains unpaid, or has been sunk in unknown charges and expences. Let me therefore repeat perhaps more clearly what I have already desired.

1. That you would correspond with Hugonin, and obtain from him a correct mercantile account of debtor and creditor of rents and payments for the aforesaid two years.

2. That if there remains any arrears, you would propose and enforce the most vigorous measures for my prompt and entire satisfaction.

3. That as there must be deducted from this year's rents a considerable fine to Magdalen College for Horn, Hugonin at your instigation would cast about to see whether he cannot perceive any extraordinary means of supply in the timber way. A dozen years have now elapsed since the first Cut of the Hanger. May not those *underwoods* be again ripe for the Axe? You know I consider only present profit, and disregard all future improvements and rural beauty. A beast,

[1] Frederick II. of Prussia died August 17, 1786. He had recently endeavoured to mediate between the Republican party in Holland and the Stadtholder.

you will say. Alas, why do hard circumstances force me to be one?

4. That you would manage, if it can be done without *offence* or expence, the substitution of Richard Andrews, in the place of Hugonin, a clear-sighted Agent for a blind Gentleman. I fear nothing more is to be expected from Lenborough, but as you seem quiet, I entertain a faint hope that Harris's bond has been discharged from the rent or purchase money. You have done no more than I expected in assuring me that the £500 shall be ready at Goslings', but I should be sorry to distress you, or to lay your generous spirit under any obligations to a purse-proud Cit. If they will readily take your bond, and allow me credit for the sum before the 1st of December for January next, it will be the readiest and most private way. Otherwise I can have recourse to another expedient, of desiring the Darrels either to sell an equivalent part of my short annuity, or, if the funds are too low, to advance me the *desideratum* on a security which is in their own hands. When I am possessed of the money in one way or another I will take a view of my former credit with Gosling (a small credit, I trow) of this additional supply of my debts, expences, and resources, and I hope I shall be able to discharge at least the remainder of Newton's bill. But I must not impoverish myself too, and I have some thoughts of keeping the rest of my library (if not troublesome to Downing Street) till my return to England.

It is impossible to hate more than I do this odious necessity of owing, borrowing, anticipating; and I look forwards with impatience to the happy period when the supplies will always be raised within the year, with a decent and useful surplus in the treasury. Had it not been for the cursed dissolution of Parliament, such would already have been the case. I now trust to the conclusion of my History, and it will hasten and secure the principal comforts of my life. You will believe I am not lazy; yet I fear the term is somewhat more distant than I thought. My long gout lost me three months in the

spring; in every great work unforeseen [obstacles], and difficulties, and delays will arise; and I should be rather sorry than surprized if next autumn was postponed to the ensuing spring. If My Lady (a good creature) should write to Mrs. Porten, she may convey news of my life and health, without saying anything of this *possible* delay. Adieu. I embrace, &c.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, January 17th, 1786.

Hear all Ye nations! An Epistle from Sheffield-place, received the 17th of January, is answered the same day; and to say the truth, this method, which is the best, is at the same time the most easy and pleasant. Yet I do not allow that in the last past silence and delay you have any more right to damn than myself. Our letters crossed each other, our claims were equal, and if both had been stiffly maintained, our mutual silence must have continued till the day of judgment. The balance was doubtless in my favour, if you recollect the length, the fullness, the variety of pleasant and instructive matter of my last dispatch. Even at present, of myself, my occupations, my designs, I have little or nothing to add; and can only speak dryly and briefly to very dry and disagreeable business demands and want of money. But we shall both agree that the true criminal is My Lady; and though I do suppose that a letter is on the road, which will make some amends, her obstinate, contumacious, dilatory silence, after so many months or years since my valuable letter, is worthy not of a Cat but of a Royal Tygress.

Notwithstanding your gloomy politicians, I do love the funds; and were the next war to reduce them to half, the remainder would be a better and pleasanter property, than a similar value in your dirty acres. We are now in the height of our winter amusements; balls, great suppers, comedies, &c.; and, except St. Stephen's, I certainly lead a more gay

and dissipated life here, among the Alps, (by the bye, a most extraordinary mild winter,) than in the midst of London. Yet my mornings, and sometimes an afternoon, are diligently employed, my work advances, but much remains, indeed much more than I imagined; but a great book, like a great house, was never yet finished at the given time. When I talk of the spring of '87, I suppose all my time well bestowed; and what do you think of a fit of the gout, that may disqualify me for two or three months? You may growl, but if you calmly reflect on my pecuniary and sentimental state, you will believe that I most earnestly desire to compleat my labour, and *visit* England. Adieu.

With regard to the three old Ladies, I behave like a fool to one, and like a beast (though they too are silent) to the other two. But all shall be speedily rectified. The portrait seems to be firmly rooted here. You know you have no right, and Deyverdun seems not disposed to shew you any indulgence.

Yours,
E. G.

I shall probably hear from you and the Goslings before the end of next month, and you may depend on an immediate answer. You will probably have corresponded with Hugonin. It is surely hard to be obliged to a man, who in two years and four months, has not condescended to send me a line of information or account. If you talk of credit, you must allow that it is unpleasant to desire the Darrels to sell a part of my short Annuity.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Lausanne, May 3rd, 1786.

DEAR MADAM,

Shall I begin by a complaint or an apology? Without much injustice I might complain of your long silence, which between other correspondents than ourselves might seem to

indicate some degree of forgetfulness, the too frequent consequences of absence and distance. Between us, however, it indicates no such thing, and in the confidence of our mutual regard our silence is more eloquent than the loquacity of others. I might even add that the constant expectation on every post-day of a letter from Bath, has suspended my not very vigorous efforts to renew the correspondence. Some truth there undoubtedly may be in this assertion, but you will much more readily believe, that in my strange compound of industry and lazyness, I have very often formed the design, and as often found some excellent reason of delay till the very next post, when I would most undoubtedly write to the best and dearest of my friends. Perhaps it would not be a bad method on both sides, a note of four lines, a certificate of health and remembrance, without computing of debtor or creditor, or any formal attempt to produce a regular Epistle. But as even this project may fail, I must seriously beg that you would never allow yourself to be made uneasy by any flying reports, or newspaper. Be assured that if any untoward accident should stop my breath, or disable my hand, my friend M. Deyverdun will send the early and authentic Gazette to Sheffield place, from whence it will be imparted with proper speed to my other friends in England. At the same time, I can affirm with truth, that my sole reason for this advertisement is derived from some foolish Articles, that were very familiar last year to the home and foreign papers. Since I have known you or myself I never had more pleasing inducements to cherish life, or less apprehension of too speedily quitting it.

My health is certainly better than when I left England, and this improvement I partly ascribe to the climate, and partly to the temperance of my diet. I had long ago shaken off the bad habits of the Hampshire Militia, but a London life, in the best Company, is a life of fullness and intemperance; which cannot be separated from the lateness and irregularity of our hours, the variety of wines and dishes, and the English

practise of setting after dinner, with the bottle and glasses on the table. Since my last fit of the Gout, I avoid the temptation without losing the pleasure of suppers, by confining myself to a mess of boiled milk, and in companies of twenty or thirty men and women, my frugal bason has often been placed on the tables: my dinners are moderate, and breakfast still continues to be my favourite repast. This regimen appears to have succeeded; I have passed the winter without hearing of the enemy, and last month, after a short and slight visit or rather menace, he politely retired, and has left me free to enjoy the beauties of an incomparable spring, which rapidly treads on the heels of a very mild winter.

The glories of the landskip I have always enjoyed; but Deyverdun has almost given me a taste for minute observation, and I can dwell with pleasure on the shape and colour of the leaves, the various hues of the blossoms, and successive progress of vegetation. These pleasures are not without cares; and there is a white Acacia just under the windows of my library, which in my opinion was too closely pruned last Autumn, and whose recovery is the daily subject of anxiety and conversation! My romantic wishes led sometimes to an idea which was impracticable in England, the possession of an house and garden, which should unite the society of town with the beauties and freedom of the country. That idea is now realized in a degree of perfection to which I never aspired, and if I could convey in words a just picture of my library, apartments, terrace, wilderness, vineyard, with the prospect of land and water, terminated by the mountains; and this position at the gate of a populous and lively town where I have some friends and many acquaintance, you would envy or rather applaud the singular propriety of my choice.

During the first year of my residence I often compared the tumult of London and the house of Commons, with the studious social tranquillity of Lausanne, and felt with complacency that I had chosen the better part. Those busy

scenes are now far from me, like the remembrance of a noisy and troublesome dream, and though I possess from nature or reflection a happiness of temper that can be easy almost in any situation, I am at a loss to conceive how I could support so long a way of life so ill-suited to my mind and circumstances. What I particularly disliked was the alternative of a batchelor, large accidental dinners abroad, or my solitary chicken at home. Here I can keep a regular table and establishment equal to the best families of the place; we seldom dine alone, and I have often agreable suppers of men and women. The habits of female conversation have sometimes tempted me to acquire the piece of furniture, a wife, and could I unite in a single Woman, the virtues and accomplishments of half a dozen of my acquaintance, I would instantly pay my addresses to the Constellation.

In the mean while I must content myself with my other wife, the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, which I prosecute with pleasant and constant industry. I had some hopes of compleating it this year, but let no man who builds a house, or writes a book, presume to say when he will have finished. When he imagines that he is drawing near to his journey's end, Alps rise on Alps, and he continually finds something to add, and something to correct. Yet I *now* think myself sure of bringing over two or three Volumes in quarto (down to the taking of Constantinople by the Turks) in the course of next summer, I mean the summer of eighty-seven, and as the business of impression will require many months, I may long enjoy the company of my English friends. Of private friends I hope to find many in the *vulgar*, and some in the *pure* and *genuine* sense of the word, but I shall be totally bewildered. About three months after my departure, an Earthquake threw down all the men and systems of which I had any knowledge, and the country seems to be governed by a set of most respectable boys, who were at school half a dozen years ago. I see in the papers that young Eliot is become the brother and privy-Counsellor of Pitt, and that

the independent father has no objection either to titles or places.

And now, My Dear Madam, after so much about myself, let me conclude with a word of enquiry on a subject very near to my heart, your health and happiness. The only apprehension from your silence relates to want of activity and spirits, and from those fears I hope you can honestly deliver me. Remember me with kindness to Mrs. Gould, and Mrs. Holroyd, and let me hear if any thing good has befallen them, more especially the former, whose situation was more susceptible of change: when I mention her I include her family. Is Mr. Melmoth still alive? I saw young Coxe last year, with a very decent and reasonable Bear, whom he leads from North to South. Adieu, Dear Madam, my paper fails.

Most truly yours,

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, Jan. 20th, 1787.

After some sallies of wrath, you seem at length to have subsided in sullen silence, and I must confess not totally without reason. Yet if your mind be still open to truth, you will confess that I am not quite so black as I appear. 1. Your Lordship has shewn much less activity and eloquence than formerly, and your last letter was an answer to mine, which I had expected some time with patience. Bad examples are dangerous to young People. 2. Formerly I have neglected answering your Epistles on essential, though unpleasant, business; and the *Res-publica* or *-privata* may have suffered by my neglect. At present, when you have paid away the £500 of your own creation in Gosling's hands, satisfied Newton and *Job* (I do not mean the most patient of men), and withdraw my writings from the Attorney's paw, I do not recollect any matter of interest remaining in your hands to exercise your industry, vex my temper, or sully your dispatches. That sum of £500 you will find

entire and intact in Fleet Street; you may exhaust, but in spite of my general credit I hope you will not exceed it.

Supposing, therefore, we had no transactions, why should I write so often? To exchange sentimental compliments, or to relate the various and important transactions of the Republic of Lausanne? As long as I do not inform you of my death, you have good grounds to believe me alive and well: you have a general, and will soon have a more particular, idea of my system and arrangement here. One day glides away after another in tranquil uniformity. Every object must have sides and moments less luminous than others; but, upon the whole, the life and the place which I have chosen are most happily adapted to my character and circumstances; and I can now repeat, at the end of three years, what I soon and sincerely affirmed, that never, in a single instant, have I repented of my scheme of retirement to Lausanne; a retirement which was judged by my best and wisest friend a project little short of insanity. The place, the people, the climate, have answered or exceeded my warmest expectations: and I truly rejoice in my approaching visit to England. Mr. Pitt, were he your friend and mine, would not find it an easy task to prevent my return.

3. And now let me add a third reason, which often diverted me from writing; namely, my impatience to see you this next summer. I am building a great book, which, besides the three stories already exposed to the public eye, will have three stories more before we reach the roof and battlements. You too have built or altered a great Gothic Castle with Baronial battlements; did you finish it within the time you intended? As that time drew near, did you not find a thousand nameless and unexpected works that must be performed; each of them calling for a portion of time and labour? and had you not despised, nobly despised, the minute diligence of finishing, fitting up, and furnishing the apartments, you would have discovered a new train of indispensable business. Such, at least, has been my case. A long while ago,

when I contemplated the distant prospect of my work, I gave you and myself some hopes of landing in England last Autumn; but, alas! when autumn grew near, hills began to rise on hills, Alps on Alps, and I found my journey far more tedious and toilsome than I had imagined.

When I look back on the length of the undertaking, and the variety of materials, I cannot accuse, or suffer myself to be accused, of idleness; yet it appeared that unless I doubled my diligence, another year, and perhaps more, would elapse before I could embark with my complete manuscript. Under these circumstances I took, and am still executing, a bold and meritorious resolution. The mornings in winter, and in a country of early dinners, are very concise; to them, my usual period of study, I now frequently add the evenings, renounce cards and society, refuse the most agreeable evenings, or perhaps make my appearance at a late supper. By this extraordinary industry, which I never practised before, and to which I hope never to be again reduced, I see the last part of my history growing apace under my hands; all my materials are collected and arranged; I can exactly compute, by the square foot, or the square page, all that remains to be done; and after concluding text and notes, after a general review of my time and my ground, I can now decisively ascertain the final period of the decline and fall, and can boldly promise that I will dine with you at Sheffield-place in the month of August, or perhaps of July, in the present year; within less than a twelfthmonth of the term which I had loosely and originally fixed; and perhaps it would not be easy to find a work of that size and importance in which the workman has so tolerably kept his word with himself and the public. But in this situation, oppressed with this particular object, and stealing every hour from my amusement, to the fatigue of the pen and the eyes, you will conceive, or you might conceive, how little stomach I have for the Epistolary style; and that instead of idle, though friendly, correspondence, I think it far more agreeable to employ my time in the

effectual measures that may hasten and exhilarate our personal interview.

About a month ago I had a voluntary, and not unpleasing Epistle from Cadell; he informs me that he is going to print a new octavo edition, the former being exhausted, and that the public expect with impatience the conclusion of that excellent work, whose reputation and sale increases every day, &c. I answered him by the return of the post, to inform him of the period and extent of my labours, and to express a reasonable hope that he would set the same value on the three last as he had done on the three former Volumes. Should we conclude in this easy manner a transaction so honourable to the author and bookseller, my way is clear and open before; in pecuniary matters I think I am assured for the rest of my life of never troubling my friends, or being troubled myself; a state to which I aspire, and which I indeed deserve, if not by my management, at least by moderation.

In your last, you talk more of the French treaty [1] than of yourself and your wife and family; a true English *Quid nunc!* For my part, in this remote, inland, neutral country, you will suppose, that after a slight glance on the papers, I have neither had the means or the inclination to think very deeply about it. As a Citizen of the World, a character to which I am every day rising or sinking, I must rejoyce in every agreement that diminishes the separation between neighbouring countries, which softens their prejudices, unites their interest and industry, and renders their future hostilities less frequent and less implacable. With regard to the present treaty, I hope both nations are gainers; since otherwise it cannot be lasting; and such double mutual gain is surely possible in fair trade, though it could not easily happen in the mis-

[1] A Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between Great Britain and France was signed at Versailles on September 26, 1786, and a Supplementary Convention was signed between the same powers on January 15, 1787. Both treaties were signed on behalf of Great Britain by William Eden.

chievous amusements of war and gaming. I am much pleased with our great patriots who write to you for sense as schoolboys on an exercise day. What a delightful hand have these great statesmen made of it since my departure! without power, and, as far as I can see, without hope. When we meet I shall advise you to digest all your political and commercial knowledge, (England, Ireland, France, America,) and, with some attention to style and order, to make the whole a Classic book, which may preserve your name and benefit your Country. I know not whether you have seen Sir Henry Clinton since his return: he passed a day with me, and seemed pleased with my reception and place. We talked over you and the American War. Mrs. Trevor passes the winter here: she is pleasing and fashionable. I embrace the *silent My Lady* and the two honourable Misses, whom I sigh to behold and admire. Adieu. Ever yours.

I have three or four things to add of meaner importance.

1. My Journey to England costs me a good servant: he has a farm, a shop, and a wife: absence from these frightens him, and he takes this opportunity of retiring from the domestic state.

2. Though I can part with land, you find I cannot part with books: the remainder of my library has so long embarrassed your stinking room that it may now await my presence and final judgment.

3. All my coloured handkerchiefs are worn out: I wish My Lady would get me a couple of dozen of the best sort from Ireland: an elegant Poplin would likewise be acceptable for a fur Coat. Has the said My Lady read a novel intitled Caroline de Lichfield, of our home manufacture? I may say of ours, since Deyverdun and myself were the judges and patrons of the Manuscripts. The author, who is since married a second time, (Madame de Crousaz, now Montolieu), is a charming woman. I was in some danger. Once more, bar a long fit of the Gout, and the historian will land at Dover before the end of July. Adieu.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, June 2nd, 1787.

I begin to discover that if I wait till I could atchieve a just and satisfactory Epistle, equally pleasant and instructive, you would have a poor chance of hearing from me. I will therefore content myself with a simple answer to a question, which (I love to believe) you repeat with some impatience: "When may we expect you in England?" My great building is, as it were, compleated, and some slight ornaments, the painting and glazing of the last finished rooms, may be dispatched without inconvenience in the autumnal residence of Sheffield-place. It is therefore my sincere and peremptory intention to depart from Lausanne about the 20th of July, and to find myself (*me trouver*) in London on or before the glorious first of August. I know of nothing that can prevent it but a fit of the gout, the capricious tyrant, who obeys no laws either of time or place; and so unfortunately are we circumstanced, that such a fit, if it came late and lasted long, would effectually disable me from coming till next spring; since thereby I should lose the season, the monsoon, for the impression of three quarto volumes, which will require nine months (a regular parturition), and cannot advantageously appear before the beginning or middle of May.

At the same time do not be apprehensive that I mean to play you a dog's trick. From a thousand motives it is my wish to come over this year; the desire of seeing you, and the *silent sullen* My lady; the family arrangements, discharge of servants, which I have already made; the strong wish of settling my three youngest children in a manner honourable to them and beneficial to their parent. Much miscellaneous matter rises to my pen, but I will not be tempted to turn the leaf. Expect me therefore at Sheffield-place, with strong probability, about the 15th of August. You say nothing of

your final settlement with Newton: if the Attorney refuses to give parchments for money he must have some bad intention. Adieu. Yours.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Adelphi Hotel, August the 8th, 1787.

Intelligence extraordinary. — This day (August the 7th) the celebrated E. G. arrived in the Adelphi with a numerous retinue (one Servant). We hear that he has brought over from Lausanne the remainder of his history for immediate publication. The post had left town before my arrival. I am pleased, but indeed astonished, to find myself in London, after a journey of six hundred miles, and hardly yet conceive how I had resolution to undertake it. I find myself not a little fatigued, and have devoted this hot day to privacy and repose, without having seen any body except Cadell and Elmsley, and my neighbour Batt, whose civility amounts to kindness and real friendship. But you may depend on it, that instead of sauntering in town, or giving way to every temptation, I will dispatch my necessary work, and hasten with impatience to the groves of Sheffield-place; a project somewhat more rational than the hasty, turbulent visit which your vigour had imagined. If you come up to quicken my diligence,[1] we shall meet the sooner; but I see no appearance of my leaving town before the end of next week. I embrace, &c. Adieu.

[1] "I went to London," writes Lord Sheffield to William Eden from Sheffield Place, on August 22, 1787, "for a few days to conduct the Gibbon to this place. The Gibbon is settled here till winter; he will reside with us in Downing Street in winter and spring. The three quartos will appear in the spring, but as to remaining in this country, he has not the slightest notion of it. I have not yet succeeded in infusing a proper political zeal into him."

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

MY DEAR MADAM, Adelphi Hotel, August 9th, 1787.

At length, after a pleasant journey, I again breathe the air of my native country; and though I quitted with some regret my friends, my house, my garden, my library at Lausanne, I already find many objects that compensate my losses. I reached the Adelphi Hotel *Wednesday* the 8th instant, after the departure of the post. The first arrangements of my litterary business, and some social meetings will detain me here till the middle or end of next week, after which I shall bury myself at Sheffield-place to revise and correct. The printer mutters some complaints of the distance, but it is not possible at this time of year to confine myself to a sultry and solitary metropolis. Adieu, my dear Madam, let me soon have an account, and a favourable account, of yourself.

I am
Ever yours,
E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

MY DEAR MADAM, Sheffield-place, Sept. 23, 1787.

I am extremely happy that by Mrs. Holroyd's kind enquiries in my name, the veil is at length withdrawn, and a mistake is removed which has given us, with an appearance of reason, some mutual anxiety. No one doubtless is less entitled than myself to confound the indolence of the pen with the coldness of the heart, yet I must confess that I was surprized and grieved, that you should not take the smallest notice of the letter in which I had announced my arrival in England. Each post encreased my uneasiness, which was at the same time aggravated and soothed by the assurance from Mrs. H. that illness could not be the cause of your silence, and this day was the last which I had fixed for asking the favour of a line of comfort and explanation. By

this you will understand that I have never received your kind answer directed to me in town, and, though the loss of a letter by the post is a rare, and to many, an incredible event, I can explain it in this instance by a singular concurrence of circumstances. Two Hotels which bear the name of the Adelphi stand opposite to each other, and two Mr. Gibbons were lodged at the same time in the adverse houses, as Lord Sheffield perceived on his coming up to find me out. Your direction was applied to my rival, and as he had already departed into the country, his letter must have been sent after him, and he alone is guilty for not acknowledging and rectifying the error.

I have now passed some weeks with our friends Lord and Lady Sheffield, who wish me to express in their name every sentiment of attachment and regard; they both lament the disappointment of their wishes of enjoying your company in this place, and would promise that during your stay, it should not be profaned by any American rebels, or any fashionable females whose conduct may be less calculated to edify than to please. I am here, very idle and very busy. After building a great house, a thousand little alterations, improvements and ornaments present themselves to the architect, and besides the trouble of painting and glazing some of the last apartments, I have the daily duty of receiving, correcting, and returning a printed sheet which is sent me from London. Impatient as I am to visit Bath, I must defer my journey till I am in a great measure got out of my litterary brick and mortar; and if I can postpone it till the beginning of December, Lord Sheffield gives me hopes of his company. The moments I can pass with you will be some of the most pleasing of my life, and it will give me real concern, that I shall find it impossible to prolong my visit as I could wish, much less to fix my winter residence at Bath.

I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Wednesday, Nov. 27.

The assurance that neither giants nor dragons were to be feared between Sheffield Place and Pall Mall had induced me to leave to your fancy or judgment the well-known circumstances of changing horses, alighting from the chaise, surveying the lodging (bad and dear), ordering a fowl from the Cocoa-tree, &c., &c., and I feel every day the awkwardness of the six o'clock post. The first evening I passed at home and had scarcely dined when the Poet Hayley was announced: he embraced, forgave me, and we entered on a pleasant conversation of two hours. I mentioned to him your Christmas plan: he is grateful, but seems to decline it. However I shall see him again, and possibly he may fall in your way.

You would make me vain; nor am I less touched by the growlings of my lady, than by the praises of the Maria, whose probable excursion I applaud. As yet I have chiefly attended to my litterary concerns, and have only seen Crauford, the Lucans, Sir Joshua, &c. I have knocked without success at Lord Loughborough's door, but shall dine with him before the end of the week, perhaps with M. de Calonne,[1] who is a favourite with all parties. Pitt in the *general* opinion seems to be the Hero of the day, and Lord Lucan, fresh from Paris, says that nothing can equal the conscious shame of the French, except their public abhorrence of the Queen, and their wild resolutions of freedom. Take care of Severy,[2] I had rather he did not go to Lewes: a set of drunken dragoons.

As I may not write again (do not be furious) I can positively say that my departure for Bath is fixed for Saturday sennight, and that I shall expect you, &c., on Thursday at latest. For

[1] Charles Alexandre de Calonne was Director-General of Finances from 1783 to 1787.

[2] Wilhelm de Severy, the son of Gibbon's friends at Lausanne, had, at his suggestion, paid a visit to England.

the possession of your house, I believe the Dutchess would scruple at few sacrifices either pecuniary or *personal.* Could you resist? Do not imitate my negligence in forgetting the herald John G.[1] He will make a great figure at Bath. Adieu.

TO LADY SHEFFIELD

Bath, December 18th, 1787.

Alas! alas! alas! How vain and fallacious are all the designs of man. This is now the 18th of December, precisely one month since my departure from Sheffield-place; and it was firmly my wish, my hope, my resolution, that after dispatching some needful business in London, and accomplishing a pious duty at Bath, I should by this day be restored to the tranquil leisure, and friendly society, of S. P. A cruel tyrant has disconcerted all my plans; my business in town has been neglected, my attendance at Bath is just begun, and my return is yet distant. I was not a little edified to hear of some expressions of regret and discontent on my departure; and though I am not able to produce as good evidence, you will perhaps believe that in the solitude of a London lodging I often railed at the gout for maliciously delaying his attack till I was removed from a place where my sufferings would have been alleviated by every kind and comfortable attention. I grew at last so desperately impatient, as to resolve on immediate flight, without waiting till I had totally expelled the foe, and recovered my strength. I performed the journey with tolerable ease, but the motion has agitated the remains of the humour. I am very lame, and a second fit may possibly be the punishment of my rashness.

As yet I have seen nothing of Bath except Mrs. G.; and weakness, as well as propriety, will confine me very closely to her. I am carried over the way in a chair about one o'clock, maintain a conversation till ten o'clock in the evening,

[1] John Gibbon, the herald, 1671–1718.

and am then reconveyed to my lodging. Lord S., with Mrs. Holroyd and Maria, dined with us yesterday on the haunch of venison, but such reliefs are not always to be expected, and I chearfully perform an act of duty which is necessary and cannot be long. I am astonished to see Mrs. Gibbon so well, and though undoubtedly weaker, she seems in the last five years to be very little altered either in mind or person. We begin to throw out hints of the shortness of our stay, and indispensable business; and, unless I should be confined by the gout, it is resolved in our cabinet to leave Bath on Thursday the 26th, and passing through Lord Loughborough's and town, to settle at Sheffield, most assuredly, before the end of the year. Maria, to whom every object is new and pleasant, and who begins to undraw the curtain of the great theatre, wonders and almost murmurs at our impatience. For my own part I can say with truth, that did not the press loudly demand my presence, I could, without a sigh, allow the Dutchess to reign in Downing Street the greatest part of the winter, and should be happy in the society of two persons (no common blessing) whom I love, and by whom I am beloved. I understand with pleasure and gratitude that with the assistance of two Ushers (Miss Firth and Mrs. Moss) you have undertaken the care of Severy's English studies, from whence I expect a most rapid progress. I know not whether yours in Trisset will be equal. Pray inform our pupil, that I shall write from hence to his parents, that I am much obliged to him for his letter, which I hope to answer in a fortnight at Sheffield-place.

Adieu, Dear Madam, and believe me, with the affection of a friend and brother, ever Yours.

TO LADY SHEFFIELD

Bath, January 4th, 1788.

I congratulate you and myself on what I now consider as certain, the evacuation of Downing Street. Col. Fullarton,

a cousin of the Dutchess, informed me yesterday, that after sending her children I know not where, perhaps to the parish, she had indignantly fled into the country. By this day's post I expect an official confirmation from Lord S., and as he will probably reach you as soon as this letter, the communication will inform him of my intended motions. You will admire the triumphant Maria, and your observation will soon discern whether it will be easy to brush the powder out of her hair, and the world out of her heart, or to shut her eyes after they have been once opened to the light of pleasure. This excursion will render our scheme still more necessary, and in my letter from hence I sound Madame de S. on the subject: the more I revolve it, I think the exchange will be pleasant and beneficial to my English and Swiss friends, whose mutual advantage I shall have the advantage of promoting. You have already understood that my precipitation in leaving London has been justly punished by a second and worse fit of the gout and a fortnight's confinement.

I now begin to crawl again on two crutches, and my first sally in a chair will be to return the charitable visits of the Dutchess and her friend the Ætherial of poor Lord North, &c. Were I capable of listening to experience or common sense, I should remain here a week or ten days longer; but I am so impatient to leave this place and to reach London and S. P. that I mean to escape next Monday: Tuesday afternoon and all Wednesday will be the least that my litterary business in town will require, and I have hopes of dining at S. P. on Thursday the 10th instant, after an absence twice as long and ten times as disagreeable as I expected. As I now run, not from you, but to you, you will view my rashness with indulgence, and nurse my infirmities with compassion. — Excuse me to Severy for not answering his two letters, and let him be in readiness to receive me. Adieu.

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Downing Street, May 28th, 1788.

DEAR MADAM,

Both as an author and as a friend I am delighted with your kind approbation: and I enjoy the pleasing assurance that the perusal of my history may sometimes beguile a solitary hour, and recall the historian still more forcibly to your mind. For my own part I now feel as if a mountain was removed from my breast; as far as I can judge, the public unanimously applauds my compliment to Lord North,[1] and does not appear dissatisfied with the conclusion of my work. I look back with amazement on the road which I have travelled, but which I should never have entered had I been previously apprized of its length.

In your last letter you express some joy at the approach of summer, as it is connected with my second visit to Bath which I had promised to make before my departure for the Continent. On my side the promise will be most chearfully performed, and in the prospect of embracing a dear and valuable friend I shall ever esteem fatigue and expence as of small account. The Sheffields leave town in the beginning of next week; I must continue some days after them to pack up my books and dispatch some necessary business, and in about a fortnight I could undertake the journey to Bath. Yet before you resolve, I wish you coolly to weigh whether prudence should advise us to gratify or restrain our inclination. In my Christmas visit, confined as I was by the gout, I could not but observe how much my presence and your desire of inviting company to amuse me deranged the privacy of your life and the distribution of your hours. Delicate health and spirits like yours are agitated even by the pleasure, the tumultuous pleasure, of an interview; and that pleasure is embittered by the painful foresight of an approaching

[1] Vols. iv., v., and vi. of the *Decline and Fall* were published in April, 1788. The preface to these volumes contained an eulogium on Lord North.

separation. According to my arrangements, which it is no longer in my power to break, I *must* return to Lausanne early in the month of July, nor can I indulge my wishes at the Belvidere beyond the term of a week. That week is perfectly at your service, and I only hope to receive your commands as soon as possible. Lord and Lady S. beg to be remembered to you in the kindest manner.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Downing-street, Saturday (June 17th, 1788).

I have but a moment between my return home and my dressing, and heartily tired I am; for I am now involved in the horrors of shopping, packing, &c.; yet I must write four lines to prevent a growl and a damn, which might salute the arrival of an empty-handed post on Sunday. I hope the whole caravan, Christians and pagans, arrived in good health at the castle; that the Turrets begin to rise to the third Heaven; that each has found a proper occupation; and that Tuft enjoys the freedom and felicity of the lawn.

Yesterday the august scene was closed for this year. Sheridan surpassed himself; and though I am far from considering him as a perfect orator, there were many beautiful passages in his speech, on justice, filial love, &c.; one of the closest chains of argument I ever heard, to prove that Hastings was responsible for the acts of Middleton; and a compliment, much admired, to a certain historian of your acquaintance. Sheridan, in the close of his speech, sunk into Burke's arms; but I called this morning, he is perfectly well. A good Actor![1]

I fear that I shall not be able to dine at home a single day. To-morrow Severy and myself go to Bushy. I hope to be

[1] The trial of Warren Hastings began in Westminster Hall on February 13, 1788. Sheridan's speech was delivered on June 3, 6, 10, and 13.

with you by Sunday the 22nd Instant, but I find I have much to do, and the most important business of my Magdalen farms is not concluded. You know Hugonin's method of writing most when there is least occasion for it. I have not had a line from him since I sent the College license. The casing of my books is a prodigious operation. Adieu.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Downing-street, June 21st, 1788.

Instead of the historian, you receive a short letter; in your eyes an indispensable tribute. This day, at length, after long delay and frequent expostulation, I have received the writings, which I am now in the act of signing, sealing, and delivering, according to the lawyer's directions. They return to-night by the Mail Coach into Hugonin's hands, from which they will not depart till the money is paid. I hope to receive it next Tuesday; next Wednesday must be employed with the Darrels in proper investments, and the Thursday I hope to be at Sheffield. You see my departure is not postponed a moment by idleness or pleasure, but the precise day still hangs on contingencies, and we must all be patient, if our wishes should be thwarted. I say our wishes, for I sincerely desire to be with you. I have had many dinners, some splendid and memorable, with Hastings last Thursday, with the Prince of Wales next Tuesday, both by special desire. But the town empties, Texier is silent, and in an evening, I *desiderate* the resources of a family or a club. Caplen has finished the Herculean labour, and seven Majestic boxes will abdicate on Monday your hall. Severy has likewise dispatched his affairs, and secured his Companion Clarke, who is arrived in town; but his schemes are abridged by the inexorable rigour of Lord Howe, who has assured our great and fair Intercessors, that by the king's orders the dockyards are shut against all strangers. We therefore give up

Portsmouth, and content ourselves with two short trips; one to Stowe and Oxford, the other to Chatham; and if we can catch a launch and review, *encore vit-on*. He (Severy, not Lord Howe) salutes with me the Christians and Pagans of the family. Adieu. Yours.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Downing street, Saturday, June 25th, 1788 (?).

According to your imperious law I write a line, to postpone my arrival to Friday, or perhaps Saturday, but I hope Friday, and I promise you that not a moment shall be wasted.

And now let me add a cool word as to my final departure, which is irrevocably fixed between the 10th and 15th of July. After a full and free enjoyment of each other's society, let us submit, without a struggle, to reason and fate. It would be idle to pretend business at Lausanne; but a compleat year will elapse before my return. Severy and myself are now expected with some impatience. I desire to see *my own* house; *my own* library; *my own* garden, whose summer beauties are each day losing something. I am thankful for your hospitable entertainment; but I wish you to remember Homer's admirable precept:

"Welcome the coming, *speed* the parting guest."

Spare me, therefore, spare yourself, the trouble of a fruitless contest, in which (according to a great author) I foresee a certain loss of time, and a probable loss of temper. The Petersfield business is terminated, and I have received the money; but Darrel will not come to town from Richmond. I believe we shall have both Craufurd and Hugonin at Sheffield-place. Adieu.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Sheffield-place, July the 18th, 1788.

My dear Madam,

A kind and generous behaviour is what I always expect from you; and your obliging condescension with regard to Buriton, the sale of which would place me in so desirable a situation, excites rather gratitude than surprize in my breast. I agree with you in wishing to refer the detail of this business to your correspondence with Lord Sheffield, who will weigh every circumstance and every objection, who will consider in the first place your satisfaction, and my interest in the second. Let me only say that the idea of a Mortgage was partly for your security and partly from an apprehension of trusting my whole fortune to the public credit; that such an investment of money unites, when it is carefully made, the solidity of land with the clear ready payment of the funds, and that I am not less averse than yourself to any connection, open or clandestine, with the member for Petersfield.

To-morrow I shall leave this place, where I have been detained much longer than I intended by an indisposition of poor Severy which prevented him from waiting on you at Bath. I dine to-morrow at Tunbridge-Wells with Lord North, reach Dover Sunday, pass the water, if possible, Monday, and repose myself at Lausanne about Wednesday sevennight the 30th instant. You are too well acquainted with the World and with me not to smile at the report of my approaching marriage, of which you might be sure of having the earliest and most direct information. Cadell is too discreet to have opened his mouth on a subject, on which for particular reasons we had mutually promised secrecy. The public, where it costs them nothing, are extravagantly liberal; yet I will allow with Dr. Johnson "that booksellers in this age are not the worst patrons of litterature."

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, July 30, 1788. — Wednesday, 3 o'clock.

I have but a moment to say, before the departure of the post, that, after a very pleasant journey, I arrived here about half an hour ago; that I am as well arranged, as if I had never stirred from this place; and that dinner on the table is just announced. Severy I dropt at his country-house about two leagues off. I just saluted the family, who dine with me the day after to-morrow, and return to town for some days, I hope weeks, on my account. The son is an amiable and grateful Youth; and even this journey has taught me to know and to love him still better. My satisfaction would be compleat, had I not found a sad and serious alteration in poor Deyverdun; but thus our joys are checkered! I embrace all; and at this moment feel the last pang of our parting at Tunbridge. Convey this letter or information, without delay, from Sheffield-place to Bath. In a few days I shall write more amply to both places.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

October 1, 1788.

After such an act of vigour as my first letter, composed, finished, and dispatched within half an hour after my landing, while the dinner was smoaking on the table, your knowledge of the animal must have taught you to expect a proportionable degree of relaxation; and you will be satisfied to hear, that, for many Wednesdays and Saturdays, I have consumed more time than would have sufficed for the Epistle, in devising reasons for procrastinating it to the next post. At this very moment I begin so very late, as I am just going to dress, and dine in the Country, that I can take only the benefit of the date, October the first, and must be content to seal and send my letter next Saturday.

October the 4th.

Saturday is now arrived, and I much doubt whether I shall have time to finish. I rose, as usual, about seven; but as I knew I should have so much time, you know it would have been ridiculous to begin any thing before Breakfast. When I returned from my breakfast-room to the library, unluckily I found on the table some new and interesting books, which instantly caught my attention; and without injuring my correspondent, I could safely bestow a single hour to gratify my curiosity. Some things I found in them insensibly led me to other books, and other enquiries; the morning has stolen away, and I shall be soon summoned to dress and dine with the two Severys, father and son, who are returned from the Country on a disagreeable errand, an illness of Madame, from which she is, however, recovering. Such is the faithful picture of my mind and manners, and from a single day *disce omnes*.

After having been so long chained to the oar, in a splendid galley indeed, I freely and fairly enjoy my liberty as I promised in my preface; range without controul over the wide expanse of my library; converse, as my fancy prompts me, with poets and historians, philosophers and Orators, of every age and language; and often indulge my meditations in the invention and arrangement of mighty works, which I shall probably never find time or application to execute. My garden, *berceau*, and pavillion often varied the scene of my studies; the beautiful weather which we have enjoyed exhilarated my spirits, and I again tasted the wisdom and happiness of my retirement, till that happiness was interrupted by a very serious calamity, which took from me, for above a fortnight, all thoughts of study, of amusement, and even of correspondence. I mentioned in my first letter the uneasiness I felt at poor Deyverdun's declining health, how much the pleasure of my life was embittered by the sight of a suffering and languid friend. The joy of our meeting appeared at first to

revive him; and, though not satisfied, I began to think, at least to hope, that he was every day gaining ground; when, alas! one morning I was suddenly recalled from my berceau to the house, with the dreadful intelligence of an Apoplectic stroke; I found him senseless: the best assistance was instantly collected; and he had the aid of the genius and experience of Mr. Tissot, and of the assiduous care of an ordinary Physician, who for some time scarcely quitted his bedside either night or day. You will understand his danger when I recapitulate the operations of a few hours — leeches, six bleeding vomits, purges, clysters, blisters to his thighs, warm baths, and mustard to his feet. While I was in momentary dread of a relapse, with a confession from his physicians that such a relapse must be fatal, you will feel that I was much more to be pitied than my friend. At length, Art or Nature triumphed over the enemy of life. I was soon assured that all immediate danger was past: and now for many days I have had the satisfaction of seeing him recover, though by slow degrees, his health and strength, his sleep and appetite. He now walks about the garden, and receives his particular friends, but has not yet gone abroad. His future health will depend very much upon his own prudence: but, at all events, this has been a very serious warning; and the slightest indisposition will hereafter assume a very formidable aspect.

But let us turn from this melancholy subject. — The man of the people escaped from the tumult, the bloody tumult of the Westminster Election, to the lakes and mountains of Switzerland, and I was informed that he was arrived at the Lyon d'Or. I sent a compliment; he answered it in person; we returned together to the Inn, brought away the fair Mrs. Armstead,[1] and settled at my house for the remainder of the day. I have eat and drank, and conversed and sat up all

[1] Charles James Fox, who is alluded to above as "the man of the people," married Mrs. Elizabeth Armitstead in 1795. She survived her husband.

night with Fox in England; but it never has happened, perhaps it never can happen again, that I should enjoy him as I did that day, alone, for his fair Companion was a cypher, from ten in the morning till ten at night. Poor Deyverdun, before his accident, wanted spirits to appear, and has regretted it since. Our conversation never flagged a moment; and he seemed thoroughly pleased with the place and with his Company. We had little politicks; though he gave me, in a few words, such a character of Pitt, as one great man should give of another his rival: much of books, from my own, on which he flattered me very pleasantly, to Homer and the Arabian nights; much about the country, my garden (which he understands far better than I do), and, upon the whole, I think he envies me, and would do so were he Minister. The next morning I gave him a guide to walk him about the town and country, and invited some company to meet him at dinner. The following day he continued his journey to Berne and Zurich, and I have heard of him by various means. The people gaze on him as a prodigy, but he shows little inclination to converse with them. The wit and beauty of his Companion are not sufficient to excuse the scandalous impropriety of shewing her to all Europe, and you will not easily conceive how he has lost himself in the public opinion, which was already more favourable to his Rival. Will Fox never know the importance of character?

Far different has been the conduct and success of our friend Douglas;[1] he has been curious, attentive, agreeable; and in every place where he has resided some days, he has left acquaintance who esteem and regret him: I never knew so clear and general an impression.

After this long letter I have yet many things to say, though none of any pressing consequence. I hope you are not idle in the deliverance of Buriton, though the late events and edicts

[1] Sylvester Douglas, afterwards Lord Glenbervie, who married, in September, 1789, Catherine, eldest daughter of Lord North.

in France begin to reconcile me to the possession of dirty acres. What think you of Necker and the States generals? Are not the public expectations sanguine? Adieu. I will write soon to My Lady separately, though I have not any particular subject for her ear.

Ever yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, Nov. 29, 1788.

As I have no Correspondents but yourself, I should have been reduced to the stale and stupid communications of the papers, if you had not most gloriously dispatched me a sketch of the strange revolution that three Kingdoms should depend on the brain of one man![1] In so new a case the *Salus populi* must be the first law; and any extraordinary acts of the two remaining branches of the Legislature must be excused by necessity, and ratified by general consent. Yet I cannot any more than yourself understand this speedy and peremptory sentence of the Medical tribe. The apprehension or rather hope of his death may admonish the reigning ministers not to irritate the heir apparent: otherwise, since they have a Majority, what should prevent them from shackling him with a Counsel, or from tacking to the address of support a request that he would not change his servants? They have the confidence (aye growl) of the Country and of Europe: by *them*, I mean Pitt. Till things are settled, I expect a regular Journal.

From kingdoms I descend to farms, and the latter in a selfish consideration are not the least important and interesting. You seem to have made a considerable progress in the Buriton affair, since you would not have fixed the price without a careful survey and valuation of each particular founded on your

[1] In the summer of 1788 George III. showed symptoms of mental derangement; but he had signed a warrant for the further prorogation of Parliament from September 25 to November 20. In that interval he grew rapidly worse, and was placed under restraint.

own judgement and that of some able professor. You do not however mention that you have employed any such person. I submit to your science, but I cannot say that I am fond of this mode of auctions: besides the publicity, which on this occasion may be dangerous, you expose yourself either to let the estate go for an inadequate price or to an improper purchaser; or else by purchasing it in, you incur the expences, tax, &c., to a large amount. Since we know the persons whom Buriton best suits, suppose Bonham, Lords Stawell, and Egremont, might not the same end be answered with less inconvenience by writing at the same time a public circular letter to each, and desiring that by a certain day they would send in sealed proposals? Would they not have the same inducement to bid against one another? Upon the whole the 18,000 pounds would make me happy for life. Yet I would not proceed hastily in this momentous business. What is the motive of Hugonin's sudden migration, is it health, distress, fancy? Where does he settle? Who will take care of my affairs? A year's rent is now due, besides some arrears.

I have written to my two old Ladies without receiving answers. What are your accounts from Bath? I hope you have satisfied *her* about the sale of Buriton, which I would much sooner delay than give her any uneasiness. I wish we had a correspondent at Stamford (that Attorney whose name I have forgot, who called upon me in Downing Street) to give you notice in case it should please Almighty God, &c. — Deyverdun is not worse. Yet I much doubt whether you will see him next year. Do you still persist? Thinking as you do, I feel the force of a certain objection, and must own that a small circle is often more dangerous than a large one. I likewise fear for yourself the want of occupation in winter, and am now apprehensive of the views of Parliament, office, &c., that may open themselves under a new and friendly reign. As soon as you are *absolutely* determined let me know; as the arrangement of a proper house would not be easy.

The Severys are well and *all* impatient to see you. I have

passed three weeks with them at Rolle, as comfortably as at S. P.: we made a tour to Geneva. The youth is perfectly reconciled to his little Country. If My Lady, in the paradise of Brighton, could find leisure for a line, it would be gracious. Adieu.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, Feb. 4th, 1789.

If Hugonin's debt be desperate I must submit, but there is no *imbecillity* in saying that the loss will derange my plans, since I must sell out of the funds to supply the deficiency. The amount of my fruitless demand I cannot specify, but you may easily make it out by comparing Hugonin's remittances to the Goslings with the rent-roll of the Estate. Mrs. G. of Bath must doubtless be satisfied and secured in any way and on any fund which her prudence or fancy may prefer. You had once dropt something of giving *her* a security on your Estate. That method, which could not be attended with any risk or inconvenience to yourself, would perhaps be most agreable to all parties. I most sincerely hope that the sale may be already dispatched by private contract, before the decisive 18th of February. Why should you confine yourself to so short a day, since the town is equally full in March and April? and you are sensible how much the failure of the auction would blast any other operations. Is it yet too late for a delay? I mean only of some weeks, for I am very desirous of terminating this winter, in the *present* prosperous state of the Country: and indeed so desirous that I could patiently submit to a much larger abatement, to be at last possessed of a much better income free from those accidents and deductions to which land is so woefully exposed. You talk of £18,000, but if you could not get more than 17 or even 16, I might afterwards repent your refusal. I would certainly vest part in a mortgage, but I would rather chuse my man and my county, and should like to have the security of a larger estate than that of Buriton. While such an one was looking

for, the part of the purchase money not secured to Mrs. G. might lye safely in the funds.

I have not heard from either of the old Ladies, and wish you could inform yourself of the state of the Northamptonshire Saint. If you will apply to my good friend Lord Spencer, he could easily find you a correspondent in that neighbourhood who without noise or scandal might send you regular and early notice of her decline and fall. — On smaller matters you are too earnest and almost angry: the continuance of the foreign papers I could not foresee and will try to rectify. Jones's bill, a trifle of about ten pounds, I will settle ——

Had I the least idea of the 25 guineas of the Royal society, I should not have solicited so useless a title: but the dye is now cast, and I will write to Elmsley to satisfy that demand as well as the Antiquarian and African. I certainly did not give him any orders about newspapers, magazines, &c., as I cannot devise any method of getting them in any reasonable time without an extravagant expence. Your copiousness on my affairs makes you concise on those of the public. The debates and the outside transactions I can read in English and foreign papers, but from you, as Cicero says to his friend Cœlius (ad familiares, L. ii. Ep. 8) *nec præterita nec præsentia, sed ut ab homine longe in posterum prospiciente futura exspecto, ut ex tuis litteris, cum formam Rei publicæ viderim, quale ædificium futurum sit scire possim.* Above all I wish to hear what part you are likely yourself to act in the new regency, your hopes, your wishes, and whether you intend next winter to breathe the free and pleasant air of Lausanne or to tug at the parliamentary and official oar, amid the fogs of London.

Of my book I have not leisure or inclination to talk. Its genuine reputation will rise or fall without any regard to the barking critics who always attend the heels of any popular work. Two translations are printing at Paris, and two English editions in Germany. I embrace My lady, &c., and still hold my *intention* of writing. Adieu. Severy tells his own story. I believe he is a tolerable correspondent. Poor

Deyverdun has had another, a slighter, attack; he is now better, but I fear that his days will be neither long nor happy. A melancholy theme. Once more Adieu.

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, April 25, 1789.

Before your letter, which I received yesterday, I was in the anxious situation of a King, who hourly expects a courier from his general, with the news of a decisive engagement. I had abstained from writing, for fear of dropping a word, or betraying a feeling, which might render you too cautious or too bold. On the famous 8th of April, between twelve and two, I reflected that the business was determined; and each succeeding day I computed the speedy approach of your messenger, with favourable or melancholy tidings. When I broke the seal I expected to read, "What a damned unlucky fellow you are! Nothing tolerable was offered, and I indignantly withdrew the estate." I *did* remember the fate of poor Lenborough, and I was afraid of your magnanimity, &c. Well, then, I have £16,000 pounds instead of Buriton! upon the whole I rejoyce in the exchange, although the sum has fallen short of our expectations, and I feel the weight of the reasons which kept it down. But if Lord Stawell was the only bidder, why in God's name could he not make the same offer by private contract, and save me the expences of the Auction, which I fear are considerable? Pray who pays the tax, the buyer or the seller, and what deduction will occur on the gross sum?

What I am specially pleased with is the character of the purchaser, or rather of his agent, whom I still suppose to be my old acquaintance, Mr. Sainsbury, a man of sense, experience, and a fair reputation. He was bred an Attorney at Petersfield, knows every inch of the estate, and would not have suffered his Lord to purchase without having the money, or to give a price above the real value. From him we shall

have no captious difficulties or evasive delays — he will be content with a fair title, and I flatter myself that the whole business will be terminated with ease and despatch. But as many things fall out between the cup and the lip, your friendship I am sure will not be asleep, you will goad the slow-paced lawyers, and settle Mrs. G.'s security for her jointure in the manner most convenient and agreable for herself. By what time do you probably suppose that I may have the money in my pocket? It would be generous, too generous perhaps, in Lord S. and his agent, if they would make the payment and take possession of the estate on your act and guarantee without waiting for the return of the writings from Lausanne. I have sketched a short paper which you may shew them if you think it will be of any use.

It is whimsical enough, but it is in human nature, that I now begin to think of the deep-rooted foundations of land, and the airy fabrick of the funds. I not only consent, but even wish, to have eight or ten thousand pounds on a good mortgage; but I think the whole of that sum too large for Buriton, and conceive that Lord Stawell should reinforce it by some collateral security. How often have I regretted my dear New-river share which the Goslings so rudely tore from me. I should not be unwilling to repurchase it for the same money, I mean instead of the mortgage. — I forgot to say, indeed it is needless, that I suppose all proper care has been taken about a deposit, and to secure my receipt of the rents till the payment of the money. A propos of the rents, half a year is now due since that worthy general discharge of last Michaelmas, and I desire that Andrews may instantly exact it, it will be a seasonable supply, and if Heartfee suffers any inconvenience it will be no more than a just punishment for his scandalous and manifest collusion with poor Hugonin, whose merits I am more inclined to remember than his faults.

Mrs. G[ibbon] of Cliffe has not answered my letters, and I am anxious to learn the state of her health. Her correspondent in town is Mr. Law, I know not of what trade, in Sun

Court, Cornhill or Cheapside: if you call on him in one of your morning walks you may gain and transmit some information. — When you see your Madeira friends (is not his name Millighan?) of John Street, pray thank him in my name; the wine proves excellent, it is a credit to my table, and a comfort to my health. I want a pipe that he can answer for, and as bottles almost double the expence, I think it should be packed carefully in a double cask, and sent with all convenient speed to Messieurs Romberg at Ostend, the greatest voituriers in Europe: they must be instructed to forward it with all proper precaution to their correspondent at Basil or Basle in Switzerland, who must keep it safe till he has received from me a permit for its admission into the Canton of Berne, which I shall be able to send beforehand if Messieurs Romberg inform me of his name and direction. For want of such a permit my former wine was seized, and would have been confiscated, if the Government of Berne had not treated me with the most flattering and distinguished civility: they not only released the wine, but they paid out of their own pocket the shares to which the Bailiff and the informer were entitled by law. I should not forget that the Bailiff refused to accept of his part.

Poor Deyverdun's constitution is quite broken; he has had two or three attacks, not so violent as the first: every time the door is hastily opened, I expect to hear of some fatal accident: the best or worst hopes of the Physicians are only that he may linger some time longer; but, if he lives till the summer, they propose sending him to some mineral waters at Aix, in Savoy. You will be glad to hear that I am now assured of possessing, during my life, this delightful house and garden. The act has been *lately* executed in the best form, and the handsomest manner.

I know not what to say of your miracles at home: we rejoyce in the king's recovery, and its ministerial consequences; and I cannot be insensible to the hope, at least the chance, of seeing in this Country a first Lord of trade, or

Secretary at War. In your answer, which I shall impatiently expect, you will give me a full and true account of your designs, which by this time must have droppt, or be determined at least, for the present year. If you come, it is high time that we should look out for a house — a task much less easy than you may possibly imagine.

I embrace My Lady with warm affection, and still cherish the firm intention of writing to her soon. But the Dame pays more attention to the Epistles which she does not, than to those which she does, receive. At her request Madame de Severy wrote her a long letter about the two *Tufts* and many other important matters, and Mademoiselle at my desire added a scrap for Mademoiselle. They begin to wonder at her silence, and accuse the negligence of the post. By her correspondence with Severy I rejoyce to find that the clouds are dispelled, and hope that she leads Maria into the winter pleasures of the World.

Among new books, I recommend to you the Count de Mirabeau's great work, *sur la Monarchie Prussienne;* it is in your own way, and gives a very just and compleat idea of that wonderful machine. His *Correspondence secrette* is diabolically good. Adieu. Ever yours.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, July 14, 1789.

Poor Deyverdun is no more: He expired Saturday the 4th instant: and in his unfortunate situation, death could only be viewed by himself, and his friend, in the light of a consummation devoutly to be wished for. Since September he has had a dozen Apoplectic strokes, more or less violent: in the intervals between them his strength gradually decayed; every principle of life was exhausted; and had he continued to drag a miserable existence, he must probably have survived the loss of his faculties. Of all misfortunes this was what he himself most apprehended: but his reason was clear and

calm to the last; he beheld his approaching dissolution with the firmness of a philosopher. I fancied that time and reflection had prepared me for the event; but the habits of three-and-thirty years' friendship are not so easily broken. The first days, and more especially the first nights, were indeed painful. Last Wednesday and Saturday it would not have been in my power to write. I must now recollect myself, since it is necessary for me not only to impart the news, but to ask your opinion on a very serious and doubtful question, which must be decided without loss of time. I shall state the facts, but as I am on the spot and as new lights may occur, I do not promise implicit obedience.

Had my poor friend died without a Will, a female *first* cousin settled somewhere in the north of Germany, and whom I believe he had never seen, would have been his heir at law. In the next degree he had several cousins; and one of these, an old companion, by name Mr. de Montagny, he has chosen for his heir. As this house and garden was the best and clearest part of poor Deyverdun's fortune; as there is an heavy duty or fine (what they call *Lods*) on every change of property out of the legal descent; as Montagny has a small estate and a large family, it was necessary to make some provision in his favour. The will therefore leaves me the option of enjoying this place during my life, on paying the sum of £250 (I reckon in English money) at present, and an annual rent of £30; or else of purchasing the house and garden for a sum which, including the duty, will amount to £2500. If I value the rent of £30 at twelve years' purchase, I may acquire my enjoyment for life at about the rate of £600; and the remaining £1900 will be the difference between that tenure and absolute perpetual property. As you have never accused me of too ardent a zeal for the interest of posterity, you will easily guess which scale at first preponderated. I deeply felt the advantage of acquiring, for the smaller sum, every possible enjoyment, as long as I myself should be capable of enjoying: I rejected, with scorn, the idea of giving

£1900 for ideal posthumous property; and I deemed it of little moment whose name, after my death, should be inscribed on my house and garden at Lausanne. How often did I repeat to myself the philosophical lines of Pope, which seem to determine the question:

> Pray Heaven, cries Swift, it last as you go on;
> I wish to God this house had been your own.
> Pity to build without or son or wife:
> Why, you'll enjoy it *only* all your life.
> Well, if the use be mine, does it concern one,
> Whether the name belong to Pope or Vernon?

In this state of self-satisfaction I was not much disturbed by the unanimous advice of all my real or nominal friends, who exhort me to prefer the right of purchase: among such friends, some are careless and some are ignorant; and the judgment of those, who are able and willing to form an opinion, is often byassed by some selfish or social affection, by some visible or invisible interest. But my own reflections have gradually and forcibly driven me from my first propensity; and those reflections I will now proceed to enumerate:

1. I can make this purchase with ease and prudence. As I have had the pleasure of *not* hearing from you very lately, I flatter myself that you advance on a carpet-road, and that almost by the receipt of this letter (July the 31st) the acres of Buriton will be transmuted into Sixteen thousand pounds: If the payment be not absolutely compleated by that day, Sainsbury will not scruple, I suppose, depositing the £2500 at Gosling's, to meet my draught. Should he hesitate, I can desire Darrel to sell off *quantum sufficit* of my short annuities. As soon as the new settlement of my affairs is made, I shall be able, after deducting this sum, to square my expence to my income. The decay of the Belvidere[1] *must* place me in easy, and the bounty of the Cliffe[2] *may* establish me in affluent circumstance. If this Lausanne

[1] His stepmother, Mrs. Gibbon. [2] His aunt, Miss Hester Gibbon.

purchase should seem a violent measure, at the worst I can make Cadell repay me the money in three or four years. I am revolving the means. I am beginning to be a rich man.

2. On mature consideration, I am perhaps less selfish or less philosophical than I appear at first sight: Indeed, were I not so, it would now be in my power to turn my fortune into life-annuities, and let the Devil take the hindmost. I feel, (perhaps it is foolish,) but I feel that this little paradise will please me still more when it is absolutely my own; and that I shall be encouraged in every improvement of use or beauty, by the prospect that, after my departure, it will be enjoyed by some person of my own choice. I sometimes reflect with pleasure that my writings will survive me: and that idea is at least as vain and chimerical.

3. The heir, Mr. de Montagny, is an old acquaintance of mine. I *believe* him to be a man of honour: but I *know* him to be a man of a passionate quarrelsome disputatious temper. My situation of a life-holder is rather new and singular in this country: the laws have not provided for many nice cases which may arise between the Landlord and tenant: some I can foresee, others have been suggested, many more I might feel when it would be too late. His right of property might plague and confine me: he might forbid my lending to a friend, inspect my conduct, check my improvements, call for securities, repairs, &c. But if I purchase, I walk on my own terrace, fierce and erect, the free master of one of the most delicious spots on the Globe.

4. You will perhaps think £2500 a very smart price for a moderate house and three or four acres of land (I fancy that is about the measure). You will be much more surprized to hear that poor Deyverdun has valued it in my favour at least £1000 below the real value and market price. Of this I must inform myself more correctly, but I am much inclined to believe it, from the general opinion, from the comparison of other sales and purchases, from the peculiar merits of the situation, and from the scarcity of ground. If it were divided

into three houses and gardens and sold to builders, I know not what it would produce.

Should I ever migrate homewards, (You stare, but such an event is less improbable than I could have thought it two years ago,) this place would be disputed by strangers and natives, and the difference would perhaps clear the expences of my removal.

Weigh these reasons, and send me without delay a rational, explicit opinion, to which I shall pay such regard as the nature of circumstances will allow. But, alas! when all is determined, I shall possess this house, by whatsoever tenure, without friendship or domestic society. I did not imagine, six years ago, that a plan of life so congenial to my wishes, would so speedily vanish. I cannot write upon any other subject. Adieu, yours ever.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, July 25th, 1789.

After receiving and dispatching the power of attorney, last Wednesday, I opened, with some palpitation, the unexpected missive which arrived this morning. The persual of the contents spoiled my breakfast: they are disagreeable in themselves, alarming in their consequences, and peculiarly unpleasant at the present moment, when I hoped to have formed and secured the arrangements of my future life. I do not perfectly understand what are these deeds which are so inflexibly required; the wills and marriage-settlements I have sufficiently answered. But your arguments do not convince Sainsbury, and I have very little hope from the Lenborough search. What will be the event? If his objections are only the result of legal scrupulosity, surely they might be removed, and every chink might be filled, by a general bond of indemnity, in which I boldly ask you to joyn, as it will be a substantial important act of friendship, without any possible risk to yourself or your successors. Should he still remain

obdurate, I must believe what I already suspect, that Lord Stawell repents of his purchase, and wishes to elude the conclusion. Our case would be then hopeless, *Ibi omnis effusus labor*, and the Estate would be returned on our hands with the taint of a bad title. The refusal of mortgage does not please me; but surely our offer shows some confidence in the goodness of my title. If he will not take £8000 at *four per cent.* we must look out elsewhere; new doubts and delays will arise, and I am persuaded that you will not place an implicit confidence in Woodcock or any other Attorney. I know not as yet your opinion about my Lausanne purchase.

If you are against it, the present posture of affairs gives you great advantage, &c., &c. The purchase money of Buriton will not be paid in time. Sainsbury, if false, will not advance a shilling, and with the prospect of living or rather starving on a landed estate, I cannot afford to sell out £2500 of my short annuities. For my own part I hang in suspense, but if the money could be easily found I rather incline to the *property* as simple and beneficial.

I am ignorant of your picture: mine shall depart by the first proper occasion: but should not some precautions be taken with regard to duties? the importation of foreign pictures is heavily taxed, but a work of Sir Joshua's may surely return home.

The Severys are all well; an uncommon circumstance for the four persons of the family at once. They are now at Mex (pronounce May), a country-house six miles from hence, which I visit to-morrow for two or three days: they often come to town, and we shall contrive to pass a part of the Autumn together at Rolle. I want to change the scene; and beautiful as the garden and prospect must appear to every eye, I feel that the state of my own mind casts a gloom over them; every spot, every walk, every bench, recalls the memory of those hours, of those conversations, which will return no more. But I tear myself from the subject. I could not help writing to-day, though I do not find I have said any thing very ma-

terial. As you must be conscious that you have agitated me, you will not postpone any agreeable, or even *decisive* intelligence. I almost hesitate, whether I shall not run over to England, to consult with you on the spot, and to fly from poor Deyverdun's shade, which meets me at every turn. I did not expect to have felt it so sharply. But six hundred miles! why are we so far off?

Once more, what is the difficulty of the title? Will men of sense, in a sensible Country, never get rid of the tyranny of lawyers? more oppressive and ridiculous than even the old yoke of the Clergy. Is not a term of seventy or eighty years, near twenty in my own person, sufficient to prove our legal possession? Will not the record of fines and recoveries attest that *I* am free from any bar of entails and settlements? Consult some Sage of the Law, whether their present demand be necessary and legal. If our ground be firm, force them to execute the agreement or forfeit the deposit. But if, as I much fear, they have a right, and a wish, to elude the consummation, would it not be better to release them at once, than to be hung up five years, as in the case of Lovegrove, which cost me in the end four or five thousand pounds? You are bold, you are wise; consult, resolve, act.

In my penultimate letter I dropped a strange hint, that a migration homeward was not impossible. I know not what to say; my mind is all afloat; yet you will not reproach me with caprice or inconstancy. How many years did you damn my scheme of retiring to Lausanne! I executed that plan; I found as much happiness as is compatible with human nature, and during four years (1783–1787) I never breathed a sigh of repentance. On my return from England the scene was changed: I found only a faint semblance of Deyverdun, and that semblance was each day fading from my sight. I have passed an anxious year, but my anxiety is now at an end, and the prospect before me is a melancholy solitude. I am still deeply rooted in this country; the possession of this paradise, the friendship of the Severys, a mode of society

suited to my taste, and the enormous trouble and *expence* of a migration. Yet in England (when the present clouds are dispelled) I could form a very comfortable establishment in London, or rather at Bath; and I have a very noble country-seat about ten miles from East Grinstead in Sussex.[1] That spot is dearer to me than the rest of the three kingdoms; and I have sometimes wondered how two men, so opposite in their tempers and pursuits, should have imbibed so long and lively a propensity for each other.

Sir Stanier Porten is just dead. He has left his widow with a small pension, and two children, my nearest relations: the eldest, Charlotte, is about Louisa's age, and one of the most amiable, sensible young creatures I ever saw. I have conceived a romantic idea of educating and adopting her; as we descend into the vale of years, our infirmities require some domestic female society: Charlotte would be the comfort of my age, and I could reward her care and tenderness with a decent fortune. A thousand difficulties oppose the execution of this plan, which I have never opened but to you; yet it would be less impracticable in England than in Switzerland. Adieu. I am wounded, pour some oil into my wounds: Yet I am less unhappy since I have thrown my mind upon paper. Adieu, ever yours.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, Sept. 9, 1789.

Within an hour after the reception of your last, I drew my pen for the purpose of a reply, and my exordium ran in the following words: "I find by experience, that it is much more rational, as well as easy, to answer a letter of real business by the return of the post." This important truth is again verified by my own example. After writing three pages I was called away by a very rational motive, and the post

[1] Alluding to Sheffield Place.

departed before I could return to the conclusion. A second delay was coloured by some decent pretence: three weeks have slipped away, and I now force myself on a task, which I should have dispatched without an effort on the first summons. My only excuse is, that I had little to write about English business, and that I could write nothing definitive about my Swiss affairs. And first, as Aristotle says, of the first,

1. I was indeed in low spirits when I sent what you so justly style my dismal letter; but I do assure you, that my own feelings contributed much more to sink me, than any events or terrors relative to the sale of Buriton. But I again hope and trust, from your consolatory epistle, that the purchasers are willing and honest, that the deeds have been produced or excused, and that on or before the reception of this despatch (alas, it will be the 23rd perhaps of September) the money has been paid. In all this I must be passive, but with regard to Mrs. Gibbon's, before it is again vested, I am sure she will be satisfied with your security, as mine on the stock which I already hold would require new powers of Attorney, and must be productive of fresh delay. But it is a whimsical circumstance in my fate, that I happen to receive the largest sum which can ever fall to my lot at the time, when money is the most plenty and consequently bears the lowest value, when good mortgages are so difficult to be found, and when the funds scarcely yield four per cent. interest. I wish Lord Stawell would take the £8000 on Buriton even at four per cent., perhaps his proud stomach may be come down. Should he still disdain it, I listen with pleasure and gratitude to the proposal of your Yorkshire mortgage on the same terms, though in general it is more advisable for friends to abstain from any pecuniary concerns with each other. If you no longer adhere to that idea, some sound good mortgage, if possible in a register county, must be found, and I would even stretch the loan to £10,000 in which case my property would be nearly divided between landed and monied security without

reckoning my copper share or my poor annuity in the French funds. In the meanwhile, that the portion destined to the mortgage may not lye dead, I suppose with you that there is nothing more commodious than India-bonds. Will you consult Darrel?

2. My Swiss transaction has suffered a great alteration. I shall not become the proprietor of my house and garden at Lausanne, and I relinquish the fantom with more regret than you could easily imagine. But I have been determined by a difficulty, which at first appeared of little moment, but which has gradually swelled to an alarming magnitude. There is a law in this country, as well as in some provinces of France, which is styled "*le droit de retrait, le retrait lignager*" (Lord Loughborough must have heard of it), by which the relations of the deceased are entitled to redeem an house or estate at the price for which it has been sold; and as the sum fixed by poor Deyverdun is much below its known value, a crowd of competitors are beginning to start. The best opinions (for they are divided) are in my favour, that I am not subject to "*the droit de retrait*," since I take not as a purchaser, but as a legatee. But the words of the Will are somewhat ambiguous, the event of law is always uncertain, the administration of justice at Berne (the last appeal) depends too much on favour and intrigue; and it is very doubtful whether I could revert to the life-holding, after having chosen and lost the property. These considerations engaged me to open a negotiation with Mr. de Montagny, through the medium of my friend the Judge; and as he most ardently wishes to keep the house, he consented, though with some reluctance, to my proposals. Yesterday he signed a covenant in the most regular and binding form, by which he allows my power of transferring my interest, interprets in the most ample sense my right of making alterations, and expressly renounces all claim, as landlord, of visiting or inspecting the premisses. I have promised to lend him 12,000 Livres, (between seven and eight hundred pounds), secured on the house and land.

The mortgage is four times its value; the interest at four per cent. will be annually discharged by the rent of thirty guineas, and I shall have an additional hold on his good behaviour. So that I am now tranquil on that score for the remainder of my days. I hope that time will gradually reconcile me to the place which I have inhabited with my poor friend; for in spite of the *cream* of London, I am still persuaded that no other residence is so well adapted to my taste and habits of studious and social life.

Far from delighting in the whirl of a Metropolis, my only complaint against Lausanne is the great number of strangers, always of English, and now of French, by whom we are infested in summer. Yet we have escaped the *damned* great ones, the Count d'Artois, the Polignacs, &c. who slip by us to Turin. What a scene is France! While the assembly is voting abstract propositions, Paris is an independent Republic; the provinces have neither authority nor freedom, and poor Necker declares that credit is no more, and that the people refuse to pay taxes. Yet I think you must be seduced by the abolition of tythes. If Eden goes to Paris you may have some curious *confidential* information. Give me some account of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas; do they live with Lord North? I hope they do. When will parliament be dissolved? Are you still Coventry mad? I embrace My Lady, the stately Maria, and the smiling Louisa. Alas! Alas! you will never come to Switzerland. Adieu, ever yours.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, December 15th, 1789.

You have often reason to accuse my strange silence and neglect in the most important of *my own* affairs; for I will presume to assert, that in a business of yours of equal consequence, you should not find me cold or careless. But on the present occasion my silence is, perhaps, the highest compliment I ever paid you. You remember the answer of Philip

of Macedon: "Philip may sleep, while he knows that Parmenio is awake." I expected, and, to say the truth, I wished that my Parmenio would have decided and acted, without expecting my dilatory answer, and in his decision I should have acquiesced with implicit confidence. But since you will have my opinion, let us consider the present state of my affairs. In the course of my life I have often known, and sometimes felt, the difficulty of getting money, but I now find myself involved in a much more singular distress, the difficulty of placing it, and if it continues much longer, I shall almost wish for my land again.

I perfectly agree with you, that it is bad management to purchase in the funds when they do not yield four per cent., and I incline every day more and more to the encrease of the mortgage. I am much mistaken if in my last letter I did not extend the sum as £10,000 pounds, which would make, as I remember to have said, about an equal partition of my property. Can that sum be called, even in your wealthy island, so very inconsiderable? I would even give somewhat larger latitude (even as far as £12,000 if I preserve a right of calling in a fourth or a moiety on reasonable notice). Is it possible that in seven or eight months no good and clear security can be found, especially if I am forced to be content with the scanty interest of four per cent.? Yet I approve your diffidence and caution: in the concerns of our friends even cowardice is a virtue. The doubtful title of a mortgage might distress and perplex me for the remainder of my life, and you would not easily forgive yourself for having been the innocent author of my calamities. Rather than expose myself to such a risk, I would try whether some *great* banker would not be disposed to give low interest and firm security for my money till it should be called for, or at all events I would deposit it in the Bank for six months or a year, and live on the principal till you could find an unquestionable opportunity of placing it on landed property. Some of this money I can place safely and advantageously by means of my banker here;

and I shall possess, what I have always desired, a command of cash, which I cannot abuse to my prejudice, since I have it in my power to supply by my pen any extraordinary or fanciful indulgence of expence. And so much — much, indeed — for pecuniary matters.

What would you have me say of the affairs of France? we are too near, and too remote, to form an accurate judgment of that wonderful scene. The abuses of the court and government called aloud for reformation; and it has happened, as it will always happen, that an innocent, well-disposed prince has paid the forfeits of the sins of his predecessors; of the ambition of the Lewis XIV., of the profusion of Lewis XV. The French nation had a glorious opportunity, but they have abused, and may lose their advantages. If they had been content with a liberal translation of our system, if they had respected the prerogatives of the crown, and the privileges of the Nobles, they might have raised a solid fabric, on the only true foundation, the natural Aristocracy of a great Country. How different is the prospect! Their King brought a captive to Paris, after his palace had been stained with the blood of his guards; the Nobles in exile; the Clergy plundered in a way which strikes at the root of all property; the capital an independent Republic; the union of the provinces dissolved; the flames of discord kindled by the worst of men; (in that light I consider Mirabeau;) and the honestest of the Assembly a set of wild Visionaries, (like our Dr. Price,) who gravely debate, and dream about the establishment of a pure and perfect democracy of five-and-twenty millions, the virtues of the golden age, and the primitive rights and equality of mankind, which would lead, in fair reasoning, to an equal partition of lands and money. How many years must elapse before France can recover any vigour, or resume her station among the powers of Europe! As yet, there is no sympton of a great man, a Richelieu or a Cromwell, arising, either to restore the Monarchy, or to lead the Commonwealth. The weight of Paris, more deeply en-

gaged in the funds than *all* the rest of the Kingdom, will long delay a bankrupcy; and if it should happen, it will be, both in the cause and effect, a measure of weakness, rather than of strength.

You send me to Chamberry, to see a prince and an Archbishop. Alas! we have exiles enough here, with the Marshal de Castries and the Duke de Guignes at their head: and this inundation of strangers, which used to be confined to the summer, will now stagnate all the winter. The only ones whom I have seen with pleasure are M. Mounier, the late president of the National Assembly, and the Count de Lally; they have both dined with me. Mounier, who is a serious dry politician, is returned to Dauphiné. Lally is an amiable man of the World, and a poet: he passes the winter here with his *female friend* the Princess d'Hénin. You know how much I prefer a quiet select society to a crowd of names and titles, and that I always seek conversation with a view to amusement rather than information. What happy countries are England and Switzerland, if they know and preserve their happiness.

I have a thousand things to say of My Lady, Maria, and Louisa, but I can add only a short postcript about the Madeira and picture.

1. Good Madeira is now become essential to my health and reputation. May your hogshead prove as good as the last; may it not be intercepted by the rebels or the Austrians. What a scene again in that country! Happy England! happy Switzerland! I again repeat I must have early notice of my wine's approach, that I may send a permit to meet it at Basil.

2. To whom did you entrust the picture and Rennel's maps? I have not heard of either. Was it to Elmsley? I have expected these many months a box of books, &c., which he announced. Will you not clear up the point? My picture expects a safe occasion. Adieu.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, May 18th, 1791.

I write a short letter, on small paper, to inform you, that the various deeds, which arrived safe and in good condition, have this morning been sealed, signed, and delivered, in the presence of respectable and well known English witnesses, though out of compliment to you I inserted one Irish evidence, a protégé of Sarah's and considering all things a very pretty gentleman. I am very well behaved to him. To have read the aforesaid acts, would have been difficult; to have understood them, impracticable. I therefore signed them with my eyes shut, and in that implicit confidence, which we freemen and Britons are humbly content to yield to our lawyers and ministers. I hope, however, most seriously hope, that every thing has been carefully examined, and that I am not totally ruined. It is not without much impatience that I expect an account of the payment and investment of the purchase-money, and am somewhat afraid of the high charges of auctioneers and attornies. The writings well secured are delivered to a trusty carrier, who promises to begin his Journey Monday next, the 23rd instant, and to deposit them in Downing Street about a fortnight afterwards. It was my intention to have added a new edition of my Will: but I have an unexpected call to go to Geneva to-morrow with the Severys, and must defer that business a few days, till after my return. On my return I may possibly find a letter from you, and will write more fully in answer: my posthumous work, contained in a single sheet, will not ruin you in postage. In the meanwhile, let me desire you either never to talk of Lausanne, or to execute the journey this summer; after the dispatch of public and *private* business, there can be no real obstacle but in yourself, and if you deceive me I shall insist on the additional year's purchase for Newhaven, which I had given up in consideration of the visit. Pray do not go to War

with Russia:[1] it is very foolish: I am quite angry with Pitt. Adieu. Pray inform Mrs. G. of our conclusion and her security. I write to her this post after a long pause. I am a sad dog.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Lausanne, May 18th, 1791.

DEAR MADAM,

As much as I am accustomed to my own sins, I am shocked, really shocked, when I think of my long and most inexcusable silence; nor do I dare to compute how many months I have suffered to elapse without sending a single line — (Oh shame! shame!) — to the best and dearest of my friends, who indeed has been very seldom out of my thoughts. I have sometimes imagined, that if the opportunities of writing occurred less frequently, they would be seized with more diligence; but the unfortunate departure of the post twice every week encourages procrastination, and each short successive delay is indulged without scruple, till the whole has swelled to a tremendous account. I will try, alas! to reform; and although I am afraid that writing grows painful to you, I have the confidence to solicit a *speedy line*, to say that you love and forgive me. After a long experience of the unfeeling doubts and delays of the law, you will probably soon hear from Lord S. that the Buriton transaction is at last concluded, and I hope you will be satisfied with the full and firm security of your annuity. That you may long continue to enjoy it is the first and most sincere wish of my heart.

In the placid course of our lives, at Lausanne and Bath, we have few events to relate, and fewer changes to describe; but I indulge myself in the pleasing belief that we are both as well and as happy as the common order of Nature will allow us to expect. I should be satisfied, had I received from time to time some indirect, but agreeable information of the general state of your health. For myself, I have no complaint, ex-

[1] In the spring of 1791 war with Russia seemed probable.

cept the Gout; and though the visits of my old enemy are longer, and more enfeebling, they are confined to my feet and knees; the pain is moderate, and my imprisonment to my chamber, or my chair, is much alleviated by the daily kindness of my friends. I wish it were in my power to give you an adequate idea of the conveniency of my house, and the beauty of my garden: both of which I have improved at a considerable expence since the death of poor Deyverdun. But the loss of a friend is indeed irreparable, and I sometimes feel, that like Adam I am alone in Paradise. Were I ten years younger, I might possibly think of a female companion; but the choice is difficult, the success doubtful, the engagement perpetual, and at fifty-four a man should never think of altering the whole System of his life and habits. The disposal of Buriton, and the death of my aunt Hester, who has left me a small estate in Sussex, makes me very easy in my worldly affairs; my income is equal to my expence, and my expence is adequate to my wishes. You may possibly have heard of litterary projects which are ascribed to me by the public without my knowledge: but it is much more probable that I have closed the account: and though I shall never lay aside the pleasing occupations of study, you may be assured that I have no serious settled thoughts of a new work. Next year I shall meditate, and I trust shall execute, a visit to England, in which the Belvidere is one of my powerful loadstones. I often reflect, with a painful emotion, on the imperious circumstances which have thrown us at such a distance from each other.

In the moving picture of the World, you cannot be indifferent to the strange Revolution which has humbled all that was high, and exalted all that was low, in France. The irregular and lively spirit of the Nation has disgraced their liberty, and instead of building a free constitution, they have only exchanged Despotism for Anarchy. This town and country are crowded with noble Exiles; and we sometimes count in an assembly a dozen princesses and dutchesses. Burke, if

I remember right, is no favourite of yours; but there is surely much eloquence and much sense in his book. The prosperity of England forms a proud contrast with the disorders of France; but I hope we shall avoid the folly of a Russian War. Pitt, in this instance, seems too like his father.

I am, My Dearest Madam,

Ever most affectionately Yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, May 31st, 1791.

At length I see a ray of sunshine breaking from a dark cloud. Your Epistle of the 13th arrived this morning, the 25th instant, the day after my return from Geneva; it has been communicated to Severy; we now believe that you intend a visit to Lausanne this summer, and we hope that you will execute that intention. If you are a man of honour, you shall find me one; and, on the day of your arrival at Lausanne, I will ratify my engagement of visiting the British isle before the end of the year 1792, excepting only the fair and foul exception of the Gout. You rejoyce me by proposing the addition of dear Louisa; it was not without a bitter pang that I threw her overboard, to lighten the vessel and secure the Voyage: I was fearful of Mrs. Moss, a second carriage, and a long train of difficulty and expence, which might have ended in blowing up the whole scheme. But if you can bodkin the sweet creature in the coach, she will find an easy welcome at Lausanne. The first arrangements which I must make before your arrival, may be altered by your own taste, on a survey of the premises, and you will all be commodiously and pleasantly lodged. You have heard a great deal of the beauty of my house, garden, and situation; but such are their intrinsic value, that, unless I am much deceived, they will bear the test even of exagerated praise. From my knowledge of your Lordship, I have always entertained some doubt how you would get through the *French* society of a Lausanne

winter: but I am satisfied that, exclusive of friendship, your summer visits to the banks of the Leman Lake will long be remembered as one of the most agreeable periods of your life; and that you will scarcely regret the amusement of a Sussex Committee of Navigation in the dog days. You ask for details: what details? a map of France and a post-book are easy and infallible guides. If the Ladies are not afraid of the Ocean, you are not ignorant of the passage from Brighton to Dieppe: Paris will then be in your direct road; and even allowing you to look at the Pandæmonium, the ruins of Versailles, &c., a fortnight diligently employed will clear you from Sheffield-place to Gibbon Castle. What can I say more?

As little have I to say on the subject of my worldly matters, which seems now, Jupiter be praised, to be drawing towards a final conclusion; since, when people part with their money, they are indeed serious. I do not perfectly understand the ratio of the precise sum which you have poured into Gosling's reservoir, but suppose it will be explained in a general account; as that reservoir is unproductive, I hope the Yorkshire mortgage will soon be in motion. I had not a doubt of the Law's (in either sense of the word) delaying to the last moment the payment of Hester's paltry legacy, but I conceive that you are in possession of Newhaven, and that you have obtained for me the year's or at least the nine months' rent to which I must have been entitled last Lady-day. I do not perfectly understand whether my share of Hug, or to what amount, has actually been paid. By this time you must have received the Deeds. — *Act.*

You have been very dutiful in sending me, what I have always desired, a cut Woodfall on a remarkable debate; a debate, indeed, most remarkable! Poor Burke is the most eloquent and rational madman that I ever knew. I love Fox's feelings, but I detest the political principles of the man, and of the party. Formerly you detested them more strongly, during the American War, than myself. I am half afraid

that you are corrupted by your unfortunate connections. Should you admire the National assembly, we shall have many an altercation, for I am as high an Aristocrate as Burke himself; and he has truly observed, that it is impossible to debate with temper on the subject of that cursed Revolution. In my last excursion to Geneva I frequently saw the Neckers, who by this time are returned to their Summer residence of Copet. He is much restored in health and spirits, especially since the publication of his last book, which has probably reached England. Both parties who agree in abusing him, agree likewise that he is a man of virtue and Genius: but I much fear that the purest intentions have been productive of the most baneful consequences. Our military men, I mean the French, are leaving us every day for the camp of the princes at Worms, and support what is called . . . representation. Their hopes are sanguine; I will not answer for their being well grounded: it is *certain*, however, that the emperor had an interview the 19th instant with the Count of Artois at Mantua; and the Aristocrates talk in mysterious language of Spain, Sardinia, the empire, four or five armies, &c. They will doubtless strike a blow this summer: May it not recoil on their own heads! Adieu. Embrace our female travellers. A short delay.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, June 12th, 1791.

I now begin to see you all in real motion, swimming from Brighton to Dieppe, according to my scheme, and afterwards threading the direct road which you cannot well avoid, to the turbulent capital of the late Kingdom of France. I know not what more to say, or what further instructions to send; they would indeed be useless, as you are travelling through a country which has been sometimes visited by Englishmen: only this let me say, that, in the midst of Anarchy, the roads were never more secure than at present. As you will wish to

[1] The words in the original letter are torn out by the seal.

assist at the national assembly, you will act prudently in obtaining from the French in London a good recommendation to some leading member; Cazalès, for instance, or the Abbé Maury. I soon expect from Elmsly a cargo of books; but you may bring me any new pamphlets of exquisite flavour, particularly the last works of John Lord Sheffield, which the dog has always neglected to send. You will have time to write once more, and you must endeavour, as nearly as possible, to mark the day of your arrival. You may come either by Lyons and Geneva, by Dijon and Les Rousses, or by Dole and Pontarlière. The post will fail you on the edge of Switzerland, and must be supplied by hired horses. I wish you to make your last day's journey easy, so as to dine upon the road, and arrive by tea-time. I rejoyce in the approaching conclusion of my affairs, though the residue of the purchase money has suffered and will suffer most heavy evacuations.

The pulse of the contre-Revolution beats high, but I cannot send you any certain facts. Adieu. I want to *hear* My lady abusing me for never writing. *All* the Severys are very impatient.

Notwithstanding the high premium, I do not absolutely wish you drowned. Besides all other cares, I must marry and propagate, which would give me a great deal of trouble.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, July 1st, 1791.

In obedience to your orders, I direct a flying shot to Paris, though I have not any thing particular to add, excepting that our impatience is increased in the *inverse ratio* of time and space. Yet I almost doubt whether you have passed the sea. The news of the King of France's escape must have reached you before the 28th, the day of your departure, and the prospect of strange unknown disorder may well have suspended your firmest resolves. The Royal animal is again caught, and all may probably be quiet. I was just

going to exhort you to pass through Brussels and the confines of Germany; a fair Irishism, since if you read this, you are already at Paris. The only reasonable advice which now remains, is to obtain, by means of Lord Gower, a sufficiency, or even superfluity, of forcible passports, such as leave no room for cavil on a jealous frontier. The frequent intercourse with Paris has proved that the best and shortest road, instead of Besançon, is by Dijon, Dole, Les Rousses, and Nyon. As my larder cannot always be furnished for the doubtful day of your arrival, I must desire that you would make your first appearance, not at dinner time, but at the hour of tea; you may dine at Rolle or Morges. Adieu. I warmly embrace the ladies. It would be idle now to talk of business.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, December 28th, 1791.

Alas! alas! the Demon of procrastination has again possessed me. Three months have nearly rolled away since your departure; and seven letters, five from the most valuable Maria, and two from Yourself, have extorted from me only a single epistle, which, perhaps, would never have been written, had I not used the permission of employing my own tongue and the hand of a secretary. Shall I tell you, that, for these last six weeks, the eve of every post day has witnessed a *firm* resolution, and the day itself has furnished some ingenious delay? This morning, for instance, I had determined to invade you as soon as the breakfast things should be removed: they were removed; but I had something to read, to write, to meditate, and there was time enough before me. Hour after hour has stolen away, and I finally begin my letter at two o'Clock, evidently too late for the post, as I must dress, dine, go abroad, &c. A foundation, however, *shall be* laid, which will stare me in the face; and next Saturday I shall probably be rowzed by the awful reflection that it is the last day in the year.

After realizing this summer an event which I had long considered as a dream of fancy, I know not whether I should rejoyce or grieve at your visit to Lausanne. While I possessed the family, the sentiment of pleasure, with some occasional shades, highly predominated; and the last weeks of harmony and content were those which I the most truly enjoyed, when, just as we had subsided in a regular, easy, comfortable plan of life, the last trump sounded, and, without speaking of the pang of separation, you left me to one of the most gloomy, solitary months of October, which I have ever passed.

For yourself and daughter, however, you have contrived to snatch some of the most interesting scenes of this World. Paris, at such a moment, Switzerland, and the Rhine, have suggested a train of lively images and useful ideas, which will not be speedily erazed. The mind of the young Damsel, more especially, will be enlarged and enlightened in every sense; in four months she has lived many years; and she will much deceive and displease me, if she does not review and methodize her journal, in such a manner as she is capable of performing, for the amusement of her particular friends. Another benefit which will redound from your recent view is, that every place, person, and object, about Lausanne, are now become familiar and interesting to you. In our future correspondence (do I dare pronounce the word correspondence?) I can talk to you as freely of every circumstance as if it were actually before your eyes.

And first, of my own improvements. — All those venerable piles of ancient verdure which you admired, have been eradicated in one fatal day. Your faithful substitutes, William de Severy and Levade, have never ceased to persecute me, till I signed their death warrant. Their place is now supplied by a number of picturesque naked poles, the foster fathers of as many twigs of platanuses and acacias, which may afford a grateful but distant shade to the founder, or to his *seris nepotibus*. In the meanwhile I must confess that the

terrace appears broader, and that I discover a much larger quantity of snow than I should otherwise do. The workmen admire your ingenious plan for cutting out a new bedchamber and book-room; but, on mature consideration, we all unanimously prefer the old scheme of adding a third room beyond the library, with two spacious windows, and a fireplace between, on the Terrace. It will be larger (28 feet by 21), and pleasanter, and warmer: the difference of expence will be much less considerable than I imagined: the door of communication with the library will be artfully buried in the wainscot; and, unless it be opened by my own choice, may always remain a profound secret. Such is the design; but as it will not be executed before next summer, you have time and liberty to state your objections. I am much colder about the staircase, but it may be finished, according to your idea, for thirty pounds; and I feel they will persuade me. Am I not a very rich man? When these alterations are compleated, not forgetting the watercloset, few authors of six Volumes in quartos will be more agreeably lodged than myself.

Lausanne is now full and lively; all our native families are returned from the Country; and, praised be the Lord, we are infested with few foreigners, either French or English. Even our Democrates are more reasonable or more discreet; it is agreed to wave the subject of politics, and we all seem happy and cordial. I have a grand dinner this week, a supper of thirty or forty people on Twelfth-day, &c.; some concerts have taken place, some balls are talked of; and even Maria would allow (yet it is ungenerous to say even Maria) that the winter scene at Lausanne is tolerably gay and active. I say nothing of the Severys, as Angletine has epistolized Maria last post. She has probably hinted her brother meditates a short excursion to Turin; that worthy creature Trevor has given him a pressing invitation to his own house. Mrs. Trevor, who is one of us, does not envy him.

In the beginning of February I propose going to Geneva for three or four weeks. I shall lodge and eat with the

Neckers; my mornings will be my own, and I shall spend my evenings in the society of the place, where I have many acquaintance. This short absence will agitate my stagnant life, and restore me with fresh appetite to my house, my library, and my friends. Before that time, the end of February, what events may happen, or be ready to happen! The National assembly (compared to which the former was a Senate of heroes and Demigods) seem resolved to attack Germany *avec quatre millions de bayonettes libres;* the army of the princes must soon either fight, or starve, or conquer. Will Sweden draw his sword? will Russia draw her purse? an empty purse! All is darkness and anarchy: neither party is strong enough to impose a settlement; and I cannot see a possibility of an amicable arrangement, where there are no heads (in any sense of the word) who can answer for the multitude. Send me your ideas, and those of Lord Guildford, Lord Loughborough, Fox, &c.

Before I conclude, a word of my vexatious affairs. — Shall I never sail on the smooth stream of good security and half-yearly interest? Will every body refuse my money? I had already written to Darell and Gosling to obey your commands, and was in hopes that you had already made large and salutary evacuations. During your absence I never expected much effect from the cold indifference of agents; but you are now in England — you will be speedily in London; set all your setting dogs to beat the field, hunt, enquire, — why should you not advertise? And let not the Goslings dine at my expence. I know not what to say at present of India bonds — do they not Sink? Our affairs in that Country seem in a very ticklish situation. At all events consult with Darrel, he has knowledge of that sort and is a real friend. Yet I am almost ashamed to complain of some stagnation of interest, when I am witness to the natural and acquired philosophy of so many French, who are reduced from riches, not to indigence, but to absolute want and beggary. A Count Argout has just left us, who possessed ten thousand a-year

in the Island of St. Domingo; he is utterly burned and ruined; and a brother, whom he tenderly loved, has been murdered by the Negroes. These are real misfortunes.

I have much revolved the plan of the Memoirs I once mentioned; and, as you do not think it ridiculous, I believe I shall make an attempt: if I can please myself, I am confident of not displeasing; but let this be a profound secret between us: people must not be prepared to laugh; they must be taken by surprize. Have you looked over your, or rather my letters? Surely in the course of the year, you may find a safe and cheap occasion of sending me a parcel; they may assist me. Adieu. I embrace My Lady: send me a favourable account of her health and spirits. How happy might we have been, could she have preserved them at Lausanne! I kiss the Marmaille. By an amazing push of remorse and diligence I have finished my letter, three pages and a half, this same day since dinner; but I have not time to read it. Ever yours.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, April 4th, 1792.

For fear you should abuse me, as usual, I will begin the attack, and scold at you, for not having yet sent me the long-expected intelligence of the completion of my mortgage. You had positively assured me that the second of February would terminate my worldly cares, by a consummation so devoutly to be wished. The news, therefore, might reach me about the 16th; and I argued with the gentle logic of lazyness, that it was perfectly idle to answer your letter, till I could chaunt a thanksgiving song of gratitude and praise. As every post disappointed my hopes, the same argument was repeated for the next; and twenty empty-handed postilions have blown their insignificant horns, till I am provoked at last to write by sheer impatience and vexation.

Facit indignatio versum. Cospetto di Baccho; for I must

ease myself by swearing a little. What is the cause, the meaning, the pretence, of this delay? Are the Yorkshire Mortgagors inconstant in their wishes? are the London lawyers constant in their procrastination? Is a letter on the road, to inform that all is concluded, or to tell me that all is broke to pieces? In sober truth I am out of humour to think of all the dinners that the Goslings have given at my expence. Had the money been placed in the three per Cents last May, besides the annual interest, it would now have gained by the rise of stock nearly twenty per Cent. Your Lordship is a wise man, a successful writer, and a useful Senator; you understand America and Ireland, Corn and Slaves, but your prejudice against the funds, in which I am often tempted to joyn, makes you a little blind to their encreasing value in the hands of our virtuous and excellent minister. But our regret is vain; one pull more and we reach the shore; and our future correspondence will be no longer tainted with business. But shall I then be more diligent and regular? I hope and believe so; for now that I have got over this article of worldly interest, my letter seems to be almost finished.

A propos of letters, am I not a sad dog to forget My Lady and Maria? Alas! the dual number has been prejudicial to both. How happy could I be with either, were t'other dear charmer away. I am like the Ass of famous memory; I cannot tell which way to turn first, and there I stand mute and immoveable. The Baronial and maternal dignity of My Lady, supported by twenty years' friendship, may claim the preference. But the five incomparable letters of Maria! — Next week, however. — Am I not ashamed to talk of next Week?

I have most successfully, and most agreeably, executed my plan of spending the month of March at Geneva, in the Necker house, and every circumstance that I had arranged turned out beyond my expectation; the freedom of the morning, the society of the table and drawing-room, from half an hour past two till six or seven; an evening assembly and card-party,

in a round of the best company, and, except one day in the week, a private supper of free and friendly conversation. You would like Geneva better than Lausanne; there is much more information to be got among the men; but though I found some agreeable women, their manners and style of life are, upon the whole, less easy and pleasant than our own. I was much pleased with Necker's brother, Mr. de Germani, a good-humoured, polite, sensible man, without the genius or fame of the statesman, but much more adapted for private and ordinary happiness.

Madame de Stael is expected in a few weeks at Copet, where they receive her, and where, "to dumb forgetfullness a prey," she will have leisure to regret the pleasing anxious being, which she enjoyed amidst the storms of Paris. But what can the poor creature do? her husband is in Sweden, her lover is no longer Secretary of War, and her father's house is the only place where she can reside with the least degree of prudence and decency. Of that father I have really a much higher idea than I ever had before; in our domestic intimacy he cast away his gloom and reserve; I saw a great deal of his mind, and all that I saw is fair and worthy. He was overwhelmed by the hurricane, he mistook his way in the fog, but in such a perilous situation, I much doubt whether any mortal could have seen or stood. In the meanwhile, he is abused by all parties, and none of the French in Geneva will set their foot in his house. He remembers Lord Sheffield with esteem. His health is good, and he would be tranquil in his private life, were not his spirits continually wounded by the arrival of every letter and every newspaper. His sympathy is deeply interested by the fatal consequences of a Revolution, in which he had acted so leading a part; and he feels as a friend for the danger of Mr. de Lessart, who may be guilty in the eyes of the Jacobins, or even of his judges, by those very actions and dispatches which would be the most approved by all true Lovers of his Country.

What a momentous event is the Emperor's death![1] In the forms of a new reign, and of the Imperial election, the Democrates have at least gained time, if they knew how to use it. But the new Monarch, though of a weak complexion, is of a martial temper; he loves the Soldiers, and is beloved by them; and the slow, fluctuating politics of his uncle may be succeeded by a direct line of march to the gates of Strasburgh and Paris. It is the opinion of the master-movers in France, (I know it most certainly,) that their troops will not fight, that the people have lost all sense of patriotism, and that on the first discharge of an Austrian cannon the game is up. But what occasion for Austrians or Spaniards? the French are themselves their greatest enemies; 4000 Marseillais are marched against Arles and Avignon, the *troupes de ligne* are divided between the two parties, and the flame of civil war will soon extend over the southern provinces. You have heard of the unworthy treatment of the Swiss regiment of Ernst. The canton of Bern has bravely recalled them, with a stout letter to the King of France, which must be inserted in all the papers.

I now come to the most unpleasant articles, our home politics. Rosset and La Motte are condemned to five and twenty years imprisonment in the fortress of Arbourg. We have not yet received their official sentence, nor is it believed that the proofs and proceedings against them will be published; an awkward circumstance, which it does not seem easy to justify. Some (though none of note) are taken up, several are fled, many more are suspected and suspicious. All are silent, but it is the silence of fear and discontent; and the secret hatred which rankled against Government begins to point against the few who are known to be well-affected.

I never knew any place so much changed as Lausanne,

[1] The Emperor Leopold II. died March 1, 1792, and was succeeded by his son Francis Joseph, who, pending his election as emperor, took the title of King of Bohemia and Hungary.

even since last year; and though you will not be much obliged to me for the motive, I begin very seriously to think of visiting Sheffield-place by the month of September next. Yet here again I am frightened, by the dangers of a French, and the difficulties of a German, route. You must send me an account of the passage from Brighton, with an itinerary of the Rhine, distances, expences, &c. As usual, I just save the post, nor have I time to read my letter, which, after wasting the morning in deliberation, has been struck off in a heat since dinner. No news of the Madeira. The views of Sh.-pl. are just received; they are admired, and shall be framed. Severy has spent the Carnival at Turin. Trevor is only the best man in the World.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, May 30th, 1792.

After the receipt of your *penultimate*, eight days ago, I expected with much impatience, the arrival of your next-promised Epistle. It arrived this morning, but has not compleatly answered my expectations. I wanted, and I hoped for a full and fair picture of the present and probable aspect of your political World, with which, at this distance, I seem every day less satisfied. In the slave question you triumphed last session; in this you have been defeated. What is the cause of this alteration? If it proceeded only from an impulse of humanity, I cannot be displeased, even with an error; since it is very likely that my own vote (had I possessed one) would have been added to the Majority. But in this rage against slavery, in the numerous petitions against the Slave trade, was there no leaven of new democratical principles? no wild ideas of the rights and natural equality of man? It is these I fear. Some articles in newspapers, some pamphlets of the year, the Jockey Club, — have fallen into my hands. I do not infer much from such publications; yet I have never known them of so black and

malignant a cast. I shuddered at Grey's motion, disliked the half-support of Fox, admired the firmness of Pitt's declaration, and excused the usual intemperance of Burke. Surely such men as Grey, Sheridan, Erskine, have talents for mischief.

I see a Club of reform which contains some respectable names. Inform me of the professions, the principles, the plans, the resources of these reformers. Will they heat the minds of the people? Does the French democracy gain no ground? Will the bulk of your party stand firm to their own interest, and that of their country? Will you not take some active measures to declare your sound opinions, and separate yourselves from your rotten members? or if you allow them to perplex government, if you trifle with this solemn business, if you do not resist the spirit of innovation in the first attempt, if you admit the smallest and most specious change in our parliamentary system, you are lost. You will be driven from one step to another; from principles just in theory, to consequences most pernicious in practice; and your first concessions will be productive of every subsequent mischief, for which you will be answerable to your country and to posterity. Do not suffer yourselves to be lulled into a false security; remember the proud fabric of the French Monarchy. Not four years ago it stood founded, as it might seem, on the rock of time, force, and opinion, supported by the triple Aristocracy of the Church, the Nobility, and the Parliaments. They are crumbled into dust; they are vanished from the earth. If this tremendous warning has no effect on the men of property in England; if it does not open every eye, and raise every arm, you will deserve your fate. If I am too precipitate, enlighten; if I am too despondING, encourage me.

My pen has run into this argument; for, as much a foreigner as you think me, on this momentous subject I feel myself an Englishman.

The pleasure of residing at Sheffield-place is, after all, the

first and the ultimate object of my visit to my native country. But when or how will that visit be effected? Clouds and whirlwinds, Austrian Croats, and Gallic cannibals, seem on every side to impede my passage. You appear to apprehend the perils or difficulties of the German road, and French peace is more sanguinary than civilized War. I must pass through, perhaps, a thousand Republics or municipalities, which neither obey nor are obeyed. The strictness of passports, and the popular ferment, are much encreased since last summer: Aristocrate is in every mouth, Lanterns hang in every street, and an hasty word or a casual resemblance, may be fatal. Yet, on the other hand, it is probable that many English, men, women, and children, will traverse the country without any accident before next September; and I am sensible that many things appear more formidable at a distance than on a nearer approach, Without any absolute determination, we must see what the events of the next three or four months will produce. In the mean while, I shall expect with impatience your next letter: let it be speedy; my answer shall be prompt.

You will be glad, or sorry, to learn that my gloomy apprehensions are much abated, and that my departure, whenever it takes place, will be an act of choice, rather than of necessity. I do not pretend to affirm, that secret discontent, dark suspicion, private animosity, are very materially asswaged; but we have not experienced, nor do we now apprehend, any dangerous acts of violence, which may compell me to seek a refuge among the friendly Bears, and to abandon my library to the mercy of the Democrates. The firmness and vigour of Government have crushed, at least for a time, the spirit of innovation; and I do not believe that the body of the people, especially the Peasants, are disposed for a revolution. From France, praised be the Demon of Anarchy! the insurgents of the pays de Vaud could not at present have much to hope; and should the *Gardes nationales*, of which there is little appearance, attempt an incursion, the country is armed

and prepared, and they would be resisted with equal numbers and superior discipline. The Gallic wolves that prowled round Geneva are drawn away, some to the south and some to the north, and the late events in Flanders seem to have diffused a general contempt, as well as abhorrence, for the lawless savages, who fly before the enemy, hang their prisoners, and murder their officers. The brave and patient regiment of Ernest is expected home every day, and as Bern will take them into present pay, that veteran and regular corps will add to the security of our frontier.

I rejoyce that we have so little to say on that subject of Worldly affairs. Since the interest of the Yorkshire is due from the month of February my complaints are silenced, but I am desirous of the consummation of the business. You seem to applaud your good fortune in finding an excellent settlement for £3000, with which you have purchased three unexceptionable Debentures, but you forget to mention who are my Creditors and in what part of the Globe my landed security is placed. I must confess some fears of Ireland or the West Indies, with neither of which I would willingly have any connection. As my property is now divided, I should much wish that you would draw up and sign a regular statement of the several objects, stating in whose hands and where the respective title deeds are deposited. With regard to those which are entrusted . . . it could not surely be offensive to ask him for a written acknowledgment. I have no evidence whatsoever to produce to his Executors; this thought sometimes makes me rather uneasy. I thank you for the offer of supporting my Credit at Gosling's; but the stream now begins to flow faster than I draw, and they have been instructed to keep £500 India bonds from your talons. Notwithstanding the Darrel's caution, I wish you had seized the propitious moment when stocks were so ridiculously high. I am much surprized to have no account whatsoever of the approach of my Madeira, which has been so injudiciously paid for beforehand; enquiries must be made. Will you

likewise inform yourself of the Wedgewood, why I have not been able to obtain their old account which was solicited by letter, a strong measure from me, when I paid Severy's bill two or three years ago? If they have waited scandalously for their money, it is not my fault; but I do not like it myself, as it is the only debt I have in the World. Mrs. Moss saw my house and garden in a rainy day, and her passage was so rapid that I could not even give her a dish of tea: she seems pleased with her situation at Geneva.

This summer we are threatened with an inundation, besides many nameless English and Irish; the Dowager Lady Spencer is arrived, the Dutchess of Ancaster is expected, but I am less anxious about those matrons, than for the good Dutchess of Devonshire and the wicked Lady Elizabeth Foster, who are on their march. Lord Malmsbury, the *audacieux* Harris, will inform you that he has seen me: *him* I would have consented to keep.

Before I absolutely conclude, I must animadvert on the whimsical peroration of your last Epistle concerning the future fate of my library,[1] about which you are so indignant. I am a friend to the circulation of property of every kind, and besides the pecuniary advantage of my poor heirs, I consider a public sale as the most laudable method of disposing of it. From such sales my books were chiefly collected, and when I can no longer use them they will be again culled by various buyers according to the measure of their wants and means. If indeed a true liberal public library existed in London, I might be tempted to enrich the catalogue and encourage the

[1] Gibbon's library at Lausanne was bought, in 1796, from Lord Sheffield by Beckford for £950. Beckford shut himself up in it "for six weeks, from early in the morning until night, only now and then taking a ride," and read himself "nearly blind." "It is, of all the libraries I ever saw, that of which I should most covet the possession — that which seems exactly everything that any gentleman fond of letters could wish," said one visitor. In 1830 the library was divided into two parts. Half was sold for £500 to an English gentleman; the other half went at the same price to a bookseller at Geneva. The half which was sold to an English purchaser was, in 1876, still kept together in the possession of a Swiss gentleman near Geneva.

institution: but to bury my treasure in a *country* mansion under the key of a jealous master! I am not flattered by the Gibbonian collection, and shall own my presumptuous belief that six quarto Volumes may be sufficient for the preservation of that name. If however your unknown successor should be a man of learning, if I should live to see the love of litterature dawning in your grandson —— In the meanwhile I admire the firm confidence of our friendship that you can insist, and I can demur, on a legacy of fifteen hundred or two thousand pounds without the smallest fear of offence.

One word more before we part; call upon Mr. John Nichols, bookseller and printer, at Cicero's head, Red-Lion-passage, Fleet-street, and ask him whether he did not, about the beginning of March, receive a very polite letter from Mr. Gibbon of Lausanne? To which, either as a man of business or a civil Gentleman, he should have returned an answer. My application related to a domestic article in the Gentleman's magazine of August, 1788, (p. 698,) which had lately fallen into my hands, and concerning which I requested some farther lights. Mrs. Moss delivered the letters into my hands, but I doubt whether they will be of much service to me; the work appears far more difficult in the execution than in the idea, and as I am now taking my leave for some time of the library, I shall not make much progress in the memoirs of P. P. till I am on English ground. But is it indeed true, that I shall eat any Sussex pheasants this autumn? The event is in the book of Fate, and I cannot unroll the leaves of September and October. Should I reach Sheffield-place, I hope to find the whole family in a perfect state of existence, except a certain Maria Holroyd, my fair and *generous* correspondent, whose annihilation on proper terms I most fervently desire. I must receive a copious answer before the end of next month, June, and again call upon you for a map of your political World. The Chancellor roars; does he break his chain? *Vale.*

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Lausanne, August 1st, 1792.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

Notwithstanding all the arts of our great Enemy, the Demon of procrastination, I should not have postponed for so many months a pleasing duty, which may at any time be performed in a single hour, had I not for some time past entertained a lively and probable hope of visiting you this autumn in person; had I not flattered myself, that the very next post I might be able to fix the day of my departure from Lausanne, and almost of my arrival at the Belvidere. That hope is now vanished, and my journey to England is unavoidably delayed till the spring or summer of next year. The extraordinary state of public affairs in France opposes an insuperable bar to my passage; and every prudent stranger will avoid that inhospitable land, in which a people of slaves is suddenly become a nation of tyrants and cannibals. The German road is indeed safe, but, independent of a great addition of fatigue and expence, the armies of Austria and Prussia now cover that frontier; and though the Generals are polite, and the troops well disciplined, I am not desirous of passing through the Clouds of Hussars and Pandours that attend their motions. These public reasons are fortified by some private motives, and to this delay I resign myself with a sigh for the present, and a hope for the future.

What a strange wild World do we live in! You will allow me to be a tolerable historian, yet, on a fair review of ancient and modern times, I can find none that bear any affinity with the present. My knowledge of your discerning mind, and my recollection of your political principles, assure me, that you are no more a *Democrat* than myself. Had the French improved their glorious opportunity to erect a free constitutional Monarchy on the ruins of arbitrary power and the Bastile, I should applaud their generous effort; but this total subversion of all rank, order, and government, could be

productive only of a popular monster, which after devouring every thing else, must finally devour itself. I was once apprehensive that this monster would propagate some imps in our happy island, but they seem to have been crushed in the cradle; and I acknowledge with pleasure and pride the good sense of the English nation, who seem truly conscious of the blessings which they enjoy: and I am happy to find that the most respectable part of opposition has cordially joyned in the support of "things as they are." Even this country has been somewhat tainted with the Democratical infection: the vigilance of Government has been exerted, the malecontents have been awed, the misguided have been undeceived, the feaver in the blood has gradually subsided, and I flatter myself that we have secured the tranquil enjoyment of obscure felicity, which we had been almost tempted to despise.

You have heard, most probably, from Mrs. Holroyd, of the long-expected though transient satisfaction which I received from the visit of the Sheffield family. He appeared highly satisfied with my arrangements here, my house, garden, and situation, at once in town and country, which are indeed singular in their kind, and which have often made me regret the impossibility of showing them to my dearest friend of the Belvidere. Lord S. is still, and will ever continue, the same active being, always employed for himself, his friends, and the public, and always persuading himself that he wishes for leisure and repose. He has now a new care on his hands, the management and disposal of his eldest daughter, who is indeed a most extraordinary young woman. There are various roads to happiness; but when I compare his situation with mine, I do not, upon the whole, repent that I have given the preference to a life of celibacy and retirement. Although I have been long a spectator of the great World, my unambitious temper has been content with the occupations and rewards of study; and although my library be still my favourite room, I am now no longer stimulated by the prosecution of any litterary work. The society of Lausanne is

adapted to my taste; my house is open to many agreeable acquaintance, and some real friends; the uniformity of the natives is enlivened by travellers of all nations; and this summer I am happy in a familiar intercourse with Lady Spencer, the Dutchess of Devonshire, Lady Elizabeth Foster, and Lady Duncannon, who seems to be gradually recovering from her dreadful complaints. My health is remarkably good. I have now enjoyed a long interval from the gout; and I endeavour to use with moderation Dr. Cadogan's best remedies, temperance, exercise, and cheerfulness. Adieu, Dear Madam; may every blessing that Nature can allow be attendant on your latter season! Your age and my habits will not permit a very close correspondence; but I wish to hear, and I *presume* to ask, a speedy *direct* account of your own situation. May it be such as I shall hear with pleasure! Once more Adieu; I live in hopes of embracing you next summer at the Belvidere, but you may be assured that I bring over nothing for the press.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, August 23rd, 1792.

When I inform you that the design of my English expedition is at last postponed to another year, you will not be much surprized. The public obstacles, the danger of one road, and the difficulties of another, would alone be sufficient to arrest so unwieldy and inactive a Being; and these obstacles on the side of France, are growing every day more insuperable. On the other hand, the terrors, which might have driven me from hence, have in a great measure, subsided; our state prisoners are forgot; the country begins to recover its old good humour and unsuspecting confidence, and the last revolution of Paris appears to have convinced almost every body of the fatal consequences of Democratical principles, which lead by a path of flowers into the Abyss of Hell. I may therefore wait with patience and tranquillity till the Duke of

Brunswick shall have opened the French road. But if I am not driven from Lausanne, you will ask, I hope with some indignation, whether I am not drawn to England, and more especially to Sheffield-place? The desire of embracing you and yours is now the strongest, and must gradually become the sole, inducement that can force me from my library and garden, over seas and mountains. The English World will forget and be forgotten, and every year will deprive me of some acquaintance, who by courtesy are styled friends: Lord Guilford and Sir Joshua Reynolds! two of the men, and two of the houses in London, on whom I the most relied for the comforts of society.

Even the satisfaction which I promised myself at Sheffield would at present be ——

September 12th, 1792.

Thus far had I written in the full confidence of finishing and sending my letter the next post; but six post-days have unaccountably slipped away, and were you not accustomed to my silence, you would almost begin to think me on the road. How dreadfully, since my last date, has the French road been polluted with blood! and what horrid scenes may be acting at this moment, and may still be aggravated, till the Duke of Brunswick[1] is master of Paris! On every rational principle of calculation he must succeed; yet sometimes, when my spirits are low, I dread the blind efforts of mad and desperate multitudes fighting on their own ground. A few days or weeks must decide the military operations of this year, and perhaps for ever; but on the fairest supposition, I cannot look forwards to any firm settlement, either of a legal or an absolute government. I cannot pretend to give you any Paris news. Should I inform you, as we believe, that *Lally is still among the cannibals*, you would possibly answer, that he is now sitting in the library at Sheffield. Madame de

[1] The Duke of Brunswick, as commander-in-chief of the combined armies of Austria and Prussia, issued his manifesto on July 25, 1792, before crossing the French frontier and directing his march on Paris.

Stael, after miraculously escaping through pikes and poniards, has reached the castle of Copet, where I shall see her before the end of the week. If any thing can provoke the King of Sardinia and the Swiss, it must be the foul destruction of *his* cousin Madame de Lamballe, and of *their* regiment of guards.[1] An extraordinary council is summoned at Berne, *but resentment may be checked by prudence.* In spite of Maria's laughter, I applaud your moderation, and sigh for a hearty union of all the sense and property of the country. The times require it; but your last political letter was a cordial to my spirits. The Duchess of D. rather dislikes a coalition: amiable creature! The Eliza (we call her Bess) is furious against you for not writing. We shall lose them in a few days; but the motions of Bess and the Duchess for Italy or England, are doubtful. Ladies Spencer and Duncannon certainly pass the Alps. I live with them.

The interesting subjects of our late correspondence seem to have obliterated all memory of my private concerns, which have suffered as usual a rub when we thought them finally terminated. Although my ideas about money matters are grown somewhat confused, I do not believe there is much *caput mortuum* left, and have no doubt that the different channels of interest will be properly filled at Michaelmas, but I should be glad to see the greatest part of my decreasing short annuities well secured in a mortgage, and I flatter myself that yourself and agents are alive to that pursuit. But I must again put you in mind of two interesting queries to which I have not yet received any answer. 1. What is the nature of the three thousand pounds debentures which you purchased last Winter? Who is my debtor? and what and where is my security? Surely this is no idle curiosity on my side. 2. I wished to know in what hands the different

[1] The Swiss Guard, nearly eight hundred in number, were massacred in the attack upon the Tuileries on August 10, 1792. Of the few who escaped, fifty-four were murdered in the Abbaye at the September massacres. Their death is commemorated by Thorwaldsen's lion at Lucerne.

deeds of my property are vested, and to possess something like a written attestation. The Buriton Mortgage and the aforesaid debentures are very properly, as I suppose, in Lord Sheffield's iron chest. *Fort bien.* My short annuities in their own books and in Mr. E. Darrel's — *pas mal;* my Sussex Navigation and India Bonds with Gosling, *passe encore:* but my claims on you, the Newhaven Mortgage and the Annuity are delivered — are they not, to Mr. Batt, an honourable but a sickly man? Should he fail, have we any to exhibit to his unknown heir? If delicacy, false delicacy, forbids your asking for a receipt, or taking them, which I should like better, into your own custody, I must seriously desire they may be sent over to me. Did I not express some anxiety on this head, you would have a right to call me a very careless fellow.

There are some minor matters which you may find in my long letter; such as a request to settle a shameful obsolete bill, my only one, at Wedgewood's, and to enquire whether Mr. John Nichols, bookseller in Red Lion Passage, Fleet Street, did not receive a letter from me last March which he has never answered. But I must insist on a hogshead of Madeira announced, shipped, and, I believe, paid six months ago, but which has never reached my lips or my cellar. This must be explored. Adieu. Since I do not appear in person, I feel the absolute propriety of writing to my lady and Maria; but there is far from the knowledge to the performance of a duty.

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO MR. CADELL

Lausanne, Sept. 28th, 1792.

DEAR SIR,

As you must have been informed by Lord Sheffield of my approaching arrival, I trust that you will feel some disappointment when you are told by myself that my journey to England is delayed to another year. The cause of this delay proceeds solely from the troubles of the continent. It would

be madness to venture my life in the land of Cannibals, and the circuitous route by Germany would be attended with a large increase of trouble and expense. I grow every day more sedentary, and could I have the pleasure of shewing you my house, my library, and my garden, you would not be surprised that I should quit them with some reluctance. You may perhaps be likewise disappointed at hearing that I shall probably come empty-handed. A variety of untoward circumstances have contributed to encrease my indolence. I cannot please myself with the choice of a subject, and it may be prudent to enjoy rather than expose my historical fame.

Several months ago I wrote a very civil letter to *Mr. John Nichols, Bookseller at Cicero's head, Red Lion Passage, Fleet Street,* which (had he received it) I can scarcely persuade myself he would have left without an answer. It related to a very curious paper about the Gibbon family inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine, August, 1788, p. 698, which had just fallen into my hands. I wished to know the author and by what means I could correspond with him on the subject. Perhaps you may be able, and I am sure you are willing, to clear up that point and put me in a proper channel by a personal application either to the aforesaid John Nichols or to some other person concerned in the Gentleman's Magazine.

Be so kind as to inform Elmsley of what he will hardly believe, that I am preparing materials for a letter to him, with a long list of commissions. Among these I wish you boldly to introduce the works of merit, history, travels, literature, philosophy, and even extraordinary novels which bear your authentic stamp.

My best compliments to Mr. Strahan.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, October 5th, 1792.

As our English newspapers must have informed you of the invasion of Savoy by the French, and as it is possible that you may have some trifling apprehensions of my being killed and eaten by those Cannibals, it has appeared to me that a short extraordinary dispatch might not be unacceptable on this occasion. It is indeed true, that about ten days ago the French army of the south, under the command of Mr. de Montesquiou, (if any French army can be said to be under any command,) has entered Savoy, and possessed themselves of Chamberry, Montmelian, & several other places. It has always been the practise of the King of Sardinia to abandon his transalpine dominions; but on this occasion the Court of Turin appears to have been surprized by the strange eccentric motions of a Democracy, which always acts from the passion of the moment; and their inferior troops have retreated, with some loss and disgrace, into the passes of the Alps. Mount Cenis is now impervious, and our English travellers who are bound for Italy, the Dutchesses of Devonshire, Ancaster, &c., will be forced to explore a long circuitous road through the Tirol. But the Chablais is yet intact, nor can our telescopes discover the tricolor banners on the other side of the lake. Our accounts of the French numbers seem to vary from fifteen to thirty thousand men; the regulars are few, but they are followed by a rabble rout, which must soon, however, melt away, as they will find no plunder, and scanty subsistence, in the poverty and barrenness of Savoy. N.B. I have just seen a letter from M. de M., who boasts that at his first entrance into Savoy he had only twelve battalions. Our intelligence is far from correct.

The Magistrates of Geneva were alarmed by this dangerous neighbourhood, and more especially by the well known animosity of an exiled citizen, Claviere, who is one of the six

ministers of the French Republic. It was carried by a small Majority in the general council, to call in the succour of three thousand Swiss, which is stipulated by ancient treaty. The strongest reason or pretence of the minority, was founded on the danger of provoking the French, and they seem to have been justified by the event; since the complaint of the French resident amounts to a declaration of War. The fortifications of Geneva are not contemptible, especially on the side of Savoy; and it is much doubted whether M. de Montesquiou is prepared for a regular siege; but the malcontents are numerous within the walls, and I question whether the spirit of the citizens would hold out against a bombardment. In the meanwhile the diet has declared, that the first canon fired against Geneva will be considered as an act of hostility against the whole Helvetic body. Berne, as the nearest and most powerful Canton, has taken the lead with great vigour and vigilance; the road is filled with the perpetual succession of troops and artillery; and, if some disaffection lurks in the towns, the peasants, especially the Germans, are inflamed with a strong desire of encountering the murderers of their Countrymen. Mr. de Watteville, with whom you dined at my house last year, refused to accept the command of the Swiss succour of Geneva, till it was made his first instruction that he should never, in any case, surrender himself prisoner of War.

In this situation, you may suppose that we have some fears. I have great dependence, however, on the many chances in our favour, the valour of the Swiss, the return of the Piedmontese with their Austrian allies, 8 or 10 thousand men from the Milanese, a diversion from Spain, the great events (how slowly they proceed) on the side of Paris, the inconstancy and want of discipline of the French, and the near approach of the winter season. I am not nervous, but I will not be rash. It will be painful to abandon my house and library; but if the danger should approach, I will retreat before it, first to Bern, and gradually to the North. Should I even

be forced to take refuge in England (a violent measure so late in the year) you would perhaps receive me as kindly as you do the French priests—a noble act of hospitality! Could I have foreseen this storm, I would have been there six months ago; but who can foresee the wild measures of the Savages of Gaul? We thought ourselves perfectly out of the Hurricane latitudes. Adieu. I am going to bed, and must rise early to visit the Neckers at Rolle, whither they have retired, from the frontier situation of Copet. Severy is on horseback, with his dragoons: his poor father is dangerously ill. It will be shocking if it should be found necessary to remove him. While we are in this very awkward crisis, I will write at least every week.

Ever yours,
E. G.

Write instantly, and remember all my commissions.

I will keep my promise of sending you a weekly journal of our troubles, that, when the piping times of peace are restored, I may sleep in long and irreproachable silence; but I shall use a smaller paper, as our military exploits will seldom be sufficient to fill the ample size of an English quarto.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

October 13th, 1792.

Since my last of the 6th, our attack is not more imminent, and our defence is most assuredly stronger, two very important circumstances, at a time when every day is leading us, though not so fast as our impatience could wish, towards the unwar-like month of November; and we observe with pleasure that the troops of M. de Montesquiou, which are chiefly from the southern provinces, will not chearfully entertain the rigour of an Alpine Winter.

The 7th instant, M. de Chateauneuf, the French resident, took his leave with an haughty mandate, commanding the Genevois, as they valued their safety and the friendship of

the Republic, to dismiss their Swiss allies, and to punish the Magistrates who had traiterously proposed the calling in these foreign troops. It is precisely the fable of the Wolves, who offered to make peace with the sheep, provided they would send away their dogs. You know what became of the sheep. This demand appears to have kindled a just and generous indignation, since it announced an Edict of proscription; and must lead to a Democratical revolution, which would probably renew the horrid scenes of Paris and Avignon. A General assembly of the Citizens was convened, the message was read, speeches were made, oaths were taken, and it was resolved, with only three dissentient votes, to live and dye in the defence of their country. The Genevois muster above three thousand well-armed citizens; and the Swiss, who may easily be encreased, in a few hours, to an equal number, add spirit to the timorous, and confidence to the well-affected: their arsenals are filled with arms, their magazines with ammunition, and their granaries with corn. But their fortifications are extensive and imperfect, they are commanded from two adjacent hills; a French faction lurks in the City; the character of the Genevois is rather commercial than military; and their behaviour, lofty promise, and base surrender, in the year 1782, is fresh in our memories. In the meanwhile, 4000 French at the most are arrived in the neighbouring camp, nor is there yet any appearance of mortars or heavy artillery. Perhaps a haughty menace may be repelled by a firm countenance.

If it were worth while talking of justice, what a shameful attack of a feeble unoffending state! On the news of their danger, all Switzerland, from Schaffouse to the Pays de Vaud, has risen in arms; and a French resident, who has passed through the country, in his way from Ratisbon, declares his intention of informing and admonishing the National convention. About eleven thousand Bernois are already posted in the neighbourhood of Copet and Nyon; and new reinforcements of men, artillery, &c., arrive every day. Another army

is drawn together to oppose Mr. de Ferrieres, on the side of Bienne and the Bishoprick of Basle; and the Austrians in Swabia would be easily persuaded to cross the Rhine in our defence. But we are yet ignorant whether our sovereigns mean to wage offensive or defensive War. If the latter, which is more likely, will the French begin the attack? Should Geneva yield to fear or force, this country is open to an invasion; and though our men are brave, we want Generals; and I despise the French much less than I did two months ago. It should seem from Trevor's letters, who is indeed low-spirited, that our hopes from the King of Sardinia and the Austrians of Milan are faint and distant; Spain sleeps, and the Duke of Brunzwick (amazement!) seems to have failed in his great project. For my part, till Geneva falls, I do not think of a retreat; but, at all events, I am provided with two strong horses, and a hundred Louis in gold. Zurich would be probably my winter quarters, and the society of the Neckers would make any place agreable. Their situation is worse than mine: I have no daughter ready to lye in; nor do I fear the French aristocrates on the road.

Adieu. Keep my letters; excuse contradictions and repetitions. The Dutchess of Devonshire leaves us next week. Lady Elizabeth abhorrs you.

Ever yours,
E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

October 20th, 1792.

Since my last, our affairs take a more pacific turn; but I will not venture to affirm that our peace will be either safe or honourable. Mr. de Montesquiou and three Commissioners of the Convention, who are at Carrouge, have had several conferences with the Magistrates of Geneva; several expresses have been dispatched to and from Paris, and every step of the negociation is communicated to the deputies of Bern and Zurich. The French troops observe a very tolerable degree

of order and discipline: and no act of hostility has yet been committed on the territory of Geneva.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

October 27.

My usual temper very readily admitted the excuse, that it would be better to wait another week, till the final settlement of our affairs. The treaty is signed between France and Geneva; and the ratification of the Convention is looked upon as assured, if any thing can be assured in that wild Democracy. On condition that the Swiss Garrison, with the approbation of Berne and Zurich, be recalled before the first of December, it is stipulated that the independence of Geneva shall be preserved inviolate; that M. de Montesquiou shall immediately send away his heavy artillery; and that no French troops shall approach within ten leagues of the city. As the Swiss have acted only as auxiliaries, they have no occasion for a direct treaty; but they cannot prudently disarm, till they are satisfied of the pacific intentions of France; and no such satisfaction can be given till they have acknowledged the new Republic, which they will probably do in a few days, with a deep groan of indignation and sorrow; it has been cemented with the blood of their countrymen! But when the Emperor, the King of Prussia, the first General, and the first army in Europe have failed, less powerful states may acquiesce, without dishonour, in the determination of fortune. Do you understand this most unexpected failure? I will allow an ample share to the badness of the roads and the weather, to famine and disease, to the skill of Dumourier, a heaven-born General, and to the enthusiastic ardour of the new Romans; but still, still there must be some secret shameful cause at the bottom of this strange retreat.[1]

[1] The Duke of Brunswick was charged with being bribed to retire. No ground for the accusation has ever been alleged, except that, on the duke's return, he paid off heavy debts.

We are now delivered from the impending terrors of siege and invasion. The Geneva *Emigrés*, particularly the Neckers, are hastening to their homes; and I shall not be reduced to the hard necessity of seeking a winter azylum at Zurich or Constance: but I am not pleased with our future prospects. It is much to be feared that the present Government of Geneva will be soon modelled after the French fashion; the new Republic of Savoy is forming on the opposite bank of the lake; the Jacobin Missionaries are powerful and zealous; and the Malcontents of this country, who begin again to rear their heads, will be surrounded with temptations, and examples, and allies. I know not whether the pays de Vaud will long adhere to the dominion of Berne; or whether I shall be permitted to end my days in this little paradise, which I have so happily suited to my taste and circumstances.

Last Monday only I received your letter, which had strangely loitered on the road since its date of the 29th of September. There must surely be some disorder in the posts, since the Eliza departed indignant at never having heard from you.

I still am of opinion that it is both unseemly and unusual for *us* to propose any specific terms. You must hear the ideas of the parents or guardians. You must consider on the behalf of your client, how far a moderate interest may be enhanced by rank and character, how far a deficiency (less desirable) in those qualifications may be varnished with gold. If everything should unite, you may boldly accept; if you hesitate you must take the matter ad referendum, and they must expect our answer by the return of the post. You will say perhaps that the parties may be impatient, and that delay may be productive of danger. This I must acknowledge, nor is it only in this respect that I feel the disadvantage of his not being on the spot. — I much regret the M[arquis] of C[armarthen], his father the D[uke] of L[eeds] is a fair and honourable man. Your hint of General Bude (of whom I had never heard) shall not be neglected: when the Duchess

of D. returns to England next year, I hope she will be able and willing to assist the young man, to whom she expressed much friendship, and whom she appointed her chevalier sans peur and sans reproche by the delivery of a feather and a cockade. He is now on service with his dragoons, but will probably be soon disbanded.

Without confessing that my fears and scruples were quite so *anile* as you are always disposed to think them, I am now in a great measure satisfied. I wish you may find a secure mortgage at four per cent.; but though I do not perfectly like the Debentures (which you never explained before), I cannot think they run much risk till our next meeting in England.

The case of my Wine I think peculiarly hard; to lose my Madeira, and to be scolded for losing it. Please to remember that the Wine Merchant never sent me any letter of advice, as he ought to have done, of the time and manner of its departure; and that when I first expressed my astonishment to you (in my great letter of at least four months ago) you were too much engrossed with a more interesting subject to return any answer. What could I do? my part was entirely passive, to expect its arrival, which I still expect. Yet I have now directed proper enquiries to be made at Basle and Ostend; the London Merchant must trace it forwards, and the last person in whose hands it has been must be responsible for the wine or its value. Whatsoever may be right, I have no intention of seeking a legal remedy; but on a similar occasion, I hope we shall never repeat the liberal confidence of such premature payment.

I am much indebted to Mr. Nichols for his Genealogical communications, which I am impatient to receive; but I do not understand why so civil a Gentleman could not favour me, in six months, with an answer by the post: since he entrusts me with these valuable papers, you have not, I presume, informed him of my negligence and awkwardness in regard to Manuscripts. Your reproach rather surprizes me, as I suppose I am much the same as I have been for these

last twenty Years. Should you hold your resolution of writing only such things as may be published at Charing-cross, our future correspondence would not be very interesting. But I expect and require, at this important crisis, a full and confidential account of your views concerning England, Ireland, and France. You have a strong and clear eye; and your pen is, perhaps, the most useful quill that ever has been plucked from a goose. Your protection of the French refugees is highly applauded. Rosset and La Motte have escaped from Arbourg, perhaps with connivance to avoid disagreeable demands from the Republic. Adieu.

Ever yours,

E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

November 10th, 1792.

Received this day, November 9th, a most amiable dispatch from the too humble secretary of the family of Espee, dated October 24th, which I answer the same day. It will be acknowledged, that I have fulfilled my engagement with as much accuracy as our uncertain state and the fragility of human nature would allow.

I resume my narrative. At the time when we imagined that all was settled by an equal treaty between two such unequal powers, as the Geneva flea and the Leviathan France, we were thunderstruck with the intelligence that the Ministers of the Republic refused to ratify the conditions; and they were indignant, with some colour of reason, at the hard obligation of withdrawing their troops to the distance of ten leagues, and of consequently leaving the Pays de Gex naked, and exposed to the Swiss, who had assembled 15,000 men on the frontier, and with whom they had not made any agreement. The Messenger who was sent last Sunday from Geneva is not yet returned; and many persons are afraid of some design and danger in this delay. Montesquiou has acted with politeness, moderation, and apparent sincerity;

but he may resign, he may be superseded, his place may be occupied by an *enragé*, by Servan, or prince Charles of Hesse, who would aspire to imitate the predatory fame of Custine in Germany.

In the mean while, the General holds a wolf by the ears; an officer who has seen his troops, about 18,000 men (with a tremendous train of artillery), represents them as a black, daring, desperate crew of buccaneers, rather shocking than contemptible; the officers (scarcely a Gentleman among them), without servants, or horses, or baggage, lying *higgledy piggledy* on the ground with the common men, yet maintaining a rough kind of discipline over them. They already begin to accuse and even to suspect their General, and call aloud for blood and plunder: could they have an opportunity of squeezing some of the rich Citizens, Geneva would cut up as fat as most towns in Europe. During this suspension of hostilities they are permitted to visit the City without arms, sometimes three or four hundred at a time; and the Magistrates, as well as the Swiss Commander, are by no means pleased with this dangerous intercourse, which they dare not prohibit. Such are our fears; yet it should seem on the other side, that the French affect a kind of magnanimous justice towards their little neighbour, and that they are not ambitious of an unprofitable contest with the poor and hardy Swiss. The Swiss are not equal to a long and expensive War; and as most of our Militia have families and trades, the country already sighs for their return. Whatever can be yielded, without absolute danger or disgrace, will doubtless be granted; and the business will probably end in our owning the Sovereignty, and trusting to the good faith of the Republic of France: how that word would have sounded four years ago! The measure is humiliating; but after the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick, and the failure of the Austrians, the smaller powers may acquiesce without dishonour.

Every dog has his day; and these Gallic dogs have their day, at least, of most insolent prosperity. After forcing or

tempting the Prussians to evacuate their country, they conquer Savoy, pillage Germany, threaten Spain: the Low Countries are ere now invaded; Rome and Italy tremble; they scour the Mediterranean, and talk of sending a squadron into the South Sea. The whole horizon is so black, that I begin to feel some anxiety for England, the last refuge of liberty and law; and the more so, as I perceive from Lord S.'s last epistle that his firm nerves are a little shaken; but of this more in my next, for I want to unburthen my conscience.

If England, with the experience of our happiness and French calamities, should now be seduced to eat the apple of false freedom, we should indeed deserve to be driven from the paradise which we enjoy. I turn aside from the horrid and improbable, (yet not impossible) supposition, that, in three or four years' time, myself and my best friends may be reduced to the deplorable state of the French emigrants: they thought it as impossible three or four years ago. Never did a revolution affect, to such a degree, the private existence of such numbers of the first people of a great Country: your examples of misery I could easily match with similar examples in this country and the neighbourhood; and our sympathy is the deeper, as we do not possess, like you, the means of alleviating, in some degree, the misfortunes of the fugitives. But I must have, from the very excellent pen of the Maria, the tragedy of the Archbishop of Arles; and the longer the better. Madame de Biron has probably been tempted by some faint and (I fear) fallacious promises of clemency to the Women, and which have likewise engaged Madame d'Aguesseau and her two daughters to revisit France. Madame de Bouillon stands her ground, and her situation as a foreign princess is less exposed. As Lord S. has assumed the glorious character of protector of the distressed, his name is pronounced with gratitude and respect. The D. of Richmond is praised, on Madame de Biron's account. To the Princess d'Henin, and Lally, I wish to be remembered.

The Neckers cannot venture into Geneva, and Madame de

Stael will probably lye in at Rolle. He is printing a defence of the King, &c., against their Republican Judges; but the name of Necker is unpopular to all parties, and I much fear that the Guillotine will be more speedy than the press. It will, however, be an eloquent performance; and, if I find an opportunity, I am to send you one, to you, Lord S., by his particular desire: he wishes likewise to convey some copies with speed to our principal people, Pitt, Fox, Lord Stormont, &c. But such is the rapid succession of events, that it will appear, like the 'Pouvoir Executif,' his best Work, after the whole scene has been totally changed.

Shall you never be able to place my £3000 on good Security? Was there ever before a two years' fruitless chace after a Mortgage? We are in hot pursuit from all quarters of my Madeira, and unless already drunk by the Hussars it must emerge.

Ever yours,
E. G.

P.S. — The Revolution of France, and my triple dispatch by the same post to Sheffield-place, are, in my opinion, the two most singular events in the eighteenth Century. I found the task so easy and pleasant, that I had some thoughts of adding a letter to the gentle Louisa. And a note to the most respectable Tuft. I should not have forgot Miss Firth, but I hear she is leaving you. Is she going to be married? I am this moment informed, that our troops on the frontier are beginning to move, on their return home; yet we hear nothing of the treaty's being concluded.

TO LADY SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, November 10, 1792.

I could never forgive myself, were I capable of writing by the same post, a political Epistle to the father, and a friendly letter to the daughter, without sending any token of remembrance to the respectable Matron, my dearest My lady,



whom I have now loved as a sister for something better or worse than twenty years. No, indeed, the historian may be careless, he may be indolent, he may always intend and never execute, but he is neither a monster nor a statue; he has a memory, a conscience, a heart, and that heart is sincerely devoted to Lady S. He must even acknowledge the fallacy of a sophism which he has sometimes used, and she has always and most truly denied; that, where the persons of a family are strictly united, the writing to one is in fact writing to all; and that consequently all his numerous letters to the husband, may be considered as equally addressed to the wife. He feels, on the contrary, that separate minds have their distinct ideas and sentiments, and that each character, either in speaking or writing, has its peculiar tone of conversation. He agrees with the maxim of Rousseau, that three friends who wish to disclose a common secret, will impart it only *deux à deux;* and he is satisfied that, on the present memorable occasion, each of the persons of the Sheffield family will claim a peculiar share in this triple missive, which will communicate, however, a triple satisfaction. The experience of what may be effected by vigorous resolution, encourages the historian to hope that he shall cast the skin of the old serpent, and hereafter show himself as a new creature.

And first let me congratulate yourself and your friends on the present happy state of your mental and corporeal faculties, of which I have gained the pleasing intelligence, not only from the hints in Lord S. and Maria's letters, but still more clearly from your own long and spirited Epistle to young Severy, which he received with gratitude and will answer with speed.

I lament, on all our accounts, that the last year's expedition to Lausanne did not take place in a golden period; the more familiar and cheerful intercourse with Madame de Severy would have opened your hearts to each other. I should have escaped many moments of painful though silent sympathy, and every object in Nature and society would have appeared

to your eyes with a different aspect and colour. But we must reflect, that human felicity is seldom without alloy; and if we cannot indulge the hope of your making a second visit to Lausanne, we must look forwards to my residence next summer at Sheffield-place, where I must find you in the full bloom of health, spirits, and beauty. I can perceive, by all public and private intelligence, that your house has been the open hospital Azylum of French fugitives; and it is a sufficient proof of the firmness of your nerves, that you have not been overwhelmed or agitated by such a concourse of strangers. Curiosity and compassion may, in some degree, have supported you. Every day has presented to your view some new scene of that strange tragical romance, which occupies all Europe so infinitely beyond any event that has happened in our time, and you have the satisfaction of not being a mere spectator of the distress of so many victims of false liberty. The benevolent fame of Lord S. is widely diffused.

From Angletine's last letter to Maria, you have already some idea of the melancholy state of her poor father. As long as Mr. de Severy allowed our hopes and fears to fluctuate with the changes of his disorder, I was unwilling to say anything on so painful a subject; and it is with the deepest concern that I now confess our absolute despair of his recovery. All his particular complaints are now lost in a general dissolution of the whole frame: every principle of life is exhausted, and as often as I am admitted to his bed-side, though he still looks and smiles with the patience of an Angel, I have the heartfelt grief of seeing him each day drawing nearer to the term of his existence. A few weeks, possibly a few days, will deprive me of a most excellent friend, and break for ever the most perfect system of domestic happiness, in which I had so large and intimate a share. Wilhelm (who has obtained leave of absence from his military duty) and his sister behave and feel like tender and dutiful children; but they have a long gay prospect of life, and new connexions,

new families will make them forget, in due time, the common lot of mortality. But it is Madame de Severy whom I truly pity; I dread the effects of the first shock, and I dread still more the deep perpetual consuming affliction for a loss which can never be retrieved.

You will not wonder that such reflections sadden my own mind, nor can I forget how much my situation is altered since I retired, nine years ago, to the banks of the Leman lake. The death of poor Deyverdun first deprived me of a domestic companion, who can never be supplied; and your visit has only served to remind me that man, however amused and occupied in his Closet, was not made to live alone. Severy will soon be no more; his widow for a long time, perhaps for ever, will be lost to herself and her friends, the son will travel, and I shall be left a stranger in the insipid circle of mere common acquaintance. The Revolution of France, which first embittered and divided the Society of Lausanne, has opposed a barrier to my Sussex visit, and may finally expell me from the paradise which I inhabit. Even that paradise, the expensive and delightful establishment of my house, library, and garden, almost becomes an incumbrance, by rendering it more difficult for me to relinquish my hold, or to form a new system of life in my native Country, for which my income, though improved and improving, would be probably insufficient. But every complaint should be silenced by the contemplation of the French; compared with whose cruel fate, all misery is relative happiness. I perfectly concurr in your partiality for Lally; though Nature might forget some meaner ingredients, of prudence, economy, &c., she never formed a purer heart, or a brighter imagination. If he be with you, I beg my kindest salutations to him. I am every day more closely united with the Neckers. Should France break, and this country be over-run, they would be reduced, in very humble circumstances, to seek a refuge; and where but in England? Adieu, dear Madam: there is,

indeed, much pleasure in discharging one's heart to a real friend.

Ever yours,
E. G.

TO THE HON. MARIA HOLROYD

Lausanne, Nov. 10, 1792.

In dispatching the weekly political journal to Lord Sheffield, my conscience (for I have some remains of conscience) most powerfully urges me to salute, with some lines of friendship and gratitude, the amiable secretary, who might save herself the trouble of a modest apology. I have not yet forgotten our different behaviour after the much lamented *separation* of October the 4th, 1791, your meritorious punctuality, and my unworthy silence. I have still before me that entertaining narrative, which would have interested me, not only in the progress of the *carissima famiglia*, but in the motions of a Tartar camp, or the march of a caravan of Arabs; the mixture of just observation and lively imagery, the strong sense of a man, expressed with the easy elegance of a female. I still recollect with pleasure the happy comparison of the Rhine, who had heard so much of liberty on both his banks, that he wandered with mischievous licentiousness over all the adjacent meadows. The inundation, alas! has now spread much wider; and it is sadly to be feared that the Elbe, the Po, and the Danube, may imitate the vile example of the Rhine: I shall be content, however, if our own Thames still preserves his fair character of

Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.

These agreeable epistles of Maria produced only some dumb intentions, and some barren remorse; nor have I deigned, except by a brief missive from my chancellor, to express how much I loved the author, and how much I was pleased with the composition. That amiable author I have known and loved from the first dawning of her life and

coquetry, to the present maturity of her talents; and as long as I remain on this planet, I shall pursue, with the same tender and even anxious concern, the future steps of her establishment and life. That establishment must be splendid; that life must be happy. She is endowed with every gift of nature and fortune; but the advantage which she will derive from them, depends almost entirely on herself. You must not, you shall not, think yourself unworthy to write to any man: there is none whom your correspondence would not amuse and satisfy.

I will not undertake a task, which my taste would adopt, and my indolence would too soon relinquish; but I am really curious, from the best motives, to have a particular account of your own studies and daily occupation. What books do you read? and how do you employ your time and your pen? Except some professed scholars, I have often observed that women in general read much more than men; but, for want of a plan, a method, a fixed object, their reading is of little benefit to themselves, or others. If you will inform me of the species of reading to which you have the most propensity, I shall be happy to contribute my share of advice or assistance.

I lament that you have not left me some monument of your pencil. Lady Elizabeth Foster has executed a very pretty drawing, taken from the door of the green-house where we dined last summer, and including the poor Acacia, (now recovered from the cruel shears of the gardener,) the end of the terrace, the front of the Pavilion, and a distant view of the country, lake, and mountains. I am almost reconciled to d'Apples' house, which is nearly finished. Instead of the monsters which Lord Hercules Sheffield extirpated, the terrace is already shaded with the new acacias and plantanes; and although the uncertainty of possession restrains me from building, I myself have planted a bosquet at the bottom of the garden, with such admirable skill that it affords shade without intercepting prospect.

The society of the aforesaid Eliza, of the Duchess of Devon-

shire, &c. has been very interesting; but they are now flown beyond the Alps, and pass the winter at Pisa. The Legards, who have long since left this place, should be at present in Italy; but I believe Mrs. Grimstone and her daughter returned to England. The Levades are highly flattered by your remembrance. Since you still retain some attachment to this delightful country, and it is indeed delightful, why should you despair of seeing it once more? The happy peer or commoner, whose name you may assume, is still concealed in the book of fate; but, whosoever he may be, he will cheerfully obey your commands, of leading you from —— Castle to Lausanne, and from Lausanne to Rome and Naples. Before that event takes place, I may possibly see you in Sussex; and, whether as a visitor or a fugitive, I hope to be welcomed with a friendly embrace. The delay of this year was truly painful, but it was inevitable; and individuals must submit to those storms which have overturned the thrones of the earth.

The tragic story of the Archbishop of Arles I have now somewhat a better right to require at your hands. I wish to have it in all its horrid details; and as you are now so much mingled with the French exiles, I am of opinion, that were you to keep a journal of all the authentic facts which they relate, it would be an agreeable exercise at present, and a future source of entertainment and instruction.

I should be obliged to you, if you would make, or find, some excuse for my not answering a letter from your aunt, which was presented to me by Mr. Fowler. I shewed him some civilities, but he is now a poor invalid, confined to his room. By her channel and yours I should be glad to have some information of the health, spirits, and situation of Mrs. Gibbon of Bath, whose alarms (if she has any) you may dispel. She is in my debt. Adieu; most truly yours.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, Nov. 25th, 1792.

After the triple labour of my last dispatch, your experience of the creature might tempt you to suspect that it would again relapse into a long slumber. But, partly from the spirit of contradiction, (though I am not a lady) and partly from the ease and pleasure which I now find in the task, you see me again alive, awake, and almost faithful to my hebdomadal promise. The last week has not, however, afforded any events deserving the notice of an historian. Our affairs are still floating on the waves of the convention, and the ratification of a corrected treaty, which had been fixed for the 20th, is not yet arrived; but the report of the diplomatic committee has been favourable, and it is generally understood that the leaders of the French Republic do not wish to quarrel with the Swiss. We are gradually withdrawing and disbanding our militia. Geneva will be left to sink or swim, according to the humour of the people; and our last hope appears to be, that by submission and good behaviour we shall avert for some time the impending storm.

A few days ago, an odd incident happened in the French army; the desertion of the general. As the Neckers were sitting, about eight o'clock in the evening, in their drawing-room at Rolle, the door flew open, and they were astounded by their servant's announcing *Monsieur le General de Montesquiou!* On the receipt of some secret intelligence of a *decrêt d'accusation*, and an order to arrest him, he had only time to get on horseback, to gallop through Geneva, to take boat for Coppet, and to escape from his pursuers, who were ordered to seize him alive or dead. He left the Neckers after supper, passed through Lausanne in the night, and proceeded to Berne and Basle, whence he intended to wind his way through Germany, amidst enemies of every description, and to seek a refuge in England, America, or the moon. He told

Necker, that the sole remnant of his fortune consisted in a wretched sum of twenty thousand livres; but the public report, or suspicion, bespeaks him in much better circumstances. Besides the reproach of acting with too much tameness and delay, he is accused of making very foul and exorbitant contracts: and it is certain that new Sparta is infected with this vice beyond the example of the most corrupt monarchy. Kellerman is arrived to take the command; and it is apprehended that on the first of December, after the departure of the Swiss, the French may *request* the permission of using Geneva, a friendly city, for their winter quarters. In that case, the democratical revolution, which we all foresee, will be very speedily effected.

I would ask you, whether you apprehend there was any treason in the Duke of Brunswick's retreat, and whether you have totally withdrawn your confidence and esteem from that once-famed general? Will it be possible for England to preserve her neutrality with any honour or safety? We are bound, as I understand, by treaty, to guarantee the dominions of the King of Sardinia and the Austrian provinces of the Netherlands. These countries are now invaded and over-run by the French. Can we refuse to fulfil our engagements, without exposing ourselves to all Europe as a perfidious or pusillanimous nation? Yet, on the other hand, can we assist those allies, without plunging headlong into an abyss, whose bottom no man can discover? But my chief anxiety is for our domestic tranquillity; for I must find a retreat in England, should I be driven from Lausanne. The idea of firm and honourable union of parties pleases me much; but you must frankly unfold what are the great difficulties that may impede so salutary a measure: you write to a man discreet in speech, and now careful of papers. Yet what can such a coalition avail if Fox be detestable and Pitt democratical? Where is the champion of the constitution? Alas, Lord Guildford! I am much pleased with the Manchester ass. The asses or wolves who sacrificed him have cast off

the mask too soon; and such a nonsensical act must open the eyes of many simple patriots, who might have been led astray by the specious name of reform. It should be made as notorious as possible. Next winter may be the crisis of our fate, and if you begin to improve the constitution, you may be driven step by step from the disfranchisement of Old Sarum to the king in Newgate, the lords voted useless, the bishops abolished, and a house of commons without articles (*sans culottes*).

Necker has ordered you a copy of his royal defence, which has met with, and deserved, universal success. The pathetic and argumentative parts are, in my opinion, equally good, and his mild eloquence may persuade without irritating. I have applied to this gentler tone some verses of Ovid (Metamorph. l. iii. 302, &c.) which you may read. Madame de Stael has produced a second son. She talks wildly enough of visiting England this winter. Her friend the Vicomte de Narbonne is somewhere about Dorking. If you could shew him any civilities she would thank us both. She is a pleasant little woman.

No news from Basil or Ostend of my Madeira. Pray contrive to get me a mortgage; there is nothing like land or landed security. Poor Mrs. G. in such a state! I can only wish her an easy dismission. I wish the same to poor Severy, whose condition is hopeless. Should he drag through the winter, Madame de S. would scarcely survive him. She kills herself with grief and fatigue. What a difference in Lausanne! I hope triple answers are on the road. I must write soon; the *times* will not allow me to read or think. Ever yours.

No. 6 (I believe). Send me a list of these letters, with their respective dates.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, Dec. 14th, 1792.

Our little storm has now completely subsided, and we are again spectators, though anxious spectators, of the general tempest that invades or threatens almost every country of Europe. Our troops are every day disbanding and returning home, and the greatest part of the French have evacuated the neighbourhood of Geneva. Monsieur Barthelemy, whom you have seen secretary in London, is most courteously entertained, as ambassador, by the Helvetic body. He is now at Berne, where a Diet will speedily be convened; the language on both sides is now pacific, and even friendly, and some hopes are given of a provision for the officers of the Swiss guards who have survived the Massacres of Paris.

January 1st, 1793.

With the return of peace I have relapsed into my former indolence; but now awakening, after a fortnight's slumber, I have little or nothing to add, with regard to the internal state of this country, only the revolution of Geneva has already taken place, as I announced, but sooner than I expected. The Swiss troops had no sooner evacuated the place, than the *Egaliseurs*, as they are called, assembled in arms; and as no resistance was made, no blood was shed on the occasion. They seized the gates, disarmed the garrison, imprisoned the magistrates, imparted the rights of citizens to all the rabble of the town and country, and proclaimed a *national* convention, which has not yet met. They are all for a pure and absolute Democracy; but wish to remain a small independent state, whilst others aspire to become a part of the republic of France; and as the latter, though less numerous, are more violent and absurd than their adversaries, it is highly probable that they will succeed. The Citizens of the best families and fortunes have retired from

Geneva into the Pays de Vaud, but the French methods of recalling or proscribing emigrants will soon be adopted. You must have observed, that Savoy has now become *le Department du Mont Blanc*. I cannot satisfy myself whether the mass of the people is pleased or displeased with the change; but my noble scenery is clouded by the democratical aspect of twelve leagues of the opposite coast, which every morning obtrude themselves on my view. I here conclude the first part of the history of our Alpine troubles, and now consider myself as disengaged from all promises of periodical writing. Upon the whole, I kept it beyond our expectation; nor do I think that you have been sufficiently astonished by the wonderful effort of the triple dispatch.

You must now succeed to my task, and I shall expect, during the winter, a regular political journal of the events of your greater world. You are on the theatre, and may often be behind the scenes. You can always see, and may sometimes foresee. My own choice has indeed transported me into a foreign land; but I am truly attached, from interest and inclination, to my native country; and even as a Citizen of the World, I wish the stability and happiness of England, the sole great refuge of mankind against the opposite mischiefs of despotism and Democracy. I was indeed alarmed, and the more so, as I saw that you were not without apprehension; but I now glory in the triumph of reason and genuine patriotism, which seems to pervade the country; nor do I dislike some mixture of popular enthusiasm, which may be requisite to encounter our mad or wicked enemies with equal arms.

The behaviour of Fox rather afflicts than surprises me. You may remember what I told you last year at Lausanne, when you attempted his defence, that his inmost soul was deeply tinged with Democracy. Such wild opinions cannot easily be reconciled with his excellent understanding, but ''tis true 'tis pity, and pity 'tis, 'tis true.' He will surely ruin himself in the opinion of the wise and good men of his party. You have now crushed the daring subverters of the

Constitution, but I now fear the moderate well-meaners — reformers. Do not, I beseech you, tamper with Parliamentary representation. The present House of Commons forms in *practice* a body of Gentlemen who must always sympathize with the interest and opinions of the people, and the slightest innovation launches you without rudder or compass on a dark and dangerous ocean of Theoretical experiment. On this subject I am indeed serious.

Upon the whole, I like the beginning of '93 better than the end of '92. The illusion seems to break away throughout Europe. I think England and Switzerland are safe. Brabant adheres to the old constitution. The Germans are disgusted with the rapine and insolence of their deliverers. The Pope is resolved to head his armies, and the Lazzaroni of Naples have presented St. Januarius with a gold fuzee, to fire on the Brigands Français. So much for politics, which till now never had such possession of my mind. Next post I will write about myself and my own designs. Alas, your poor eyes! make the Maria write; I will speedily answer her. My Lady is still dumb. The German posts are now slow and irregular. You had better write by the way of France, under cover, directed to *Le Citoyen Rebours, à Pontarlier, France.* Adieu.

Ever yours,

G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, Jan. 6th, 1793.

There was formerly a time when our correspondence was a painful discussion of my private affairs; a vexatious repetition of losses, of disappointments, of sales, &c. These affairs are now decently arranged: but public cares have now succeeded to private anxiety, and our whole attention is lately turned from Lenborough and Beriton, to the political state of France and of Europe. From these politics, however, one letter shall be free, while I talk of myself and of my own

plans; a subject most interesting to a friend, and only to a friend.

I know not whether I am sorry or glad that my expedition has been postponed to the present year. It is true, that I now wish myself in England, and almost repent that I did not grasp the opportunity when the obstacles were comparatively smaller than they are now likely to prove. Yet had I reached you last summer before the month of August, a considerable portion of my time would be now elapsed, and I should already begin to think of my departure. If the Gout should spare me this winter, (and as yet I have not felt any symptom,) and if the spring should make a soft and early appearance, it is my intention to be with you in Downing-street before the end of April, and thus to enjoy six weeks or two months of the most agreeable season of London and the neighbourhood, after the hurry of parliament is subsided, and before the great rural dispersion. As the banks of the Rhine and the Belgic provinces are completely overspread with anarchy and war, I have made up my mind to pass through the territories of the French Republic. From the best and most recent information, I am satisfied that there is little or no real danger in the journey; and I must arm myself with patience to support the vexatious insolence of democratical tyranny. I have even a sort of curiosity to spend some days at Paris, to assist at the debates of the Pandæmonium, to seek an introduction to the principal Devils, and to contemplate a new form of public and private life, which never existed before, and which I devoutly hope will not long continue to exist. Should the obstacles of health or weather confine me at Lausanne till the month of May, I shall scarcely be able to resist the temptation of passing some part at least of the summer in my own little paradise.

But all these schemes must ultimately depend on the great question of peace and War, which will indeed be speedily determined. Should France become impervious to an Eng-

lish traveller, what must I do? I shall not easily resolve to explore my way through the unknown language and abominable roads of the interior parts of Germany, to embark in Holland, or perhaps at Hamburgh, and to be finally intercepted by a French privateer. My stay in England appears not less doubtful than the means of transporting myself. Should I arrive in the spring, it is possible, and barely possible, that I should return here in the autumn; it is much more probable that I shall pass the winter, and there may be even a chance of my giving my own country a longer tryal. In my letter to My Lady I fairly exposed the decline of Lausanne; but such an establishment as mine must not be lightly abandoned; nor can I discover what adequate mode of life my private circumstances, easy as they now are, could afford me in England. London and Bath have doubtless their respective merits, and I could wish to reside within a day's journey of Sheffield-place. But a state of perfect happiness is not to be found here below; and in the possession of my library, house, and garden, with the relicks of our society, and a frequent intercourse with the Neckers, I may still be tolerably content. Among the disastrous changes of Lausanne, I must principally reckon the approaching dissolution of poor Severy and his family. He is still alive, but in such hopeless and painful decay, that we no longer conceal our wishes for his speedy release. I never loved nor esteemed him so much as in this last mortal disease, which he supports with a degree of courage, patience, and even chearfulness, beyond all belief. His wife, whose whole time and soul are devoted to him, is almost sinking under her long anxiety. The children are most amiably assiduous to both their parents, and at all events, his filial duties and worldly cares must detain the son some time at home.

And now approach, and let me drop into your most private ear, a literary secret. Of the Memoirs little has been done, and with that little I am not satisfied. They must be postponed till a mature season; and I much doubt whether the

book and the author can ever see the light at the same time. But I have long revolved in my mind another scheme of Biographical writing: the lives, or rather the characters, of the most eminent persons in arts and arms, in Church and State, who have flourished in Britain from the reign of Henry VIII. to the present age. This work, extensive as it may be, would be an amusement rather than a toil: the materials are accessible in our own language, and for the most part ready to my hands: but the subject, which would afford a rich display of human nature and domestic history, would powerfully address itself to the feelings of every Englishman. The taste or fashion of the times seems to delight in picturesque decorations; and this series of British portraits might aptly be accompanied by the respective heads, taken from originals, and engraved by the best masters. Alderman Boydell, and his son-in-law, Mr. George Nicol, bookseller in Pallmall, are the great undertakers in this line; but your negociation with them will require the dexterity of an Auckland or a Malmsbury, as it is most essential that I be solicited, and do not solicit. In your walk through Pall Mall, you may call on the bookseller, who appeared to me an intelligent man, and after some general questions about his Edition of Shakespeare, &c., you may open the British portraits as an idea of your own to which I am perfectly a stranger. If he kindles at the thought, and eagerly claims my alliance, you will begin to hesitate. "I am afraid, Mr. Nichols, that we shall hardly persuade my friend to engage in so great a work. Gibbon is old, and rich, and lazy. However, you may make the tryal, and if you have a mind to write to Lausanne (as I do not know when he will be in England), I will send the application."

On receipt of his proposal, the business will come properly before me, and it will then be in my power to deliberate, to demur, to state observations, and to prescribe terms. Should Nichols or Boydell be cool, you will be still colder; I shall hear from you the tone and motives of their refusal, and on

my arrival in England I shall be free to consider, whether it may suit me to proceed in a mere literary work without any other decorations than those which it may derive from the pen of the author. It is a serious truth, that I am no longer ambitious of fame or money; that my habits of industry are much impaired, and that I have reduced my studies to the loose amusement of my morning hours, the repetition of which will insensibly lead me to the last term of existence. And for this very reason I shall not be sorry to bind myself by a liberal engagement, from which I may not with honour recede.

Before I conclude, we must say a word or two of Parliamentary and pecuniary concerns. 1. We all admire the generous spirit with which you damned the Assassins, but I hope that your abjuration of all future connection with Fox was not quite so peremptory as it is stated in the French papers. Let him do what he will, I must love the dog. The opinion of Parliament in favour of Louis XVI. was declared in a manner worthy of the representatives of a great and wise nation. It will certainly have a powerful effect; and if the poor King be not already murdered, I am satisfied that his life is in safety: but is such a life worth his care? Our debates will now become every day more interesting; and as I only expect from you opinions and anecdotes, I most earnestly conjure you to send me Woodfall's Register, with the margins cut close, as often (and that must be very often) as the occasion deserves it. My direction, more distinctly than in my last letter, must be under cover to Le Citoyen le Rebours, Maitre de Poste a Pontarlier, dans le departement du Doubs. I now spare no expense for news.

2. Will it never be possible to get me a good Mortgage for my £3000? I believe it may be advisable to change my stock from the Short Annuities, the value of which is wearing every day, to the 3 per Cents., which are now so low. Notwithstanding Sainsbury's death, I hope the Buriton interest is regularly paid; when there is a stoppage, the Goslings might

give you or me notice that I may not be exposed to the danger of overdrawing. I want to have Caplin's direction, as I may have some orders that should be executed before my arrival. We have written twice to Ostend without obtaining an answer. Have you had no better success? I tremble for my Madeira.

I want some account of Mrs. G.'s health. Will my lady never write? How can people be so indolent! I suppose this will find you at Sheffield-place during the recess, and that the heavy baggage will not move until after the birthday. Shall I be with you by the first of May? The Gods only know. I almost wish that I had accompanied Madame de Staël.

Ever yours,
E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Begun Feb. 9, — ended Feb. 18, 1793.

The struggle is at length over, and poor de Severy is no more! He expired about ten days ago, after every vital principle had been exhausted by a perpetual complication of disorders, which had lasted above five months: and a mortification in one of his legs, that gradually rose to the more noble parts, was the immediate cause of his death. His patience and even chearfulness supported him to the fatal moment; and he enjoyed every comfort that could alleviate his situation, the skill of his physicians, the assiduous tenderness of his family, and the kind sympathy not only of his particular friends, but even of common acquaintance, and generally of the whole town. The stroke has been severely felt, yet I have the satisfaction to perceive that Madame de Severy's health is not affected; and we may hope that in time she will recover a tolerable share of composure and happiness. Her firmness has checked the violent sallies of grief; her gentleness has preserved her from the worst of symptoms, a dry, silent despair. She loves to talk of her irreparable loss,

she descants with pleasure on his virtues; her words are interrupted with tears, but those tears are her best relief; and her tender feelings will insensibly subside into an affectionate remembrance. Wilhelm is much more deeply wounded than I could imagine, or than he expected himself: nor have I ever seen the affliction of a son and heir more lively and sincere. Severy was indeed a very valuable man: without any shining qualifications, he was endowed in a high degree with good sense, honour, and benevolence; and few men have filled with more propriety their circle in private life. For myself, I have had the misfortune of knowing him too late and of losing him too soon. But enough of this melancholy subject.

The affairs of this theatre, which must always be minute, are now grown so tame and tranquil, that they no longer deserve the historian's pen. The new constitution of Geneva is slowly forming, without much noise or any bloodshed; and the patriots, who have staid in hopes of guiding and restraining the multitude, flatter themselves that they shall be able at least to prevent their mad countrymen from giving themselves to France, the only mischief that would be absolutely irretrievable. The Revolution of Geneva is of less consequence to *us*, however, than that of Savoy; but our fate will depend on the general event, rather than on these particular causes. In the meanwhile we hope to be quiet spectators of the struggle of this year; and we seem to have assurances that both the Emperor and the French will compound for the neutrality of the Swiss. The Helvetic body does not acknowledge the Republic of France; but Barthelemy, their Ambassador, resides at Baden, and steals, like Chauvelin, into a kind of extra official negociation. All spirit of opposition is quelled in the canton of Bern, and the perpetual banishment of the Van Berchem family has scarcely excited a murmur. It will probably be followed by that of Colonel Polier, &c.; the crime alledged in their sentence is the having assisted at the federation dinner at Rolle two years

ago; and as they are absent, I could almost wish that they had been summoned to appear, and heard in their own defence. To the general supineness of the inhabitants of Lausanne I must ascribe, that the death of Louis XVI. has been received with less horror and indignation than I could have wished. I was much tempted to go into mourning, and probably should, had the Dutchess been still here; but as the only Englishman of any mark, I was afraid of being singular; more especially as our French emigrants, either from prudence or poverty, do not wear black, nor do even the Neckers. Have you read his discourse for the King? It might indeed supersede the necessity of mourning.

I should judge from your last letter, and from the *Diary* (alas, poor Woodfall!), that the French declaration of war must have rather surprised you. I wish (though I know not how) it could have been avoided, that we might still have continued to enjoy our safe and prosperous neutrality. You will not doubt my best wishes for the destruction of the miscreants; but I love England still more than I hate France. All reasonable chances are in favour of a confederacy, such as was never opposed to the ambition of Louis XIV.; but, after the experience of last year, I distrust reason, and confess myself fearful for the event. The French are strong in numbers, activity, enthusiasm; they are rich in rapine; and although their strength may be only that of a frenzy-feaver, they may do infinite mischief to their neighbours before they can be reduced to a strait wastecoat. I dread the effects that may be produced on the minds of the people by the increase of debt and taxes, probable losses, and possible mismanagement. Our trade must suffer; and though projects of invasion have been always abortive, I cannot forget that the fleets and armies of Europe have failed before the towns in America, which have been taken and plundered by a handful of Buccaneers. I know nothing of Pitt as a War Minister; but it affords me much satisfaction that the intrepid wisdom of the new Chancellor is introduced into the Cabinet. I wish,

not merely on your own account, that you were placed in an active, useful station in Government. I should not dislike you Secretary at War.

I have little more to say of myself, or of my journey to England: you know my intentions, and the great events of Europe must determine whether they can be carried into execution this summer. If —— has warmly adopted *your* idea, I shall speedily hear from him; but, in truth, I know not what will be my answer: I see difficulties which at first did not occur: I doubt my own perseverance, and my fancy begins to wander into new paths. The amusement of reading and thinking may perhaps satisfy a man who has paid his debt to the public; and there is more pleasure in building castles in the air than on the ground. I shall contrive some small assistance for your correspondent, though I cannot learn any thing that distinguishes him from many of his countrymen. We have had our full share of poor emigrants; but if you wish that any thing extraordinary should be done for this man, you must send me a measure. Adieu. I embrace My lady and the Maria, as also Louisa. Perhaps I may soon write, without expecting an answer.

Ever yours,

E. G.

EDWARD GIBBON TO LORD CHANCELLOR LOUGHBOROUGH

Rolle, February 23rd, 1793.

My Lord,

I do not merely congratulate your lordship's promotion to the first civil office in the kingdom; an office which your abilities have long deserved, and which your temperate ambition, if I am not mistaken, had repeatedly declined. My satisfaction does not arise from an assurance of the wisdom and vigour which administration will derive from the support of so respectable an ally. But as a friend to government in general, I most sincerely rejoice that you are now armed in

the common cause against the most dangerous fanatics that have ever invaded the peace of Europe; against the new barbarians, who labour to confound the order and happiness of society; and who, in the opinion of thinking men, are not less the enemies of subjects than of kings. The hopes of the wise and good are now fixed on the success of England; and I am persuaded that my personal attachment to your lordship will be amply gratified by the important share which your counsels will assume in that success. I could wish that some of your former associates possessed sufficient strength of mind to extricate themselves from the toils of prejudice and party. But I grieve that a man, whom it is impossible for me not to love and admire, should refuse to obey the voice of his country; and I begin to fear that the powerful genius of Mr. Fox, instead of being useful, will be adverse to the public service. At this momentous crisis we should inlist our whole force of virtue, ability, and spirit; and without any view to his private advantage, I could wish that our active friend, Lord Sheffield, might be properly stationed in some part of the line.

M. Necker, in whose house I am now residing on a visit of some days, wishes me to express the sentiments of esteem and consideration which he entertains for your Lordship's character. As a friend to the interest of mankind, he is warmly attached to the wellfare of Great Britain, which he has long revered as the first, and, perhaps, as the last azylum of genuine liberty. His late eloquent work, *du Pouvoir Executif*, which your lordship has assuredly read, is a valuable testimony of his esteem for our constitution; and the testimony of a sagacious and impartial stranger may have taught some of our countrymen to value the political blessings which they have been tempted to despise.

I cherish a lively hope of being in England, and of paying my respects to your lordship before the end of the summer: but the events of the year are so uncertain, and the sea and land are encompassed with so many difficulties and dangers,

that I am doubtful whether it will be practicable for me to execute my purpose.

I am, my lord, most respectfully, and your lordship will permit me to add most affectionately, your most obedient and faithful humble servant.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, April 27, 1793.

My Dearest Friend, for such you most truly are, nor does there exist a person who obtains, or shall ever obtain, a superior place in my esteem and affection.

After too long a silence I was sitting down to write, when, only yesterday morning (such is now the irregular slowness of the English post) I was suddenly struck, indeed struck to the heart, by the fatal intelligence[1] from Sir Henry Clinton and M. de Lally. Alas! what is life, and what are our hopes and projects! When I embraced her at your departure from Lausanne, could I imagine that it was for the last time? When I postponed to another summer my journey to England, could I apprehend that I never, never should see her again? I have often deplored the nervous complaints which so deeply affected her happiness and spirits, but I always hoped that she would spin feeble her thread to a long duration, and that her delicate frame would survive (as is often the case) many constitutions of a stouter appearance. In four days! in your absence, in that of her children! But she is now at rest; and if there be a future state, her mild virtues have surely entitled her to the reward of pure and perfect felicity. It is for you that I feel; and I can judge of your sentiments by comparing them with my own. I have lost, it is true, an amiable and affectionate friend, whom I had known and loved above three and twenty years, and whom I often styled by the endearing name of sister. But you are deprived of

[1] Lady Sheffield died April 3, 1793. Her death is said to have been occasioned by her attendance upon the sick *émigrés* at Guy's hospital.

the companion of your life, the wife of your choice, and the mother of your children — poor children! The energy of Maria, and the softness of Louisa, render them almost equally the objects of my tenderest compassion. I do not wish to aggravate your grief; but, in the sincerity of friendship, I cannot hold a different language. I know the impotence of reason, and I much fear that the strength of your character will serve to make a sharper and more lasting impression.

The only consolation in these melancholy tryals to which human life is exposed, the only one at least in which I have any confidence, is the presence of a real friend; and of that, as far as it depends on myself, you shall not be destitute. I regret the few days that must be lost in some necessary preparations; but I trust that to-morrow se'nnight (May the fifth) I shall be able to set forwards on my journey to England; and when this letter reaches you, I shall be considerably advanced on my way. As it is yet prudent to keep at a respectful distance from the banks of the French Rhine, I shall incline a little to the right, and proceed by Schaffhausen and Stutgard to Frankfort and Cologne: the Austrian Netherlands are now open and safe, and I am sure of being able at least to pass from Ostend to Dover; from whence, without passing through London, I shall pursue the direct road to Sheffield-place. Unless I should meet with some unforeseen accidents and delays, I hope, before the end of the month, to share your solitude, and sympathise with your grief. All the difficulties of the journey, which my indolence had probably magnified, have now disappeared before a stronger passion; and you will not be sorry to hear, that, as far as Frankfort to Cologne, I shall enjoy the advantage of the society, the conversation, the German language, and the active assistance of Severy. His attachment to me is the sole motive which prompts him to undertake this troublesome journey: and as soon as he has seen me over the roughest ground, he will immediately return to Lausanne. The

poor young man loved Lady S. as a mother, and the whole family is deeply affected by an event which reminds them too painfully of their own. Adieu. I could write Volumes, and shall therefore break off abruptly. I shall write on the road, and hope to find a few lines à poste restante at Frankfort and Brussells. Adieu; ever yours.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Lausanne, May, 1793.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I must write a few lines before my departure, though indeed I scarcely know what to say. Nearly a fortnight has now elapsed since the first melancholy tidings, without my having received the slightest subsequent accounts of your health and situation. Your own silence announces too forcibly how much you are involved in your own feelings; and I can but too easily conceive that a letter to me would be more painful than to an indifferent person. But that amiable man, Count Lally, might surely have written a second time; but your sister, who is probably with you; but Maria, alas! poor Maria! I am left in a state of darkness to the workings of my own fancy, which imagines every thing that is sad and shocking. What can I think of for your relief and comfort? I will not expatiate on those common-place topics, which have never dryed a single tear; but let me advise, let me urge, you to force yourself into business, as I would try to force myself into study. The mind must not be idle; if it be not exercised on external objects, it will prey on its own vitals.

A thousand little arrangements, which must precede a long Journey, have postponed my departure three or four days beyond the term which I had first appointed; but all is now in order, and I set off to-morrow, the ninth instant, with my Valet de Chambre, a courier on horseback, and Severy, with his servant, as far as Frankfort. I calculate my arrival at Sheffield-place (how I dread and desire to see that mansion!)

for the first week in June, soon after this letter; but I will try to send you some later intelligence. I never found myself stronger, or in better health. The German road is now cleared, both of enemies and allies, and though I must expect fatigue, I have not any apprehensions of danger. It is scarcely possible that you should meet me at Frankfort, but I shall be much disappointed at not finding a line at Brussels or Ostend. Adieu. If there be any invisible guardians, may they watch over you and yours! Adieu.

TO LADY ELISABETH FOSTER

Lausanne, May the 4th, 1793.

I know not whether you are already informed of the sudden death of poor Lady Sheffield after four days' illness; but I am sure that your feeling affectionate mind will not be surprized to hear that I set out for England next week, and that in a journey undertaken at the call of friendship all the dragons of the way have already vanished. I go by Basle, Frankfort, Cologne, Brussels, and Ostend, and I flatter myself that the success of our allied arms will contribute every week to open my passage; it is even possible, though scarcely probable, that I may embark from the English town of Calais. Your answer to my last letter is doubtless on the road and will follow me: but you must write immediately to Sheffield place, and I promise you a speedy and sincere account of our afflicted friend. I wish to hear of your motions and projects; I now sigh for your return to England, and shall be most bitterly disappointed if I have not the pleasure of seeing you in that happy island, yourself and the most amiable of Dutchesses before the end of the autumn: I cannot look with confidence beyond that period.

My friend and your Chevalier[1] will guard me as far as Cologne or Frankfort; his tender attachment to his mother

[1] Wilhelm de Severy.

who is still very melancholy will recall him from thence to Lausanne; but in the course of next winter he has thoughts of visiting England. The circumstances of the times which impoverish every one, have persuaded him to listen to my advice of conducting on his travels some English pupill of fashion and fortune. Such a pupill will be fortunate in finding a real Gentleman, and I trust that the Dutchess and yourself will exert your omnipotence in providing some connection equally honourable and advantageous for my friend, and your sincere Votary. Adieu. Excuse brevity and address a Classic prayer in my behalf before some statue of Mercury the God of travellers.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Lausanne, May the 8th (my fifty-seventh birthday), 1793.

DEAR MADAM,

I have the pleasure of acquainting you that to-morrow, the 9th instant, I set forwards for England, but the pleasure of revisiting my friends and my native country is deeply embittered by the melancholy tidings from Downing Street, which have fixed and hastened my Journey. I travel by the way of Frankfort and Brussells, and your tenderness should not feel the slightest apprehension for my safety. Every enquiry is made, every convenience is provided, every precaution is taken, and though there will undoubtedly be some fatigue, I can assure you with truth, that there does not remain the shadow of a danger. I may expect to reach Sheffield-place the first week in June, from whence I will immediately give you a line. My first cares must be devoted to poor Lord S., whose grief I feel and even fear, but I shall be impatient to see the Belvidere and the maternal countenance of my most faithful friend. May the progress of fine weather confirm your health and spirits. My own are per-

fectly good, and I never, in my whole life, found myself better qualified for a long Journey.

I am, Dear Madam,
Ever most affectionately yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Frankfort, May 19th, 1793.

And here I am, in good health and spirits, after one of the easiest, safest, and pleasantest journies which I ever performed in my whole life; not the appearance of an enemy, and hardly the appearance of a War. Yet I hear, as I am writing, the canon of the siege of Mayence, at the distance of twenty miles; and long, very long, will it be heard. It is confessed on all sides, that the French fight with a courage worthy of a better cause: the town of Mayence is strong, their artillery admirable; they are already reduced to horse-flesh, but they have still the resource of eating the inhabitants, and at last of eating one another; and, if that repast could be extended to Paris and the whole country, it might essentially contribute to the relief of mankind. Our operations are carried on with more than German slowness, and when the besieged are quiet, the besiegers are perfectly satisfied with their progress. A spirit of division undoubtedly prevails; and the character of the Prussians for courage and discipline is sunk lower then you can possibly imagine. Their glory has expired with Frederic. I am sorry to have missed Lord Elgin, who is beyond the Rhine with the King of Prussia. As I am impatient, I propose setting forwards to-morrow afternoon, and shall reach Ostend in less than eight days. The passage must depend on winds and packets; and I hope to find at Brussels or Dover a letter which will direct me to S. P. or Downing-street. Severy goes back from hence. Adieu: I embrace the dear Girls.

Ever yours,
E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Brussels, May 27, 1793.

This day, between two and three o'Clock in the afternoon, I am arrived at this place in excellent preservation. My expedition, which is now drawing to a close, has been a journey of perseverance rather than speed, of some labour since Frankfort, but without the smallest degree of difficulty or danger. As I have every morning been seated in the Chaise soon after sun-rise, I propose indulging to-morrow till eleven o'Clock, and going that day no farther than Ghent: on Wednesday the 29th instant I shall reach Ostend in good time, just eight days, according to my former reckoning, from Frankfort. Beyond that I can say nothing positive; but should the winds be propitious, it is possible that I may appear next Saturday, June 1st, in Downing Street. After that *earliest* date, you will expect me day by day till I arrive. Adieu. I embrace the dear Girls, and salute Mrs. Holroyd. I rejoyce that you have anticipated my advice of plunging into business; but I should now be sorry if that business, however important, detained us long in town. I do not wish to make a public exhibition, and only sigh to enjoy you and the precious remnant in the solitude of Sheffield-place.

Ever yours,
E. G.

If I am successful I may outstrip or accompany this letter. Yours and Maria's waited for me here, and overpaid the Journey.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Downing Street, June 13th, 1793.

DEAR MADAM,

As you know that I am now safe, well and happy at my friend Lord Sheffield, you will easily excuse a delay of some days in my promised letter.

As long as I was on the road, and it was a long time, your apprehensions, I am much afraid, were awakened not so much in proportion to the real magnitude of the danger, as to the exquisite sensibility of your own feelings. For my own part, though the scene was nearer and more familiar to me, I must fairly own, that I saw through a magnifyer, and that my resolution to visit Lord Sheffield in his state of affliction was an effort of some courage. But I was most agreably surprized to find the Lyons whom I had seen at a distance become little gentle lap-dogs on a nearer approach. I wheeled round behind the armies by the way of Basel, Frankfort, Cologne, Brussells, and Ostend, without meeting with any hostile impediment, and indeed without seeing the face of a Soldier. My passage from Ostend was short and prosperous, and I reached Downing Street not in the least affected by the fatigue of a rough and tedious journey. I found Lord S. much better and even more chearful than I could have expected: he feels his loss, but the new scenes of public business in which he verily wisely engaged have alleviated his grief by occupying his mind. The Ladies are gone into the Country, and he proposes to follow them next week. I could much have wished to visit Bath without delay: but Lord S. will not hear of so early a separation, and as he is the immediate object of my journey, I must submit, unless you particularly desire to see me very soon. Adieu.

Dear Madam,

I am ever yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Sheffield Place, Sept. 3, 1793.

DEAR MADAM,

Many days have passed away, since I have received any letter so truly, so dearly acceptable as your last. I had no occasion indeed for any fresh assurances of that regard and tenderness which I have invariably known and felt during the

space of thirty-five years: but I was delighted at seeing under your own hand, and again confirmed by your letter of the same date to Mrs. Holroyd, the clearest evidence of your health, spirits, and strength, and I am still more persuaded that some minds will rise superior to the infirmities which Nature has attached to the advanced period of human life.

My own inclinations would immediately have carried me to the Belvidere from Dover or London; but reason compelled me to acknowledge that, as Lord Sheffield's unexpected misfortune had prompted me to undertake a Journey more hazardous in appearance than in reality, my first attention was due to him, and that it was incumbent on me to try how far the society of a friend might contribute to his relief and amusement. In the three months which we have now spent together I have had the satisfaction of finding that my labours have not been unsuccessful. Our domestic society, which is much improved by the presence of Mrs. Holroyd, some chosen company in the house, the seasonable diversion of Camps and visits, and above all, the very important business of the Exchequer bills which frequently calls him to Mercer's hall, have seconded my endeavours, and I shall leave him in a placid and even chearful temper of mind. As I now find myself of less use, I had fixed my departure about the 15th or 20th instant, but he absolutely insists on keeping me here till the end of the month; and as we expect a very agreable friend, Mr. Douglas, who married Lady Catherine North, I am almost inclined to yield to his importunity. At all events, as I shall only pass three or four days in town, you may depend on seeing me at Bath in the first week of October. I remember that your elegant little mansion will not admit of an additional inhabitant, though I may be perfectly accommodated as heretofore either in your court or over the way. But I am likewise ignorant whether our dining together, at my Lausanne hours of two or three o'Clock, may not be too great an exertion for your returning strength. Should you content yourself with receiving my morning and

afternoon visits (and perhaps such an arrangement would be the most prudent), I might be tempted to prefer the Hotel, from whence a chair would convey me in a few minutes to the Belvidere. I shall expect on that subject a line from yourself or our old friend Mrs. Gould. Lord S., who is gone to town this morning, and the young Ladies beg to be kindly remembered to you. Mrs. H. will soon answer your obliging letter. I have a thousand things to say, but they will be best deferred for our interview, which I impatiently desire.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. GIBBON.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

York-house, Bath, October 9th, 1793.

Sunday afternoon I left London, and lay at Reading, and Monday in very good time I reached this place after a very pleasant airing; and am always so much delighted, and improved, with this union of ease and motion, that, were not the expence enormous, I would travel every year some hundred miles, more especially in England. I passed the day with Mrs. G. yesterday. In mind and conversation she is just the same as twenty years ago. She has spirits, appetite, legs, and eyes, and talks of living till ninety. I can say from my heart, Amen. We dine at two, and remain together till nine; but, although we have much to say, I am not sorry that she talks of introducing a third or fourth actor. Lord Spenser expects me about the 20th; but if I can do it without offence, I shall steal away two or three days sooner, and you shall have advice of my motions.

The troubles of Bristol[1] have been serious and bloody.

[1] New toll-gates had been placed on the bridge at Bristol; but they were burnt by a mob which, from September 30 to October 3, attacked the toll-houses, and broke the windows of the Guildhall and Council-house. The Herefordshire Militia were twice called out and ordered to fire on the mob; eleven rioters were killed and forty-five wounded. The attempt to raise a toll was abandoned.

I know not who was in fault; but I do not like appeasing the mob by the extinction of the toll, and the removal of the Hereford militia, who had done their duty. Adieu. The Girls must dance at Tunbridge. What would dear little Aunt say if I was to answer her letter? Drop in my ear something of your secret conversations.

Ever yours, &c.,

E. G.

I still follow the old style, though the Convention has abolished the Christian Era, with months, weeks, days, &c.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

York-house, Bath, October 13th, 1793.

I am as ignorant of Bath in general as if I were still at Sheffield. My impatience to get away makes me think it better to devote my whole time to Mrs. G.; and dear little aunt, whom I tenderly salute, will excuse me to her two friends, Mrs. Hartley and Preston, if I make little or no use of her kind introduction. A *tête-à-tête* of eight or nine hours every day is rather difficult to support; yet I do assure you, that our conversation flows with more ease and spirit when we are alone, than when any auxiliaries are summoned to our aid. She is indeed a wonderful woman, and I think all her faculties of the mind stronger and more active than I have ever known them. I have settled, that ten full days may be sufficient for all the purposes of our interview. I should therefore depart next Friday, the 18th instant, and am indeed expected at Althorp on the 20th; but I may possibly reckon without my host, as I have not yet apprized Mrs. G. of the term of my visit: and will certainly not quarrel with her for a short delay. Adieu. I must have some political speculations. The Campaign, at least on our side, seems to be at an end. Ever yours.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

Althorpe library, Tuesday, four o'clock, Nov., '93.

We have so completely exhausted this morning among the first editions of Cicero, that I can only mention my departure hence to-morrow, the sixth instant. I lye quietly at Woburn, and reach London in good time Thursday. By the following post I write somewhat more largely. My stay in London will depend, partly on my amusement, and your being fixed at Sheffield-place; unless you think I can be comfortably arranged for a week or two with you at Brighton. An insignificant Minister is often soothed by sops and jobbs. The military remarks seem good; but now to what purpose! Adieu. I embrace and much rejoyce in Louisa's improvement. Lord Ossory was from home at Farning Woods.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

St. James's Street, Nov. 9th, 1793.

As I dropt yesterday the word *unwell*, I flatter myself that the family would have been a little alarmed by my silence to-day. I am still awkward, though without any suspicions of gout, and have some idea of having recourse to medical advice. Yet I creep out to-day in a chair, to dine with Lord Lucan. But as it will be literally my first going down stairs, and as scarcely any one is apprized of my arrival, I know nothing, I have heard nothing, I have nothing to say. My present lodging, a house of Elmsley's, is chearful, convenient, somewhat dear, but not so much as a Hotel: a species of habitation for which I have not conceived any great affection. Had you been stationary at Sheffield, you would have seen me before the twentieth; for I am tired of rambling, and pant for my home, that is to say, for your house. But whether I shall have courage to brave P. of W. and a bleak down, time only can discover. Adieu. I wish you back to S.-pl. The

health of dear Louisa is doubtless the first object; but I did not expect Brighton after Tunbridge. Whenever dear little aunt is separate from you, I shall certainly write to her; but at present how is it possible?

Ever yours,
E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

[Most private.]

St. James's Street, Nov. 11th, 1793.

I must at length withdraw the veil before my state of health, though the naked truth may alarm you more than a fit of the gout. Have you never observed, through my *inexpressibles*, a large prominency *circa genitalia*, which, as it was not at all painful, and very little troublesome, I had strangely neglected for many years?[1] But since my departure from Sheffield-place it has increased, most stupendously, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. Yesterday I sent for Farquhar,[2] who is allowed to be a very skilful surgeon. After viewing and palping, he very seriously desired to call in assistance, and has examined it again to-day with Mr. Cline, a surgeon, as he says, of the first eminence. They both pronounce it a *hydrocele* (a collection of water), which must be let out by the operation of tapping; but from its magnitude and long neglect, they think it a most extraordinary case, and wish to have another surgeon, Dr. Bayley, present. If the business should go off smoothly, I shall be delivered from my burthen, (it is almost as big as a small child), and walk about in four or five days with a truss. But the medical gentlemen, who never speak quite plain, insinuate to me the *possibility* of an inflammation, of fever, etc. I am not appalled at the thoughts of the operation, which is fixed for

[1] Gibbon had, in 1761, consulted Mr. (afterwards Sir Cæsar) Hawkins, the surgeon, who wished to see him again. But he never returned, or consulted any other medical man till November, 1793.

[2] Sir Walter Farquhar, Bart.

Wednesday next, twelve o'clock; but it has occurred to me that you might wish to be present, before and afterwards, till the crisis was past; and to give you that opportunity, I shall solicit a delay till Thursday, or even Friday. In the mean while, I crawl about with some labour, and much indecency, to Devonshire-house, where I left all the fine ladies making flannel waistcoats;[1] Lady Lucan's, &c. Adieu. Varnish the business for the ladies; yet I am afraid it will be public; — the advantage of being notorious. Ever yours.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

St. James's Street, No. 76, Nov. 21, '93.

My Dear Madam,

My friend Lord S. having left me to return into Sussex, I thought you would not be sorry to receive a short assurance of my health under my own hand. You may justly reproach me with the long neglect of a growing complaint, but I am now in the hands of the most skillful physicians and surgeons, who have given me immediate relief, and promise me a safe and radical cure. With their approbation I live as usual, and dine abroad every day, and in a fortnight, when my friends return from Brighton, I shall meet them at S. P. and remain there till after Christmas.

I am
Ever yours,
E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

St. James's, Nov. 25, '93.

Though Farquahar has promised to write you a line, I conceive you may not be sorry to hear directly from me. The operation of yesterday was much longer, more searching and more painful than the former, but it has eased and lightened me to a much greater degree: no inflammation,

[1] For the soldiers serving in Flanders under the Duke of York.

no feaver, a delicious night, leave to go abroad to-morrow and to go out of town when I please *en attendant* the future measures of a radical cure. If you hold your intention of returning next Saturday to S. P., I shall probably join you about the Thursday following, after lying two nights at Beckenham. The Devons are going to Bath, and the hospitable Craufurd follows them. Yet I do not want dinners. I passed a delightful day with Burke; an odd one with Monsignor Erskine, the Pope's Nuncio. — Of public news, you and the papers know much more than I do. We seem to have strong sea and land hopes; nor do I dislike the Royalists having beaten the *Sans-Culottes* and taken Dol. How many minutes will it take to guillotine the seventy-three new members of the Convention who are now arrested? Adieu. I embrace the Ladies.

Ever yours,
E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

St. James's Street, Nov. 30, '93.

It will not be in my power to reach S. P. quite so soon as I wished and expected. Lord Auckland informs me that he shall be at Lambeth next week Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday: I have therefore agreed to dine at Beckenham on Friday. Saturday will be spent there, and, unless some extraordinary temptation should detain me another day, you will see me by four o'clock Sunday the ninth of December. My conversation with the Ambassador in what relates to you shall be *proper:* but a Swiss Philosopher is not a match for his Excellency. I dine to-morrow with the Chancellor at Hampstead, and what I do not like at this time of the year, without a proposal to stay all night. Yet I would not refuse, more especially as I had denied him on a former day. — My health is good but I shall have a final interview with Farquhar before I leave town. — We are still in darkness about Lord

Howe [1] and the French ships: but hope seems to preponderate. — Adieu, nothing that relates to Louisa can be forgot.

Ever Yours,
E. G.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

St. James's Street, Dec. 6th, 1793,
16 du mois Frimaire.

The man tempted me and I did eat — and that man is no less than the Chancellor, whose frigid reserve has thawed into sudden kindness and civility. I dine and lye to-day, as I intended, at Beckenham: but he recalls me (the third time this week) by a dinner to-morrow (Saturday) with Burke and Windham, which I do not possess sufficient fortitude to resist. Sunday he dismisses me again to the aforesaid Beckenham, but insists on finding me there Monday, which he will probably do supposing there should be room and wellcome at the Ambassador's. I shall not therefore arrive at Sheffield till Tuesday the 10th instant, and though you may perceive that I do not want society or amusement, I sincerely repine at the delay. You will likewise derive some comfort from hearing of the spirit and activity of my motions. Farquhar is satisfied, allows me to go, and does not think I shall be obliged to precipitate my return. Shall we never have anything more than hopes and rumours from Lord Howe? Pray embrace the Ladies for me, and assure Mr. Greg. Way of my concern that our different arrangements have not permitted us to meet at Sheffield.

Ever yours,
E. G.

[1] Richard, Earl Howe, had sailed (November 9) in search of the French; but he was compelled to return to Spithead (November 29) without bringing them to action.

TO HIS STEPMOTHER

Sheffield-place, Dec. 12, 1793.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I should have continued to write from London, if the state of my health, or rather my particular complaint, on the subject of which it is not easy to be explicit, had afforded any events. But you may rest assured that I am now in the best hands, and that my occasional relief will be concluded in due time by a safe and radical cure. I have not been advised to make any change in my way of life, and after enjoying as usual the best Society in London, my physician has allowed me to visit Sheffield-place. I arrived here yesterday, and shall remain in this quiet retirement till the middle of January. Lord Sheffield is nervous and rather low-spirited, complains of his eyes and bowels, and appears to me more affected with his loss than he was some months ago. The three Ladies pass the winter in the Country, but he will frequently visit town and the house of Commons. They all wish to be remembered to you, and Mrs. H. has enclosed a letter for her maid. Adieu, my Dear Madam, believe me with the warmest feelings of affection and gratitude,

Ever Yours,
E. GIBBON.

TO LORD SHEFFIELD

St. James's Street, four o'clock, Tuesday, Jan. 7, 1794.

This date says every thing.[1] I was almost killed between Sheffield-place and East Grinsted, by hard, frozen, long, and cross ruts, that would disgrace the approach of an Indian wigwam. The rest was something less painful; and I

[1] "The Gibbon is better, but I am by no means without inquietude on his account. It is thought necessary that he should go to London on Tuesday; probably I shall follow him shortly for two days, for I shall be impatient to see how he goes on" (Lord Sheffield to Lord Auckland).

reached this place half dead, but not seriously feverish, or ill. I found a dinner invitation from Lord Lucan; but what are dinners to me? I wish they did not know of my departure. I catch the flying post. What an effort! Adieu, till Thursday or Friday.

Gibbon died at 76, St. James's Street, on January 16, 1794. He was buried in Lord Sheffield's family burial-place in Fletching, Sussex.

The following account of his last moments is given by Lord Sheffield:—

"After I left him on Tuesday afternoon, the fourteenth, he saw some company, Lady Lucan and Lady Spencer, and thought himself well enough at night to omit the opium draught, which he had been used to take for some time. He slept very indifferently; before nine the next morning he rose, but could not eat his breakfast. However, he appeared tolerably well, yet complained at times of a pain in his stomach. At one o'clock he received a visit of an hour from Madame de Sylva, and at three, his friend, Mr. Craufurd, of Auchinames, (for whom he had a particular regard,) called, and stayed with him till past five o'clock. They talked, as usual, on various subjects; and twenty hours before his death, Mr. Gibbon happened to fall into a conversation, not uncommon with him, on the probable duration of his life. He said, that he thought himself a good life for ten, twelve, or perhaps twenty years. About six, he ate the wing of a chicken, and drank three glasses of Madeira. After dinner he became very uneasy and impatient; complained a good deal, and appeared so weak, that his servant was alarmed. Mr. Gibbon had sent to his friend and relation, Mr. Robert Darell, whose house was not far distant, desiring to see him, and adding, that he had something particular to say. But, unfortunately, this desired interview never took place.

"During the evening he complained much of his stomach, and of a disposition to vomit. Soon after nine, he took his opium draught, and went to bed. About ten, he complained of much pain, and desired that warm napkins might be applied to his stomach. He almost incessantly expressed a sense of pain till about four o'clock in the morning, when he said he found his stomach much easier. About seven, the servant asked, whether he should send for Mr. Farquhar? he answered, no; that he was as well as he had been the day before. At about half past eight, he got out of bed, and said he was '*plus adroit*' than he had been for three months past, and got into bed again, without assistance, better than usual. About nine, he said that he would rise. The servant, however, persuaded him to remain in bed till Mr. Farquhar, who was expected at eleven, should come. Till about that hour he spoke with great facility. Mr. Farquhar came at the time appointed, and he was then visibly dying. When the *valet de chambre* returned, after attending Mr. Farquhar out of the room, Mr. Gibbon said, '*Pourquoi est-ce que vous me quittez?*' This was about half past eleven. At twelve, he drank some brandy and water from a tea-pot, and desired his favourite servant to stay with him. These were the last words he pronounced articulately. To the last he preserved his senses; and when he could no longer speak, his servant having asked a question, he made a sign, to shew that he understood him. He was quite tranquil, and did not stir; his eyes half-shut. About a quarter before one, he ceased to breathe.

"The *valet de chambre* observed, that Mr. Gibbon did not, at any time, shew the least sign of alarm or apprehension of death; and it does not appear that he ever thought himself in danger, unless his desire to speak to Mr. Darell may be considered in that light."

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