

EDWARD GIBBON

PRIVATE LETTERS OF
EDWARD GIBBON
(1753-1794) VOLUME 1
(OF 2)

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INTRODUCTION BY THE
EARL OF SHEFFIELD

The centenary of the death of Edward Gibbon (died January, 1794, aged fifty-six) was recorded by a public commemoration held in London in November, 1894, at the instance of the Royal Historical Society. The distinguished committee of English and foreign students, who were associated on that occasion, invited me to become their President, as representing the family with which Gibbon had been so intimately connected, and which still retained the portraits, manuscripts, letters, and relics of the historian. The exhibition of these in the British Museum, and the commemoration held on November 15, reawakened interest in the work and remains of one of the greatest names in English literature; and a general desire was expressed that the manuscripts should be again collated, and that what was yet unpublished might be given to the world.

As is well known, it was my grandfather, the first Earl, who made the historian almost his adopted brother, gave him a home both in town and in country, was his devisee and literary executor, and edited and published the famous Autobiography, the letters, and remains. All of these passed under Edward Gibbon's will to Lord Sheffield; and, together with books, relics, portraits, and various mementos, they have been for a century preserved by my father and myself with religious care and veneration in Sheffield Park. The original autograph manuscripts of the *Memoirs*, the *Diaries*, *Letters*, *Note-books*, etc., have now become the property of the British Museum, subject to the copyright of all the unpublished parts which was previously assigned to Mr. Murray. And it is with no little pleasure and pride that I have acceded to the request of the publishers that I would introduce these unpublished remains to the world, and thus complete the task of editing the historian, to which my grandfather devoted so great a portion of his time, not only as a testamentary duty, but as a labour of love.

The connection of the historian with my grandfather, his early friend, John Holroyd, and the members of the Holroyd family, forms one of the pleasantest and also most interesting passages in literary history. It was in no way interrupted by Lord Sheffield's public and official duties; it was continued without a cloud to obscure their intimacy, until it was sundered by death; and the Earl, who survived his friend so long, continued to edit and to publish the manuscripts left in his hands for some twenty years

after the death of the historian.

By a clause in the will of Edward Gibbon, dated July 14, 1788, his papers were entrusted to Lord Sheffield and Mr. John Batt, his executors, in the following terms: —

"I will that all my Manuscript papers found at the time of my decease be delivered to my executors, and that if any shall appear sufficiently finished for the public eye, they do treat for the purchase of the same with a Bookseller, giving the preference to Mr. Andrew Strahan and Mr. Thomas Cadell, whose liberal spirit I have experienced in similar transactions. And whatsoever monies may accrue from such sale and publication I give to my much-valued friend William Hayley, Esq., of Eastham, in the County of Sussex. But in case he shall dye before me, I give the aforesaid monies to the Royal Society of London and the Royal Academy of Inscriptions of Paris, share and share alike, in trust to be by them employed in such a manner as they shall deem most beneficial to the cause of Learning."

In pursuance of the directions contained in the will and of many verbal communications, Lord Sheffield, in 1799, published the *Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon, with Memoirs of his Life and Writings*, in 2 vols., 4to. A third volume was added in 1815, and a new edition of the whole, with additions, appeared during the same year in 5 vols., 8vo. In 1837 another edition, in one large 8vo volume, was published.

By a clause in his own will, Lord Sheffield directed that no further publication of the historian's manuscripts should be

made.

"And I request of my said trustees and my heirs that none of the said manuscripts, papers, or books of the said Edward Gibbon be published unless my approbation of the publication be directed by some memorandum indorsed and written or signed by me. And I also request the person entitled for the time being to the possession thereof not to suffer the same to be out of his possession or to be improperly exposed."

This direction has been strictly followed by my father, the second Earl, and by myself; and it is believed that no person has ever had access to any of the manuscripts for any literary purpose, excepting the late Dean Milman, who, when editing his well-known edition of the *Decline and Fall*, in 1842, was permitted to inspect the original manuscripts of the Autobiography, on condition of not publishing any new matter.

The commemoration of 1894, however, again raised the question whether such an embargo on giving to the world writings of national importance was ever meant to be, or even ought to be, regarded as perpetual. Whilst persons named in these papers or their children were living, whilst the bitter controversies of the last century were still unforgotten, whilst the fame of Edward Gibbon had hardly yet become one of our national glories, it was a matter of good feeling and sound judgment in Lord Sheffield to exercise an editor's discretion in publishing his friend's confession and private thoughts. Now that more than a hundred years have passed since his death, no such

considerations have weight or meaning. And the opinion of those whom I have consulted, both professionally and as private friends, amply corroborates my own conclusion, that it is a duty which I owe to my own ancestor and to the public to give to the world all the remains of the historian which for more than a century have been preserved in the strong room of Sheffield Park.

The unlocking of the cases in which these manuscripts were secured was quite a revelation of literary workmanship, and has led to a most interesting problem in literary history. The manuscripts of the historian are all holographs – the text of the famous Memoirs being written with extraordinary beauty of calligraphy, and studied with the utmost care. But, singularly enough, none of the texts are prepared for immediate, or even direct, publication. The historian wrote, at various intervals between 1788 and 1793, no less than *six* different sketches. They are not quite continuous; they partly recount the same incidents in different form; they are written in different tones; and yet no one of them is complete; none of them seem plainly designed to supersede the rest. There is even a small seventh sketch, from which one of the noblest and most famous passages that Gibbon ever wrote has been excised, and inserted in the published Autobiography.

Lord Sheffield executed his editorial task with extreme judgment, singular ingenuity, but remarkable freedom. He was assisted in preparing the manuscripts for publication by his

wife and by Lady Maria Holroyd, his eldest daughter, who became by marriage the first Lady Stanley of Alderley. This very able and remarkable woman, of whose abilities the historian expressed in letters his great admiration, evidently marked the manuscripts in pencil handwriting (now recognized as hers) for the printer's copyist. These pencil deletions, transpositions, and even additions, correspond with the Autobiography as published by Lord Sheffield. Quite a third of the whole manuscript is omitted, and many of the most piquant passages that Gibbon ever wrote were suppressed by the caution or the delicacy of his editor and his family.

The result is a problem of singular literary interest. A piece, most elaborately composed by one of the greatest writers who ever used our language, an autobiography often pronounced to be the best we possess, is now proved to be in no sense the simple work of that illustrious pen, but to have been dexterously pieced together out of seven fragmentary sketches and adapted into a single and coherent narrative. The manner and the extent of this extraordinary piece of editing has been so fully explained in the address of November 15, published by the Centenary Committee, that it is not necessary for me to enlarge upon it further.

No sooner had the discovery of the process by which Gibbon's *Autobiography* had been concocted been made public, than a general desire was expressed to have the originals published in the form in which the historian left them. It was no case of

incomplete or illegible manuscripts, nor of rough drafts designed only as notes for subsequent composition. The whole of the seven manuscripts are written with perfect precision; the style is in Gibbon's most elaborate manner; and each piece is perfectly ready for the printer – so far as it goes. It was impossible to do again the task of consolidation so admirably performed by Lord Sheffield. Nothing remained but to print the whole of the pieces *verbatim*, as the historian wrote them, not necessarily in the order of time of their apparent composition, but so as to form a consecutive narrative of the author's life.

The reader may now rest assured that, *for the first time*, he has before him the Autobiographic Sketches of Edward Gibbon in the exact form in which he left them at his death. The portions enclosed in dark brackets are the passages which were omitted by Lord Sheffield, and in the notes are inserted the passages or sentences, few and simple in themselves, which Lord Sheffield added to the original manuscript. For various reasons it was found impracticable to print the six sketches in parallel columns; but the admirers of the historian and all students of English literature will find abundant opportunity for collating the original texts with each other, and with the text as published by the editor, and now for a century current as one of the masterpieces of English literature.

The *Letters* of the historian, the bulk of which were addressed to Lord Sheffield and his family, were published in part by my grandfather in one or other of the editions of *The Miscellaneous*

Works of Edward Gibbon. But in this collection many letters were omitted, and most of them were printed with some omissions and variations. These omissions have now been restored; and the *Letters*, like the other papers of our author, are now for the first time given to the world in the form in which they were composed.

I cannot pretend to any rivalry with my grandfather in the matter of the skill with which he performed the task of editing and selecting for publication the remains of his friend. But I can assure the reader that *every piece contained in this volume as the work of Edward Gibbon is now printed exactly as he wrote it without suppression or emendation*. And in transferring these literary treasures to the nation, and in giving them to the world, I feel that I am fulfilling the trust which the historian reposed in my grandfather, and am acting in the spirit of the lifelong friendship that bound him to my family.

I cannot conclude these prefatory remarks without acknowledging to the fullest extent the obligation I am under to Mr. Frederic Harrison for the assistance he has given me in the preparation and composition of this Preface.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

This collection of Gibbon's correspondence, extending as it does from 1753 to 1794, practically covers the whole of the historian's life, and contains his observations on society, literature, and politics during a period which includes such momentous events as the Seven Years' War, the War of American Independence, and the French Revolution.

By far the greater number of the letters now appear for the first time; but portions of the correspondence, marked in this edition with asterisks, were printed by Lord Sheffield shortly after Gibbon's death. These published portions were treated by the editor with great tact and more freedom. Lord Sheffield was giving to the world letters which discussed recent events and criticised living persons; it was, therefore, necessary for him to suppress some allusions and conceal many names. Jealous of his friend's literary reputation, he corrects errors in spelling or grammar, gives a dignified turn to the more homely phrases, and omits as trivial the petty details of domestic life. Sometimes, also, Lord Sheffield's editorial methods pass beyond the exercise of these more or less legitimate powers. In order to concentrate the interest of the correspondence, he culls a few lines from one letter, chooses a sentence from a second, extracts a passage from a third, and prints his patchwork as a genuine letter from Gibbon's own hand.

In this edition the letters are printed as they were written. For the blanks which conceal the identity of persons are substituted the real names; the suppressed passages are restored; the spelling and grammar of the original are preserved; the language is left as Gibbon wrote it. If the Memoirs give us Gibbon in the full dress of a fine gentleman of letters, the correspondence reveals to us the man as he was known to his valet and his housekeeper.

The letters have the ease and freshness of conversations with intimate friends, and, considering the character of the century in which they were written, they present one feature which deserves special notice. Only one short sentence has been omitted as too coarse to be printed. With this solitary exception, the reader knows the worst as well as the best of Gibbon, and there are scarcely a dozen phrases, scattered over 800 pages, which will offend good taste or good feeling.

The notes must speak for themselves. Though some points on which information is needed remain obscure, it is hoped that, so far as they go, they may be found useful. In their correction and revision, valuable aid has been given by Mr. G. H. Holden, Assistant Librarian at All Souls' College, Oxford.

GIBBON'S CORRESPONDENCE.

1753-1794

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. Pavillard, 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.

1.

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.

2.

To his Aunt, Miss Catherine Porten. ¹

February, 1755.

"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."²

Dear Madam,

*I have at length good news to tell you; I am now a good Protestant, and am extremely glad of it.³ 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 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.

A GAMBLING SCRAPE.

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 have 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 there 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,
E. Gibbon.*

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.

3.

To his Father

March 1st, 1755.

Dear Sir,

VOLTAIRE AT GENEVA.

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 *manège* 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 Voltaire⁴ 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.

4.

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. Taff⁵ 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.

HIS FATHER'S SECOND MARRIAGE

A tear to poor Nell; she really deserves it. Am glad Nemmy is well married. Would write to my aunt Hester,⁶ but know not what to say to her. You tell me Snell and Milton are gone; where?

Compliments to Bett Gilbert and to the Darrels⁷ 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 France and Italy. But not a syllable about his marriage.⁸ 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.⁹ I do not know if 'tis so very good a sign. Since she was intimate with him when I was under Ward's¹⁰ 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?

YOUNG TRAVELLERS.

*Now for myself. As my father has given me leave to make 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?¹¹ I heard he was in Germany.

I am, dear Kitty,

Your affectionate nephew

(Not your grave, obedient, humble servant),

E. Gibbon.

5.

To his Father

10 juin 1756.

Mon très cher Père,

Je reçus hier votre lettre avec beaucoup de plaisir, mais qui ne fut pas tout-à-fait sans mélange d'Inquietude. Je craignois vous avoir encore offensé par quelque nouvelle faute. Vous savez combien une affection vive et sincère prend facilement l'alarme aux plus grandes minucies. Je fus frappé en ouvrant votre lettre de voir votre style ordinaire de Dear Edward changé en un froid Monsieur. Il est vrai que la suite me rassura; j'y voyois un Père tendre qui vouloit bien entrer dans mes peines, les soulager, et me delivrer de toutes mes craintes, en m'assurant que, si je me conduisois toujours d'une façon conforme à mon devoir, le nouvel engagement qu'il avoit pris ne me porteroit aucune prejudice. J'espère que je me connois assez à présent pour pouvoir regarder cette condition comme une promesse absolue. En effet si je m'en écartois, avec quels yeux pourrois-je me regarder moi-même après m'être coupable d'une aussi noire ingratitude pour tant de bonté? Ce trait dont vous me faites part au sujet de votre nouvelle épouse, me la fait déjà aimer d'avance. Je n'aurai pas beaucoup de peine à considérer comme ma mère celle qui, ne pouvant pas me donner la vie, me l'a au moins rendu.

J'aurai l'honneur de lui en faire mes très humbles remerciemens, et de l'assurer des vœux qui je fais pour son bonheur. Pour vous, mon très cher Père, je puis vous protester dans la sincérité de mon cœur que tous ceux que je fais à votre sujet ont pour unique but votre félicité mutuelle. Puissiez-vous goûter tous les agréemens d'une Union fondée sur l'amour et l'estime, et puisse je vous réitérer ces mêmes souhaits pendant une longue suite d'années.

Vous me demandez compte de mes études et de mes exercices. Pour vous en rendre il faut nécessairement que j'entre dans un certain détail. Vos questions la-dessus peuvent se rapporter: 1. à mon François. Je sais qu'il s'en faut de beaucoup que je ne possède cette langue aussi bien que je pourrois le faire. Mais j'ose dire pourtant, sans craindre d'en être démenti par Monsieur Pavilliard, que je la sais mieux que la plupart des Anglois que j'ai vu à Lausanne. 2. Mes Langues mortes. Vous savez mieux que personne ma faiblesse par rapport au Latin lorsque j'ai quitté l'Angleterre. Il n'y avoit alors point d'auteur que je pusse lire avec facilité ni par conséquent avec plaisir. A present il n'y en aucun que je ne lise coulamment. J'en ai lu plusieurs depuis quelque peu de tems, tels que la plus grande partie des ouvrages de Cicéron, Virgile, Saluste, les Epitres de Pline deux fois, les comédies de Terence autant, Velleius Patercule, et je me propose de les lire tous avec le tems. Pour ce qui est du Grec comme je n'ai commencé à l'apprendre que depuis un mois, ou six semaines, vous sentez bien que j'en suis encore aux Premiers Principes. 3.

Ma Philosophie. J'ai achevé la Logique de Monsieur de Crousaz laquelle est fort estimée dans ce pays-ci, en partie avec Monsieur Pavilliard et en parti dans mon Particulier. Je vais lire pour la seconde fois L'Etendement Humain, et, aussitôt que je l'aurai fini, je commencerai l'Algèbre que vous me recommandez tant.

4. Ma Danse et mon Dessein. Je crois que vous ne serez pas mécontent de mes progrès dans la dernière de ces choses. Pour ce de la première je fais tout ce que je puis. Monsieur Pavilliard me rendra la justice de dire je ne suis pas fort dissipé. Je ne sors pas beaucoup et alors même ce n'est que pour aller dans les compagnies de la ville.

HIS STUDIES.

Je suis bien fâché, mon très cher Père, de voir que ces malheureux mots de Mons. Hugonin, lachés et rapportés si mal à propos, ne sont pas encore effacés de votre esprit. Je vous en demande sincèrement excuse, et je vous prie de les oublier totalement. Pour ce qui est de mon ...¹² que j'avois parlé à ma Tante, je voudrois n'en avoir jamais parlé puisqu'il vous déplait. J'avoue pourtant que l'ayant mûrement reconsideré je n'y ai point pu decouvrir l'Incongruité dont vous me parlez. Comme ma Tante vous a montré mes lettres je ne repeterai point ce que j'y ai dit. Je remarquerai seulement qu'il y a ce même Locke dont vous me conseilliez tant la Lecture, pense tout comme moi au sujet des voyages prematurees.

*J'ai, l'honneur d'être,
Mon très cher Père,
Avec un profond respect et une affection sincère,
Votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur et fils,
E. Gibbon.*

P.S. – Si j'osois je prierois de m'envoyer par un des voituriers qui vont si souvent de Londres en Suisse, la Bibliothèque Oriental d'Herbellot qui est parmi mes Livres.

6.

To his Father

4 juin 1757.

Mon très cher Père,

Je me hate de vous assurer encore une fois de mes sentimens. Je ne crois pas qu'ils vous soient inconnus, mais je me plais à les repeter; heureux si les expressions de mon cœur ne vous déplaisent pas.

Quand pourrois-j'esperer de vous les temoigner, ces sentimens en Angleterre? Quatre ans se sont déjà écoulés depuis qu'un arret de votre part m'a fixé dans ce pays. Ils m'ont paru autant de siècles. Ce n'est pas que je me plaigne du pays même ni de ses habitans. Je leur ai des obligations essentielles. Je dois au séjour que j'y ai fait mon gout pour la culture de mon esprit, et les progrès quelqu'ils soient que j'ai fait dans quelques genres d'études. Je me suis même acquis un petit nombre d'amis qui meritent mon estime, et dont le souvenir me sera toujours cher. Mais ces amis que sont-ils au prix d'un père à qui je dois tout, d'une mère qui a autant de droit sur ma reconnoissance que sur mon respect, d'une Tante que j'aimai dès que je la connus, et qui je connus aussitôt que moi-même? Je ne repasserai pas toutes les raisons dont je me suis déjà servi, pour faire voir que, quelques soient vos intentions, un plus long séjour à Lausanne ne

me peut être que nuisible. Je vous les ai proposé, c'est à vous à les peser. Mais permettez-moi, mon très cher Père, de vous prier de réfléchir sérieusement quel effet le différent emploi de mes plus belles années peut avoir sur le reste de ma vie. Je ne fais point entrer en ligne de compte mon propre agrément, c'est un objet trop léger pour être mis à côté de ceux-ci. Au moins, quelques soient vos résolutions, ne m'accablez pas par le silence. Que je les apprenne de vous, ce sera toujours pour moi une sorte de consolation.

Mais si des raisons que je n'ai gardé de blamer vous engagent à me laisser plus longtems dans ce pays; adoucissez au moins ma situation. Je vous ai souvent demandé la liberté de prendre un Domestique. Je vous le demande encore comme le douceur qui me seroit le plus sensible. Comme je sais, mon cher Père, que vous n'aimez pas beaucoup à écrire des lettres, si après six semaines ou deux mois, je regarderai votre silence comme un consentement.

Je n'ai rien de nouveau à vous dire sur ma santé ni sur mes études. Celle-la est passable; je fais tout ce je puis pour qu'on puisse dire quelque chose de plus de celles-ci.

Assurez ma chère mère (c'est avec bien du plaisir que je lui donne ce titre) de tous les sentimens que ce nom sacré emporte avec lui. J'ai l'honneur d'être, mon très cher Père, avec le plus profond respect et le plus tendre devouement

Mon très cher Père,
Votre très humble et très obeissant Serviteur et fils,
E. Gibbon.

7.

To his Father

Lausanne, 26 Octobre, 1757.

Mon très cher Père,
HIS FATHER'S SILENCE.

Dois-je me flatter que vous m'aimiez encore? Si j'en croyois mes propres sentimens, je me dirais sur le champ que j'aime mon père avec une tendresse si vive et si vraie qu'il est impossible que je ne sois pas payé de retour. Si j'ai bien entendu ses paroles, ajoutais-je à moi-même. Ce père, ci-devant si rempli de bonté, m'a daigné assurer que tout étoit oublié et qu'il me rendoit son ancienne affection. Je ne dois donc plus en douter. Il m'aime, je suis heureux. Cependant d'un autre coté mille Idées facheuses s'offroient en foule à mon esprit. Je lui ai écrit plusieurs fois, je lui ai demandé des graces que je croyois raisonnables, et que j'esperois d'obtenir. Il se tait cependant. Un silence si cruel m'afflige, m'épouvante, me fait envisager le plus grand des malheurs: la perte de son amitié. Ne croyez pas, mon très cher Père, qu'il entre le moindre reproche dans ces plaintes, le respectueux attachement que j'aurai pour vous m'en interdit jusqu'à l'apparence. Vous avez sans doute vos raisons, et quand même elles me paroistroient pas tout à fait suffisantes, mon devoir, et, plus encore, mon cœur feroient taire ma faible raison

et vous assureroient d'une obeissance libre de tout murmure.

Lorsque vous me permettez, il y a deux ans, de faire le tour de la Suisse, de peur de faire une depense trop forte, nous laissâmes Genève pour une autre fois. Je viens de faire ce petit voyage actuellement. J'y ai passé trois ou quatre semaines que j'ai taché de mettre à profit. Ma depense pendant ce tems là est allée à seize Louis neufs. J'espère, mon très cher Père, que vous ne la désapprouverez pas. Je ne l'aurois pas fait sans préalablement demander votre permission, mais le tems pressoit. Une troupe de Comédiens François étoient à Genève en passant. Il étoit bien naturel de saisir une occasion de prendre quelque Idée du Théâtre François, et cette occasion (vu la Guerre) étoit presque unique. De retour à Lausanne, j'ai repris mes anciennes occupations avec une ardeur nouvelle. Assurez, s'il vous plait, madame votre epouse de mon sincère Attachement, et faites moi la justice de me croire avec une tendresse et un respect sans bornes

Mon très cher Père,

Votre très Humble et très obeissant Serviteur,

E. Gibbon.

8.

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 war¹³ 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 agreeable 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. 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.

9.

To his Father

The Hague, April the 29th, 1758.

Dear Sir,

HIS RETURN TO ENGLAND

After a journey pretty tiresome, but in which 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 Helvetssluis 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.

10.

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.

11.

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.

12.

To his Stepmother

November, 1758.

Dear Madam,

A VISIT TO LONDON

I arrived in town between four and five o'clock safe and well, though almost frozen. – Turton¹⁴ 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,¹⁵ 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.

Dean's Yard. Tuesday Evening. Nine o'clock.

My sincerest compliments wait on Mr. and Mrs. Bayley. I wish they would recollect anything in which I could be useful to them

in town.

13.

To his Father

New Bond St., December the 14th, 1758.

Dear Sir,

I must begin by the most disagreeable news I have to tell you. All our tickets have come up blanks.¹⁶ All our visionary plans of grandeur are disappointed, the dream of those who have had the ten thousand pounds will last a little, but perhaps, not much longer.

I am settled at last in a very good lodging; I say at last because I lived a day and a half at Mrs. Porten's in the middle of hurry and noise and meazels. My aunt desires her compliments to you and Mrs. Gibbon. We eat the levrier together. Pray did you not send her a hare some time ago? I know not what happened, but she never received it. I saw at her house Dr. Maty's son,¹⁷ a little odd cur, and by an unexampled generosity I tipped the boy with a crown and the father with a coal of fire. Last night I was at the King's Scholars play, and, proper allowances being made, was very well entertained. All spoke justly enough and some (one or two) promised a good deal. Harry Courtenay was one of these, but he disappointed me before the end of the play. He came on with ease and entered well into his character (an old man in the Phormio), got safe over the dreadful first scene. From thence

he sunk gradually tho' encouraged by repeated claps, dragged himself through the last scenes in the most dead and lifeless manner. My expectations were deceived more than they ever were in my whole life. I am just come from Madame Cilesia's.¹⁸ She received me in a dirty white linnen gown, no rufles; in a word, *a negligé qui n'alloit pas le mieux du monde, à sa Majesté Corse*. She received me, however, like an old fellow-sufferer. Not that we talked at all of the M...s, tho' on the brink of it several times, but neither of us broke the ice. I do not think her pretty, something sweet enough in her face, *mais enfin voilà tout*. I am to dine there to-morrow. To-day I dine in state at home, and after dinner shall go to Cleone,¹⁹ though generally disliked.

I lodge in New Bond Street at a linnen draper's, a Mr. Steward, and I have a very good first floor, dining-room, bed-chamber and light closet with many conveniences for a guinea and half a week. I believe I shall keep to it. Lee is very serviceable to me, he has got me a very handsome chair for twenty-seven shillings.

I beg you would present my best compliments and true respects to Mrs. Gibbon.

I am, Dear Sir,

With the greatest regard,

Your most faithful, humble servant and son,

E. Gibbon, Junior.

P.S. – I have not yet been able to do your commissions.

14.

To his Stepmother

London, December, 1758.

Dear Madam,

How many thanks have I to return you! I shall wait upon Sir William Milner²⁰ as soon as he is in town, and do not doubt of liking that family, at least the lady: to say she is your friend is a sufficient encomium.

WANT OF MONEY

But, Madam, I am really concerned my father has not sent me a draught. I am really distressed for money. I have hardly a guinea left, and you know the unavoidable expences of London. I have tryed to borrow of Mrs. Porten and of Harvey, my father's lawyer. But without success. Could not you send me a bank-note by the Hastings Post of Monday? I would run all the risks of its being lost; for upon my word I shall hardly know what to do in three or four days.

Will you admit my excuse? I am just going to see Garrick, *alias* Sir John Brute.²¹ It will be a *vilaine bête*.

I am, Dear Madam,

Yours most sincerely,

E. Gibbon.

P.S. – The author of Eurydice²² (who greeted me at the Smyrna Coffee-house) asked much after you and my father. What can you mean about Miss Allen?

15.

To his Father

London, December the 21st, 1758.

Dear Sir,

I am afraid you will be angry at seeing a letter instead of me, but indeed I knew not how disagreeable it was, travelling in this season. I am besides invited to Mrs. Wray's and Mr. Darrel's for next Monday and Wednesday. Do you think these reasons sufficient? (I beg you would tell it me freely.) If you do not I will endeavour to come down the latter end of next week; as I suppose my being there Christmas Day is of no consequence.

I have seen Dr. Maty. *La La*. He made little or no excuse for having deferred writing, but has already criticised it with sense and severity. He finds it as I hoped; good, in general, but many faults in the detail.²³

I have dined once with M. Cilesia, with whom I am extremely pleased; he has wit and learning, and speaks French like a Parisian. But pray have you heard the shocking pretensions of Mlle. de Vaucluse? A prior marriage with him, or at least a promise of Marriage with a vast forfeiture. I do not know the particulars, but she pushes the affair vigorously at Genoa, and disperses a Memoire, which I hope to see. If she is not an Imposture, how criminal it makes the husband and how unhappy

the wife.

I believe it is needless to assure Mrs. Gibbon of my sincerest love and regard. Pray tell her Sir W. Milner is in town. I shall execute all her and your commissions.

I am, Dear Sir,

With the greatest regard,

Your most obedient and affectionate servant and son,

E. Gibbon.

16.

To his Father

New Bond Street, December the 30th, 1758.

Dear Sir,

HIS FIRST LITERARY VENTURE

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 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's²⁴ 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 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.

17.

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.

UNFITNESS FOR POLITICAL LIFE.

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, unasisted 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 speech, 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 dispise 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 disapprove 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.

18.
To his Stepmother

*Winchester Camp,²⁵ Monday Morning,
[in pencil] '61?*

Dear Madam,

A CAPTAIN OF MILITIA.

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.

19.

To his Stepmother

Devizes, February the 14th, 1762.

Dear Madam,

Knowing you as I do I can easily judge of the effect my father's accident must have produced upon you. Besides, I can guess at it by the impression it made upon me, though I heard of the danger and the escape at the same time. I thank God it was no worse. I hope my father is now thoroughly recovered. I shall remember the Arquebusade this week.

Of myself and my situation at the Devizes I have little to say, and that little not very agreeable. A great deal of noise and no conversation, a great many people and no society, a most excessive familiarity and no friendship; in a word, the usual scene, only I think we are not so quarrelsome as we used to be.

I wrote to my father who by this time must have received my letter. However I must just mention to him two or three things relative to the battalion. He will see by the enclosed return, our strength and what we have done, which is nothing to what we might do had we money. The Blacks²⁶ now grow so numerous that I think they must drive us out of town, they desire it so strongly, & Lord Shelbourne²⁷ has such powerful interest. I believe Sharrock²⁸ will get an ensign, one Hall,²⁹ near this place,

a very pretty lad of sixteen with a good qualification, though not in our county. He expects an answer from Durnford, who, by the bye, has not yet wrote either to Harrison³⁰ or me.

How does your pupil go on? I hope soon to have an account of him, as William is very clamourous for a new livery.

You say nothing of your brother. I hope he is sailed. Surely it must by this time be determined. I beg you would present my love and duty to my father, and believe me,

Dear Madam,

Most affectionately yours,

E. Gibbon, Junior.

20.

To his Father

Boulogne, January the 25th, 1763.

Dear Sir,
FOREIGN TOUR.

You see by the date of my letter where I am. I arrived here in company with the Duke of Bridgewater,³¹ the Marquis of Tavistock,³² Lord Ossory³³ and a Mr. Leigh, about three in the afternoon, after a tedious but pleasant passage 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.*

21.

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,³⁴ our definitive one was signed here yesterday, and this morning the Duke of Bridgewater and Mr. Neville³⁵ 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.

PARISIAN SOCIETY.

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 connections, I mean chiefly for dinner & the evening. Suppers, as yet I am pretty much a stranger to, 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 agreeable 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,³⁶ the author of the famous book *de l'Esprit*. I met him at dinner at Madame Geoffrin's,³⁷ 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 agreeable 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,³⁸ 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.³⁹ I could not see him (on account of his gout) till last Sunday. I was then introduced to him & presented my letter from

the D[uke] of R[ichmond].⁴⁰ 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 Spaniard⁴¹ gives balls every week, the magnificence of which is only exceeded by their politeness & elegance. Neville who is exactly Mr. W. Patton⁴² 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.

22.

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.

FRIENDS IN PARIS

I still continue to like Paris, as well as I expected. You know that is saying a great deal. In two months I am acquainted with more, (and more agreeable) 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, agreeable 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,⁴³ 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 accompanys 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 Bontems⁴⁴ is a very good sort of a woman, agreeable 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 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 literally 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 agreeable 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.

PARIS AND LONDON CONTRASTED.

With regard to Paris itself, I mean the houses and buildings, 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 Ambassador. 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 agreeable thing, but a dark nasty gate-way is a very disagreeable 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's⁴⁵ & 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 agreeable

sensible man, but a strange being in France. The second is your good friend Mrs. Poyntz,⁴⁶ whom I met by accident. She talked of you, whom 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.

23.

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 Litchfield⁴⁷ 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 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,⁴⁸ 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,⁴⁹ 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.

CONDUCT OF THE DUKE OF BEDFORD.

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?

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 empower 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.

24.

To his Stepmother

Besançon, May the 18th, 1763.

Dear Madam,

You will give me leave according to an article of our treaty, to write you only three lines, just to tell that I am well and where I am.

Upon my arrival at Besançon I saw Mr. Acton⁵⁰ directly. He has received me with a degree not only of civility but of friendship which astonished me, insisted upon my taking an apartment in his house, and since my seeing him, himself and his three sons (our Southampton friend is one) have been only taken up in procuring me every kind of amusement, in carrying me to all my father's friends here who have all enquired much after him, in seeing publick places, and in parties at home and abroad. The only inconvenience is that I have not an instant to myself and that I am forced to write this scrawl at half an hour after one in the morning. The day after to-morrow I set out for Lausanne, where I shall be a little quieter. The Acton family desire to be remembered to my father.

*I am, Dear Madam,
Yours and my father's with the truest affection,
E. G., Junior.*

25.

To his Father

Lausanne, May the 31st, 1763.

Dear Sir,
BESANÇON.

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 agreeable. 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 agreeable 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 agreeably 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.⁵¹ 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 comparaisn would be an affront.

LAUSANNE

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.*

26.

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 agreeable 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 agreeable 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.⁵² 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 agreeable family which I was very well acquainted with before. The Husband⁵³ 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,⁵⁴ 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.*

27.

To his Stepmother

Lausanne, August the 6th, 1763.

Dear Madam,

HIS OLD LOVE FOR SUZANNE CURCHOD.

I hope I need not assure you how agreeable 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 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 agreeable 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.

VOLTAIRE AS HOST AND ACTOR.

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.⁵⁵ 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 Tyrant⁵⁶ and the accession of a just and righteous prince. Lord —⁵⁷ 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 Thomas⁵⁸) 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.

28.

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 to my situation of travelling and being at Paris I have launched into any extravagancy, the consequences are equally disagreeable. 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 disagreeable, 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.

DECLINES TO ENTER PARLIAMENT.

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:⁵⁹ 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 agreeable, 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 agreeable 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 disagreeable 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 Economy 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.

29.

To his Father

Lausanne, October the 15th, 1763.

Dear Sir,

WAYS AND MEANS.

Give me leave to begin with the part of my letter which has given you the most uneasiness, and which is entirely owing to a mistake. As I have no copy of my letter, I cannot exactly recollect my expressions, tho' I am perfectly sure of my meaning. When I mentioned *unhappy circumstances* I meant only that my expences, tho' not excessive in themselves, appeared great, and were in fact more than what the *unhappy circumstances* of our estate allowed you to support. That I assure you, Dear Sir, was my only meaning; if my expression was doubtfull, attribute it solely to the agitation of spirits I was in when I wrote. When I reflect on my expences, I do not see, that were I to live last winter over again at Paris, I could, according to the almost necessary extravagance of the age, spend less than I have done. I do not pretend to say that a man of a more exact economy might not have done sometimes the same things for less money, but I am sure there was no one blamable or ridiculous expence. Play in particular, Dear Sir, must have occurred to you, tho' you do not mention it. I give you *my word of honor*, that since I have left

England I have not lost twenty pounds.

I will say no more of my scheme, since you disaproove of it. I own I thought it might have made me very easy without any additional expence to you. But you do not mention, Dear Sir, my other proposal supposing we borrowed the five thousand; that of giving me half of it, and making no addition to my allowance whatsoever. Unless you want the whole sum, I should still think it must be more, or at least as eligible to you as any other. I own it would be highly agreeable to me, to have always a sum of money lying by me, besides my income; for I do assure you, Sir, that it is much more a scheme of economy than of expence. I should employ about seven or eight hundred of it to encrease my annuity during a year and a half and to enable me to travel agreeably. The remainder I should put into the stocks, and spend only the interest, reserving the Capital, for any uses that might appear to both of us worthy of it, for I would promise, Dear Sir, not to touch any part of it without your knowledge and consent. In case you want the greatest part of the sum, I should beg at least that, instead of the two Hundred a year you design adding to my annuity, you would only add one hundred a year and a thousand pounds. If the whole is necessary, I am far from contesting it with you, Dear Sir, but after thanking you for the very handsome encrease of my annuity, you must give me leave to say that six hundred pounds a year will not enable me to travel. In this age, it would be almost impossible for me to do it under 9 or 8 hundred; every thing is much altered since you were abroad, and I believe

if you consult those who have travelled lately, they would name scarcely less than a thousand. After the experience I have had, it would be deceiving both myself and you to talk in another strain.

I own the thoughts of a mortgage frighten me. The diminution of the estate, the weight of the interest, the uncertainty of paying which we have already felt in the old one, give me the greatest repugnance to encreasing it. Tho' it would hurt me excessively, I could wish we could avoid it. I would return to England and wait for a more favorable opportunity. This I speak merely for myself. If it is necessary to make you easy, I have nothing more to say.

At all events, Dear Sir, you may depend upon my being in England a few days before the 30th of December. As I should be glad to return to this place as soon as the business is over (in case you still chuse it) I was thinking that so short an apparition might set the world a talking and guessing at the reasons, and as it would be better they should know nothing of them, it might be as well if I came over incognito. I could see you and Mrs. Gibbon in London, appear very little in publick and go back immediately. But as I can hear from you again before my departure, you will settle every thing as you please.

I am surprised that Mrs. Gibbon has not received the Arquebusade water I sent her four months ago, tho' I forgot to mention it. – A propos upon reflexion, I directed it to Becket and neglected giving him any directions about it. If you will write a line to him, I dare say it lies at his shop, near Somerset house in the Strand. I shall endeavour to get you some Lucerne myself,

unless you chuse to stay till next [autumn].

I beg my love and duty to Mrs. Gibbon and sincere compliments to all friends.

I am, Dear Sir,

Most affectionately and most sincerely yours,

E. Gibbon, Junior.

30.

To his Stepmother

Lausanne, December the 7th, 1763.

Dear Madam,

HIS SIX MONTHS AT LAUSANNE.

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 agreeable 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 Palmerston⁶⁰ passed thro' some time ago. He seems to have a very right notion of travelling and I fancy will make very great improvements.

GIBBON A MAJOR.

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,⁶¹ 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.

31.

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,⁶² 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 agreeable manner, under 800 or at the lowest under 700 pounds a year. 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 uneasinesses 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. Sr Thomas is the only one with whom I have a Ct 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.

32.

To his Stepmother

Lausanne, February 17th, 1764.

Dear Madam,

LETTERS OF LADY M. W. MONTAGUE.

You are very good to take notice of my owing you a letter. I am afraid I am too apt to depend upon my friends knowing me, and upon their being convinced that there is not the least connection between my regard for them and my putting pen to paper to assure them of it.

My laziness as to writing is but too natural to me; but no place is so apt to encourage it as this, where my way of life is so agreeable but at the same time so uniform, that a month or two are elapsed before I know any thing of the matter. Pleasant weather, (I am forced to draw the curtain this moment to exclude the sun) study in the morning, and company in the afternoon. Books you are not perhaps acquainted with, and people that I am sure you do not know, make up my occupations, and notwithstanding all the pleasure I hope for in Italy, I own I shall quit this place with some unwillingness. My health is very good, only about two months ago I found my blood thickening, and was forced to be bled. I have since taken some gentle physick once or twice, and am now well and in very good spirits.

The only book I have read lately that you can have any knowledge of, is the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montague.⁶³ They have entertained me very much. What fire, what ease, what knowledge of Europe and of Asia! Her account of the manners of the Turkish women is indeed different from any thing we have yet seen. One should have hardly suspected, that a Turkish husband with his four wives and twenty concubines, is very far from being absolute.

Will you be so good, Dear Madam, as to excuse the shortness of this letter. The post is *really* just going out and I have barely time to seal it. My love and duty to my father. I have just drawn a bill for fifty pounds at fifteen days after date.

*I am, Dear Madam,
Most truly & affectionately yours,
E. Gibbon.*

33.

To his Father

Lausanne, April the 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.

PASSAGE OVER MONT CENIS.

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 Pitt⁶⁴ will make very agreeable 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.⁶⁵ 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.

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.

34.

To his Father

Turin, April 28th, 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 Mont 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,⁶⁶ as well as 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 agreeable 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.⁶⁷ 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.

35.

To J. B. Holroyd, Esq., ⁶⁸ at Lausanne

Borromean Islands, May 16th, 1764.

Dear Leger,

THE BORROMEAN ISLANDS.

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 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.

LIFE AT TURIN.

I hardly think you will like Turin; the Court is old & dull;⁶⁹ 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 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,⁷⁰ rapped it, 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, & the Brunette⁷¹ 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.

GENOA.

*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 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 Tilney⁷² and some other English in their way to Venice. We heard a melancholy piece of news from them; Byng⁷³ died at Bologna a few days ago of a fever. 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,⁷⁴ 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 woman⁷⁵ on the top of Mont Cenis, in the middle of the Lago Maggiore, &c. &c. 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.*

36.

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 extravagant 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 disagreeable 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 entertainment, 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,⁷⁶ 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.

37.

To his Stepmother

Florence, June 20th, 1764.

Dear Madam,
FLORENCE.

Without any of those common apologies for not writing which are generally made use of to fill up the first half page of 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 disagreeable state of anxiety and attendance. At last, seeing no likelihood 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 disagreeable 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 unaffected 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 disagreeable 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,⁷⁷ son to the Irish speaker, a very agreeable young man whom we knew at Turin; Mr. Littleton, son to Lord Littleton,⁷⁸ &c. Some more whom I have not yet seen. We make our first visit after dinner to Sir Horatio Mann,⁷⁹ 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 agreeable society. I hope we shall avoid the fate of Lord Fordwich⁸⁰ (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 his travels by a visit to his sister at Brunswick.⁸¹ I suppose we must be all presented to him.

I was much disappointed 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 sentiments which duty and inclination

have an equal share in?

I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

E. Gibbon.

I shall not forget the wax candles. I shall send with them a small quantity of Florence wine.

38.

To his Father

Rome, October the 9th, 1764.

Dear Sir,
ROME.

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 agreeable 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 gouvernement 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 entertainments 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 entertainment 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.⁸²

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 England. 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 agreeable 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?

39.

To his Father

Rome, November the 10th, 1764.

Dear Sir,

MONEY TROUBLES.

I received last Wednesday your letter of the 16th of October, and could scarcely have thought that any one from you could give me so much uneasiness as this has done. I have let slip one post in order to consider it with more attention, and I believe I must visit again every thing I have seen, or seemed to see, in the intermediate days. I must own, Dear Sir, that I am frightened both when I look back, and when I look forwards. A mortgage of £10,000 contracted about six years ago, £1200 taken out of Hervey's hands; and now an urgent necessity of selling one of our very best estates! Where must this end? Believe me, Dear Sir, I am very far from meaning the smallest reproach. I am convinced that all these measures have been dictated by necessity, and that this necessity has been occasioned by the intricacy of affairs, the iniquity of men, and a variety of accidents over which prudence has no power. But this very conviction encreases my uneasiness. What may be one day my fate without half your knowledge of business, and deprived of all those ressources which you must have found in living so many years in the Country, and in

managing and improving your estate? With less æconomy and perhaps more wants, I may very easily find my way to a Gaol.

Notwithstanding all this, Dear Sir, I am very sensible of the unhappy difficulties of Otway's affair, and both duty and inclination would engage me to submit to every thing in order to extricate you from it. But for a sum which is not very considerable, will it be necessary to sell an Estate which I have heard you often speak of as the clearest and most valuable you are in possession of? If it is absolutely necessary to sell something, would it not be better to endeavour to part with Putney? I speak, Dear Sir, very much at random for want of knowing the respective values of the Estates, and what you are offered for Lenborough.⁸³ Indeed without some such knowledge I can scarcely say anything positive upon the subject; more than that, if you still persist in that scheme, it would be very difficult for me to dispute any thing that you think expedient, or conducive to your own ease and happiness.

But in that case, Dear Sir, should you think the following conditions unreasonable? – 1st. That upon the sale of the estate, after discharging the mortgage and deducting £1200 for Otway's affair, the residue of the money should be paid into a banker's hands and be lodged in the funds in our joint names. The interests should be solely yours, and we should have what we have so often desired, a sum of money ready for any emergency, and sufficient to execute any plan, either of bringing me into Parliament, or any thing else. Surely, Dear Sir, this scheme is preferable to

purchasing more land. Have not we enough already? The only thing that hurts me in this proposal is the air of distrust it seems to carry with it. Believe me, Dear Sir, when I say that I can as little doubt of your care and regard for me as of my own, and that if I take any precautions, they are such only, as I should think it equally prudent to take against myself. My other condition would be the same which I mentioned last year, that of changing my annuity into a rent charge upon the estate, and permitting me to convert that into another annuity which I apprehend would be at least double what I at present enjoy. I have often considered it coolly since that time, and a scheme which would make me easy and happy for life, appears to me much more eligible than any other which would make a small addition to my income at your expence. Marriage, and the consideration of posterity would be the only motives which could ever make me repent of such a step, and against these my circumstances, my constitution and a way of thinking grounded upon reasoning and strengthened by experience and habit, will I hope effectually secure me. My views will never extend beyond the happiness of your life, that of Mrs. Gibbon's and of my own. Let us mutually consult what may the most contribute towards that object without calculating what estate may at last remain *for the Elliots*.⁸⁴

I hope you will excuse, Dear Sir, the warmth [with] which I have expressed myself on a subject so highly interesting to us both. I am sure I have not wrote a line that has not been dictated by those sentiments of respect, duty and gratitude upon which

you have so many claims, and which will always engage to place your ease and happiness upon a level with my own. I shall wait your order as to the time and manner of my coming home; but I hope you will not insist upon it's being before the month of June.

I am, Dear Sir,

Most sincerely and most affectionately yours, E. G.

40.

To his Father

Rome, December the 5th, 1764.

Dear Sir,

HIS CREDIT WITHDRAWN.

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.

41.

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.

42.

To his Stepmother

Naples, January the 29th, 1765.

Dear Madam,
NAPLES.

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 sometimes 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 disagreeable 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 Ellis⁸⁵ 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 inattentive 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 premature and partial observation.

We are at present in the midst of a most brilliant carnival, and shall scarce be able to breath between balls, operas, Assemblies and dinners. I have not yet seen Mr. Hamilton our Minister,⁸⁶

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.

43.

To his Father

Rome, the 19th of March, 1765.

Dear Sir,

We are at last going to quit Rome, and altho' every reason for not writing much or often looks suspicious from an old offender like me, yet at present a laudable avarice of time makes me regret every moment I am not rambling about a place I am so soon to take my leave of.

I shall be obliged to draw (at as long a sight as I can) for two hundred pounds: not that I have run into any new expences I did not foresee before, but merely from a prudence which I think a proper one in the very nice situation into which the Florence affair has thrown me. I am sure I can have the money from Barazzi here, as Grand has renewed my credit upon him, but tho' I hope and believe he has done it equally upon the other Bankers, I am not at all sure of it, and might find myself exposed to the refusal of the banker at Venice, and without any acquaintance there who could vouch for my character and circumstances. As I hope to carry away a good £150 I am at least sure of getting to Genoa, where I have some previous knowledge of the banker, and where in case of any difficulty I could call on Celesia. I hope this precaution, which appeared to me in the light of a necessary

one, will not be inconvenient to you. It shall make no alteration in the plan I laid down in my letters from Naples, and you may depend upon it, Dear Sir, that neither in point of time nor of money I will any ways exceed it.

I can scarce hope to receive any more letters from you, which reduces me to the necessity of chusing for myself. I shall however write to you, Dear Sir, from Bologna, Genoa, and one or two places in France to acquaint you with my motions till I have the pleasure before the end of June of embracing you and Mrs. Gibbon at Beriton.

*I am, Dear Sir,
Most truly yours,
E. G.*

Lyons is the only place I can think of where you can direct to me to the post-house.

44.

To his Stepmother

Venice, April the 22nd, 1765.

Dear Madam,

DISAPPOINTMENT WITH VENICE.

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 agreeable to me, since I am sure of finding in all your letters the tenderness of a mother, the sincerity of a friend and the entertainment 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 communication with the natives of the place is strictly forbid. Our chief ressource is our Resident Mr. Murray,⁸⁷ 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 Thomas⁸⁸ 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 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.

PLANS FOR HIS RETURN.

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.

45.

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 fortnight 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 agreeable 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.*

46.

To J. B. Holroyd, Esq., at Berlin.

Beriton, October 31st, 1765.

Dear Leger,

REGRET AT MISSING BERLIN.

*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 book⁸⁹ 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. 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 agreeable 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.

VISIT TO MADAME NECKER.

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."⁹⁰

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!⁹¹ I saw it in the newspaper. Is Ridley⁹² 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.

47.
To James Scott, Esq

January the 14th, 1766.

At Miss Lake's, St. James's Place, an indifferent lodging.

2 Guineas a week. I fancy I shall not stay in it.

Dear Sir,

I should have wrote to Beriton last post, or even (which I might have done) the post before. I am sorry at present to have so disagreeable an excuse for the shortness of my present letter as a new attack in my shoulder, which has confined me to my lodgings yesterday and to-day. If I am not better to-morrow I will certainly have advice about it.

Mrs. Porten has not been well but has recovered. I have met Guise in town with his whole family, who have been exceedingly civil to me. – To-morrow (if I am able) I shall introduce d'Eyverdun⁹³ to Miss Comarque at the new play, to which she has obliged me to contribute a ticket. The number of separations encrease daily. They talk of Lords and Ladies Bolingbroke,⁹⁴ Warkworth,⁹⁵ Grosvenor,⁹⁶ Sr. James Lowther and Lady,⁹⁷ Mr. & Mrs. Onslow, &c. (would you believe it?) Sr. M. & Lady F. Soon, Dear Sir, I will write more at large, till when believe me,

Most truly yours,

E. G.

48.

To his Stepmother

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

Dear Madam,

WANT OF FRIENDS IN LONDON.

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.⁹⁸ 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 agreeable 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,⁹⁹ are however come or coming to town & may serve to enliven it. The public diversions are a great ressource, and the Cocoa Tree¹⁰⁰ 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 agreeable 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 Sevensnight 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.¹⁰¹ The debate yesterday (which 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.*

49.
To J. B. Holroyd, Esq

Beriton, April 29th, 1767.

Dear Leger,

MARRIAGE OF MR. HOLROYD.

*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,¹⁰² 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 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 comparaisn 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.

WITH THE MILITIA.

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*,¹⁰³ 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 Goat¹⁰⁴ 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.

50.

To his Stepmother

Southampton,¹⁰⁵ May the 8th, 1767.

My birth-day. May I have many happy ones. Amen.

Dear Madam,

The post is really going out, at a most inconvenient hour, half after nine in the morning, and as usual I neglected writing the night before. All I can do now is to express the joy I received by your accounts of my father's improvement in point of health, and to return you some portion of joy, by telling you, that on Wednesday morning Mrs. Harrison was safely delivered of a boy. Both mother and child are in the fairest way – The bay horse is sold – the post chaise tempts one very much.

I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

The Major.

51.

To his Father

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

Dear Sir,

THE GENERAL ELECTION.

Here I am, and how much longer I may stay in this little island, Lord knows. Jemmy Worsley is still at Guernsey 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 agreeably. 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.¹⁰⁶ 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. 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.

52.

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,¹⁰⁷ Boodle's,¹⁰⁸ the Theatre and some acquaintances whom you already know. In all these places nothing new or interesting has occurred. Ranelagh¹⁰⁹ 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 Abingdon¹¹⁰ 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.

VOLTAIRE'S RUIN.

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,¹¹¹ who is encouraged by the Solicitor General¹¹² 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 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 Preston¹¹³ 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.¹¹⁴ 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.¹¹⁵ 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;¹¹⁶ 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 tryal¹¹⁷ is not yet come out. I will take care to send it with *La Princesse de Babylone*,¹¹⁸ a new Romance

of Voltaire which is a very agreeable absurd trifle. A propos, poor Voltaire is almost ruined. He had intrusted most of his money to that expensive scoundrel the Duke of Wirtenbergh,¹¹⁹ 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 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 Simeon¹²⁰ 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.*

53.
To James Scott, Esq. ¹²¹

Beriton, December the 20th, 1768.

Dear Sir,

Some particular and very urgent reasons, oblige me as well in my own name as in those of my father, and Mrs. Gibbon, to request your immediate presence at Beriton. Your own interest is deeply concerned, but what (I am convinced) will be a much more powerfull inducement, you will have an opportunity of adding a most essential obligation to those which your friendship has already conferred on our Family. As we have now a very pressing occasion for your advice and assistance, we shall flatter ourselves with the hopes of seeing you Friday evening.

I am, Dear Sir,

With the truest regard,

Your most sincere Friend and obedient humble Servant,

Edward Gibbon, Junior.

54.
To his Father

January the 2nd, 1769.

Dear Sir,
FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES.

We got safe to town. In my way I delivered the Lease to Fletcher with proper instructions. To-morrow we shall proceed on business with all possible dispatch. I have nothing to add more than that Wilkes is just chose against Bromidge, 285 to 69.¹²² Such is the spirit of the times.

*I am, Dear Sir,
Most truly yours,
E. G.*

55.

To his Father

January the 5th, 1769.

Dear Sir,

Southouse (with whom Mr. Scott and myself passed three hours this morning) has examined the Putney Writings. I wish I could say he was satisfied with them. The former Deeds (while it was yet a Copyhold) he thinks of little or no consequence. The Deed of Enfranchisement is what he principally wants, nor is it sufficient that it may be enrolled in Chancery or in the Wimbledon Court Rolls. The Deed itself formerly in your possession is what he wants, for, says he, any purchaser would naturally be allarmed at it's not being to be found, and would immediately suspect that some incumbrance (perhaps for your life only) had been contracted on that security. I hope and sincerely believe that meer accident or neglect has deprived us of this important writing, but as it is so important, we must beg you would recollect all you can about it, and if possible give us some clue which may lead to a discovery of it.

There are later papers which he likewise calls for, an authenticated copy of my Grandfather's Will, your Marriage Settlement, both with my mother and with Mrs. Gibbon. He wants to be acquainted with the extent and nature of the fine

and recovery passed by us ten years ago. The Counter Part of Gosling's Mortgage must be in your hands, and he thinks the sight of it *absolutely* necessary. In a word, unless everything is laid before him, we are only losing our time, and it is impossible to carry anything beyond meer speculation, not only with regard to any general Plan, but even in respect to the immediate money we may want. Whatever can be got either from Public officers or from the Goslings, &c., he will get, but he judges it both safer and cheaper that the materials should be laid before him, than that he should be forced to fish them out. He asked me questions about the Attornies employed in those several transactions, and wishes he could see any of their bills, which would inform him of what had been done. The several leases which actually subsist between you and any Tenants should be produced. In a word, he is of opinion that nothing can be done without the whole is probed to the bottom.

I must therefore desire that you would immediately send up every thing that can give any light into our affairs. As to Putney in particular, I must beg you would order Newney to deliver to my order the leases relating to that Estate. As soon as I have got some more materials I am again to see Southouse. I hope they will be speedily in Town, as an expensive Residence here is neither convenient nor at present agreeable. – I have just received an answer from Boissier, who can make no offer as he is not acquainted with our terms, but declines an interview, and thinks it may suit other people better than himself.

I find the Chancery business cannot be got off, but it may be so easily delayed that there is no present apprehension from it. I hope to hear from you by the return of the post, and to receive *as soon as possible* every thing you can find. Mr. Scott is a most zealous friend, and on this as well as on every other occasion you shall ever find me most truly yours,

E. G.

56.

To his Father

Pall Mall, January 14th, 1769.

Dear Sir,

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES.

Since my last we still go on, tho' indeed rather slowly. All that I can say is, that our slowness neither proceeds from our own negligence, nor even from the dilatoriness of Law, but merely from our having been destitute of the necessary Writings. Southouse has been very active, and has already seen Stephen Harvey, Gosling's Attorney and Mrs. Williamson. The two former (tho' he has a just idea of Harvey) promise the free use of all that is in their hands. The last has wrote to her brother & hopes the Deed may be recovered from him, notwithstanding he is so odd a man. Harvey believes he may have the Counterpart of the Mortgage. In a word, we are to meet again next Wednesday, when Southouse thinks we shall be in a condition to offer some security for the money we immediately want, as well as to trace the outlines of our general Deed of trust. As I find I cannot be a Party in it, I should wish to substitute my uncle Porten as Joint-Trustee with Mr. Scott.

We should be glad to receive as soon as Possible Mrs. Gibbon's marriage Articles; In relation to which I shall not *forget*

the conversation we had in the Study. It is my duty as well as my inclination to consider her in the light of a real Mother.

2. The Abstract of the Deeds in Gosling's hands; Hervey, who thinks he has the counterpart of the Mortgage, is positive he delivered you this Abstract. 3. The Title, (whatever it is), by which we possess the Copper share, or at least some account of the Writings relative to it. To these particular enquiries I must add a general request of searching out any thing that may give us any new lights. You have (for instance) made some little purchases about Beriton, the title to which cannot be included in the general writings of the Manor, &c. For any thing of that kind the Cocoa Tree is a surer direction than my obscure lodgings (which are still those of Sir Thomas's), but I think it would be still better to send them at once to Mr. Southouse, Attorney at Law, Milk Street, Cheapside. I have already received and transmitted to him, the Putney Leases (Vane's signed). Yesterday I had a letter from John Harris, with some particulars of the Buckinghamshire Estate.

I find Southouse a true man of business; civil but determined to know everything. He questioned me very plainly about my change of Religion, of re-conversion to which I gave him very satisfactory answers. Indeed he will know everything.

I think, Dear Sir, you must be easy after what he said of the Chancery affair. I asked with some anxiety how long it could be staved off. What does that signify? answered he. We shall have the Money before it is wanted.

Depend on it, Dear Sir, we do not wish to flatter you with

vain hopes (indeed to what end could they serve?) and let this consideration dispell the Fantom which torments you and makes me so unhappy. Endeavour as far as lies in your power to reassume both a chearfull heart & and a chearfull countenance. They are indeed necessary to your health as well as to your Credit.

As for myself, I shall only say that as I cannot be happy, without your being so, I am willing to make every reasonable sacrifice to your tranquillity. The only restraints I shall wish to impose on you are such as will be conducive to our common Good. Perhaps it had been better for us all, had I insisted on them some years sooner.

I am, Dear Sir,

Most truly yours & Mrs. Gibbon's,

E. G.

57.

To his Father

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.

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES.

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 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.

We have not yet got the Deed of Enfranchisement nor will even Mrs. W. discover her brother's habitation, but we hope to trace him out & prevail with him.

58.

To his Stepmother

January the 21st, 1769.

Dear Madam,

Tho' I have nothing to add to my letter to my father, I cannot forbear writing a few lines to ask [how] you do yourself. I am too well acquainted with your sensibility not to have some fears. Send me some particular account of my poor father, his style makes me very unhappy: perhaps not the least so of the three; for it is very irksome to wear a perpetuall mask of gaiety.

You will see, Dear Madam, how much we have laboured, and how little we have done. For God's sake, for all our sakes, press my father to recollect everything, to look out everything & to send us everything that he can. All our difficulties proceed from former carelessness.

I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

E. G.

59.

To his Stepmother

London, January 31st, 1769.

Dear Madam,

I am glad to say that my father's fears from my silence these last two posts were without foundation, & am sorry to say that the hopes you conceived from it were not better founded. The truth really was that I wrote nothing because I had not anything to write. Yet we had not been idle. I have seen and talked to W., who answers the idea I had of him tho' not the character his sister gave of him. She represented him as a shy melancholy man, he is on the contrary a very sottish but dissipated man. On my applying for "G," he immediately produced an Alphabetical Index of Joe Taylor's papers – Nothing was there recorded under the name of Gibbon except some old things of my grandfather's relating to the Duc d'Autem privateer. He promised to make a further search & I am to call on him to-morrow, but I hope very little from him. I shall venture to talk of some gratuity, but in the mean time, we wish my father and yourself would recollect & search whatever can be found.

My father's last letter distressed me very much. He talks of my having doubts & suspicions. Whatever unguarded expressions may have dropped from me, I hope my past conduct & my

present designs are far from deserving the reproach of doubts & suspicions. At the same time it is true, that tho' neither myself nor Mr. Scott nor even Mr. Southouse have any doubts, yet if we want to sell, or even to borrow money on the Putney Estate, any Purchaser will demand, 1st The Deed of Enfranchisement, & 2nd My Aunt Elliston's release for £2000 due to her, & charged by my grandfather on the said Putney Estate. It appears indeed by that will that of his eleven copper shares, six were left to my aunt Gibbon, five should therefore be still my father's property, and yet there appears only one & that sold to my father by Mrs. Elliot.

Mr. S. thinks it absolutely necessary that my father should come up next week to execute on that occasion, & at the same time his presence may be usefull to us in other respects: I hope in my next letter to be able to appoint the day for his coming up.

The Chancery Affair can easily be deferred till the clear title to Putney is made out, and if my father will not encrease our difficulties by his own fears we shall yet be happy.

I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

E. G.

60.

To his Father

February 23rd, 1769.

Dear Sir,

HIS FATHER'S REPROACHES.

I scarce thought that our present melancholy situation could receive any addition of uneasiness, but the displeasure your last letter expressed, convinced me that the meer blows of fortune are trifling when compared with the unexpected reproaches of those we love.

Since my arrival in Town Mr. Scott and myself have been constantly employed on the general plan which will, I flatter myself, give ease and security to us all. Mr. Southouse has almost finished the rough Draught of our Deed of Trust, the basis of all our solid hopes. The many delays which have occurred have never proceeded from our carelessness. So far from wishing to expose your name, I consulted S. on the practicability of omitting the particular Schedule, and a method has been agreed on – When that deed of Trust is finished, which will be, I hope, in a very short time, we shall desire your presence in town. I shall execute writings by which I make myself liable to near eight thousand pounds Debt. You will then be able to make use of Mr. Scott's money, & we shall find means to answer the Chancery

Demands. As yet your credit is unhurt, and your own fears have been the only importunate Creditor. After this, Dear Sir, give me leave to ask whether your last expression that you are *still affectionately* was not somewhat severe.

I should be truly insensible if the steps you talk of taking in the Country did not *already* alarm me. They made me pass a very cruel night. The very obscurity of your language terrified me. What can those steps be? I must however say, that should you intend to procure an immediate supply, by any extraordinary methods, both Mr. Scott and myself must think ourselves disengaged from any promise, and our whole plan is entirely dissolved.

I have wrote, Dear Sir, from a full heart, for which I make no apology. It is by actions, not by words, that I shall ever seek to prove how truly I feel for yourself and poor Mrs. G., and how ardently I wish to make you, if possible, happy.

61.

To his Father

London, March the 4th, 1769.

Dear Sir,

The discovery of Williamson's papers, tho' in itself a most pleasing event, is however productive of some delay as well as trouble. Besides the Deed of Enfranchisement there are two very large boxes of writings, many no doubt very trifling, but some which certainly are, and others which possibly may be, of importance to us. Southouse will examine them with all possible diligence, but from the new matter which arises, he is obliged for a very few days to suspend the Deed of Trust, and during that time, as he has daily occasion to see me, he insists on my not leaving Town; for which reason you must excuse me, Dear Sir, from accepting at present the interview which you desire, at Beriton.

PROSPECTS OF FUTURE EASE.

Our plan is still the same as what seemed to be agreeable to your Wishes: To devote the Hampshire and Putney Estates to the payment of your debts, to convey the Copper and New River Shares to my use (on my giving up my present annuity of £300 p. annum) and to reserve the Buckinghamshire Estate for your support. Mr. Scott's £900 will be ready on the signing the Deeds,

and we can *now* make out so good a title to Putney, that the disposal of it will be a matter of neither delay nor difficulty.

The only proposed alteration was that you should allow me to have the nominal possession of the Buckinghamshire Estate, subject to pay You the whole real profits of it in the form of an annuity to you, and the Estate itself chargeable with Mrs. Gibbon's jointure. The very harsh Reception this proposal has met with from you has given me the deepest concern, as I am conscious of the rectitude of my intentions & still persuaded of the propriety of the measure. My motives could be only such as were both fair & even kind. The nominal property of land could afford me no pleasure, the *real management* of it must be attended with some trouble. I am willing, nay desirous, to put it absolutely out of my power to sell, mortgage, or alienate the smallest portion of it, and wish to bind myself by the severest ties that the Law can invent, to pay you regularly half yearly, a method which must be easy to you and may sometimes be inconvenient to me – But I shall proceed no farther on a Subject which appears so disagreeable to you; I hope indeed I have the less occasion to do it, as Mr. Scott's last letter must have cleared up some passages of his first, which did not strike you immediately in their true meaning.

I shall not, Dear Sir, swell this letter, with any vain protestations. I now see the fairest prospect of future ease and tranquillity. During the course of this unfortunate transaction I have endeavoured to have the approbation of my own conscience,

and of our real friends Mr. Porten and Mr. Scott. I flatter myself that I shall one day obtain yours.

I am, Dear Sir,

Most truly yours and Mrs. G.'s,

E. Gibbon.

62.

To his Father

Pall Mall, March the 22nd, 1769.

Dear Sir,

It is impossible for me to express how much your last letter surprized and grieved me; as well from the particular contents of it, as from the general strain of resentment & dissatisfaction which runs thro' the whole. To be accused of neglect, of indifference, of unjust insinuations are reproaches, which I can only bear because I am conscious of not having deserved them. I wish to look forwards, & if at any time I look back, it is only where such a retrospect, however unpleasant, becomes necessary.

Our Deed of Trust has ever been considered by us all as the Great Basis of our future conduct, & Mr. Porten, by our mutual consent. We were to empower them to sell the Hampshire and Bucks Estates, & to reconvey to us the Remainder (after payment of Debts, &c.) on certain conditions, which have been more than once explained. Such was the clear sense of this Deed, which I thought had been long since understood by us all. Indeed to put that sense into a Legal form was not in our power. Southouse is doing that, and it was thought as necessary as it is usual, that the Attorney's work should be revised by a Lawyer of some

note, Mr. Pechell, a Master in Chancery and particular friend of Mr. Porten. To these four persons only, the two Trustees, one Attorney and one Council, has the affair been exposed.

HIS FATHER'S SCHEME IMPRACTICABLE.

With regard to my possessing the Buckinghamshire Estate in fee, irrevocably charged with your annuity and Mrs. G.'s jointure; it was what, after the maturest consideration & the most disinterested advice, I cannot depart from. Should I ever be idiot enough to sell it whilst so heavily burdened, no such act could in the least affect your settled annuity or Mrs. G.'s jointure. I am however willing to give you my word of honor, that I will never sell or mortgage any part of it during your life; and that I will immediately make a Will, by which (supposing I should die without children before you) I leave the Estate to you in fee simple. If any legal restraints can be devised, (other than such as make me for ever a meer life Tenant) I will consent to them with pleasure: I will do more, I will try to discover them.

So far, Dear Sir, from neglecting our immediate occasion for money, the Trustees are impowered to borrow whatever sums may be wanted before the Estates can be disposed of. But I must add that till the Deed is executed nothing can be done, and that you are therefore the Cause of the Delays with which you reproach us. I am the more sensible of a speedy dispatch as the Chancery affair cannot be put off much longer.

*I am, Dear Sir,
Most truly yours,
E. Gibbon.*

63.

To his Father

London, March the 31st, 1769.

Dear Sir,

According to your request I communicated your last proposals to our common friends. I must acknowledge that we all discovered many strong and almost insuperable difficulties in it; many of which related even to your own comfort and happiness, which will ever be a very principal consideration. But I shall not at present trouble you with our objections; as we should not have time to execute this new scheme, however eligible it might be; at present every thing is nearly finished. The Hampshire Deed is almost engrossed, the B[uckinghamshire] is now before Council, and I can venture to assure you that in the course of next week, I shall be able to write in order to fix the positive day for your's and Mrs. G.'s coming up. Should we now adopt your Proposal, every thing must begin again *de novo*, and several weeks would elapse before we should be reinstated in our present situation.

With regard to your last questions, I can now positively say that neither household furniture nor stock are comprized in the Deed, tho' we expect and depend on your word of honor, that the latter, and such of the former as is not wanted, will be faithfully applied by yourself to the same common purposes.

I believe I mentioned some time ago, that the particulars of Debts will not be described in the Deed of Trust, but in a private Schedule referred to therein. You will be so good, Dear Sir, as to prepare and bring the materials of it with you. The List you gave me at Beriton must already have suffered some alterations, both as Debtor and Creditor. Besides Clarke's Debt is as yet unknown. – Indeed it will be necessary that previous to your coming up, you should send the Deeds of Copyhold (if any) and College Holding which we have not at present. We should likewise be glad to hear your sentiments still further with regard to Putney. The practice of Advertising is universal, and it is in vain to think of secrecy.

I am, Dear Sir,

Most truly your's & Mrs. G.'s,

E. G.

64.

To his Father

April 13th, 1769.

Dear Sir,

Mr. Southouse whom I saw yesterday tells me, that I may desire the favor of your company, with Mrs. G.'s, next Thursday evening. He thinks that Friday and Saturday mornings will suffice for our immediate business. As to the place, I should be glad to know whether you choose my lodgings or wish me to look out for any other place. – Should any thing (which I do not foresee) happen to defer your coming up, I shall take care to give you timely intelligence. – It is very difficult to say any thing positive as to money till we have finished writings, &c. However as to the C. affair, Mr. Scott will answer for it.

Mrs. G. distresses me every way. – I am truly concerned that it should be necessary for her to come up, at a time when I can easily conceive the state of her mind & spirits; but I am still more embarrassed from her generous obstinacy. The sum of her Jointure is left in blank. Should she still object to the encrease of her Jointure, I must leave it as an engagement not of law, but of honor, of gratitude and of inclination.

You may depend on another letter by Sunday, till when

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

65.

To his Father

April 18th, 1769.

Dear Sir,

I waited till to-night before I took Lodgings, as I was not sure of your intentions. To-morrow morning I shall look out for one. I apprehend Suffolk Street or that neighbourhood will be at once private and convenient. – You will of course come in by Hyde Park Corner, and my servant shall attend at my lodgings at Mr. Taylor's, Grocer's, opposite to the Duke of Cumberland's, Pall Mall, to conduct you to your lodgings, where I shall immediately attend you. I should think that you had better not arrive till towards five o'clock, when Sir R. will be gone to dinner.

I am, Dear Sir,

Most truly yours,

E. G.

66.

To his Stepmother

Thursday night, Cocoa Tree.

Dear Madam,

HIS FATHER'S FAILING EYESIGHT.

I was a good deal alarmed with your letter of yesterday, and as much pleased with that of to-day, which dispelled my uneasiness: before you receive this I flatter myself that my father will be quite recovered. I have seen Wentzel,¹²³ who very obligingly took my guinea to tell me that he could tell me nothing about my father's case without seeing him. On that head he was very cool and very fair; a decay of the optic nerve, he said, was sometimes tho' seldom to be removed; as to the opinions of our surgeons he treated them with infinite contempt.

I am glad that our Meeting was attended, that things may end with a good grace. Sir Simeon has been so dangerously ill with the gout, that I have not yet settled my resignation. Henry will attend next Tuesday.

I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly yours,

E. G.

67.

To his Father

London, June the 1st, 1769.

Dear Sir,

I am sorry that I cannot give you more pleasing accounts of our progress in the Putney affairs, but we find people very cool, and tho' many applications are made, yet nobody as yet has spoke seriously and to the point. We attribute this general slowness in a great measure to the vague description of an Estate seven miles from London, &c., and heartily wish you would allow us to particularize place, name, &c. Boissier has been over to S.'s at Wimbledon. It plainly appears that he wishes to buy, but to buy cheap, and that, notwithstanding his polite professions, he will do all in his power to keep off all other purchasers. Considering all these rubs, we could very much wish that you would set about giving us the particulars of the Hampshire Estates, that the summer may not steal away upon us, without any things being done.

I am much concerned to hear from Mrs. Gibbon that your Operation has not produced any good effects, tho' we could hardly expect any alteration in so short a time. As soon as we see a little more clearly into what can or cannot be done as to Putney, I propose coming down, as I wish to see you and Mrs. Gibbon,

and I am sure London has now no charms for me.

I am, Dear Sir,

Most truly yours,

E. G.

We wish to know upon what terms your Putney Tenants who have no leases (Bateman, I think, & Stewart) hold their land and what they pay.

P.S. – If you think I can be of more service at Beriton than in London, I will attend you as soon as our Militia meeting is over, for till then I think I cannot decently be in Hampshire.

68.

To his Stepmother

London, June 22nd, 1769.

Dear Madam,

Before I received your last letter I was displeased with myself for having been so long silent, and yet I should have been still more displeased if I had wrote, as I could say nothing that was agreeable, nothing but what must lower my father's spirits as they every day do mine. Tho' we have had many enquiries about Putney, yet nothing like an offer has presented itself. We must therefore think of Beriton, and tho' I do not wish to complain, I must say that we are all surprized at my father's seeming indifference on that occasion. We feel for the situation both of his eyes & his spirits, but still we are surprized. – Things indeed draw so near a crisis that some resolution must be taken. Mr. Scott & Mr. Porten propose entering upon it next Week, and think my presence necessary. As soon as something is settled you may depend either on seeing me at Beriton, or at least on hearing every particular which can interest the common cause.

I am, Dear Madam,

Most truly yours & my father's,

E. G.

69.
To his Father

Pall Mall, August the 17th, 1769.

Dear Sir,

We have agreed with Mr. Wood for the £8500, the rents and profits till Michaelmas excepted. The writings are sent to his Lawyer's to-day, and as there is no difficulty in the title, we may look upon the affair as concluded. Our friends were clearly of opinion that the measure is prudent, and, every thing considered, I could not avoid being of the same opinion. But I shall say the less on that head as they propose writing themselves very soon. They wish me to remain here till Wood's Lawyer has signified his approbation. I hope to be with you Sunday, as I find myself in a far greater solitude in Town than at Beriton.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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