

EDWARD GIBBON

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

Эдвард Гиббон

**Private Letters of Edward Gibbon
(1753-1794) Volume 2 (of 2)**

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Edward Gibbon

Private Letters of Edward Gibbon (1753-1794) Volume 2 (of 2)

418.

To his Stepmother

Bentinck Street, July 3rd, 1781.

Dear Madam,

Though your kind impatience might make the time appear tedious, there has been no other delay in my business, than the necessary forms of Election. My new constituents of Lymington obligingly chose me in my absence. I took my seat last Wednesday, and am now so old a member that I begin to complain of the heat and length of the Session. So much for Parliament. With regard to the board of trade, I am ignorant of your friend's meaning, and possibly she may be so herself. There has not been (to my knowledge) the most distant idea of my leaving it, and indeed there are few places within the compass of any rational ambition that I should like so well.

In a few days, as soon as we are relieved from public business, I shall go down to my Country house for the summer. Do not stare. I say my Country house. Notwithstanding Caplin's very diligent enquiries, I have not been able to please myself with anything in the neighbourhood of London, and have therefore hired for three months a small pleasant house at Brighthelmstone. I flatter myself that in that admirable sea-air, with the vicinity of Sheffield place, and a proper mixture of light study in the morning and good company in the evening, the summer may roll away not disagreeably. – As I know your tender apprehensions, I promise you not to bathe in the sea without due preparation and advice.

Mrs. Porten has chosen, not for health but pleasure, a different sea-shore: she has been some weeks at Margate, and will scarcely return to town before my departure. I sincerely sympathize in all the melancholy scenes which have afflicted your sensibility, and am more particularly concerned about poor Miss Gould, to whom I wish to express the thoughts and hopes of friendship on this melancholy occasion. Lady Miller's¹ sudden death has excited some attention even in this busy World, her foibles are mentioned with general regard. Adieu, Dear Madam, and do not let Mrs. Ravaud tempt you into Elysium: we are tolerably well here.

I am

Ever yours,

E. Gibbon.

¹ Anna, Lady Miller (1741-1781), author of *Letters from Italy, by an Englishwoman* (1776), a verse-writer and a well-known character at Bath, held a literary salon at her villa at Batheaston. She held, writes Walpole, January 15, 1775, "a Parnassus-fair every Thursday, gives out rhymes and themes, and all the flux of quality at Bath contend for the prizes." An antique vase, purchased in Italy, was placed on a modern altar decorated with laurel, and each guest was invited to place in the urn an original composition in verse. The author of the one declared to be the best was crowned by Lady Miller with a wreath of myrtle. Selections from these compositions were published at intervals. "Nothing here," said Miss Burney in 1780, "is more tonish than to visit Lady Miller." Lady Miller died suddenly at Bristol Hot Wells on June 24, 1781. Her husband, Sir John Riggs Miller, died in 1798.

419.
To his Stepmother

Bentinck Street, July 9th, 1781.

Dear Madam,

Nothing but my absence (on a visit to Mr. Jenkinson² in Surrey) should have prevented me from writing by the *first* post to remove those fears which could be suggested only by too exquisite a sensibility. I am well and happy; the modest expression of *tolerably* was intended to express a very high degree of content, and I most sincerely assure you that my journey to Brighthelmstone is in search not of health but of amusement and society.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. Gibbon.

² Probably C. Jenkinson, M.P. for Saltash and Secretary at War; afterwards Earl of Liverpool.

420.
To his Stepmother

Brighthelmstone, July 26th, 1781.

Dear Madam,

HIS HOUSE AT BRIGHTON.

After a short visit to Sheffield I came to this place last Sunday evening, and think it will answer my expectations. My house, which is not much bigger than yours, has a full prospect of the sea and enjoys a temperate climate in the most sultry days. The air gives health, spirits and a ravenous appetite. I walk sufficiently morning and evening, lounge in the middle of the day on the Steyne, booksellers' shops, &c., and by the help of a pair of horses can make more distant excursions. The society is good and easy, and though I have a large provision of books for my amusement, I shall not undertake any deep studies or laborious compositions this summer. You will rejoyce, I am sure, in hearing so favourable an account of my situation, and I wish I could propose to you to share it with me.

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

421.
To his Stepmother

Brighthelmstone, August 24th, 1781.

Dear Madam,

Of all mortals I have the least right to complain of a friend's silence, but yours has been so *long* and so *unnatural* that I am seriously alarmed. If you can assure me by a line that it does not proceed from want of health or spirits, I shall be perfectly at ease. Notwithstanding our princely visitors (the Cumberlands) who are troublesome, I like the air and society so well that I shall certainly stay here at least till the end of September. Adieu.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

422.
To Lord Sheffield

Brooke's, Thursday Evening, 1781.

What I *hear* would fill volumes, what I *know* does not amount to half a line. – All is expectation: but I fear that our enemies are more active than our friend. *He*³ is still at Bushy; a meeting is held next Saturday morn at eleven o'clock, but I think you need not hurry yourself. According to Louisa's phrase, I will be your grandfather. The black Patriot⁴ is now walking and declaiming in this room with a train at his heels. Adieu. No news.

E. G.

If there is another meeting Sunday evening you shall find a note. I have not seen Lord Loughborough, but understand he has preached war and any coalition against the Minister.

³ Lord North resided at Bushy, Lady North having been appointed in July, 1771, Keeper and Ranger of Bushy Park.

⁴ Probably C. J. Fox.

423.
To Lord Sheffield

1781.

Mrs. Williams, No. 8, Downing Street, will embrace Lord S., Mr. Purden and Co. for two Guineas and a half per week. The stables and *Coach houses* will be empty, and Mr. Collier will provide the needful refreshments. – Sir R[ichard] W[orsley] has opened the trenches in Doctors Commons, and cryed down his wife's credit with tradesmen, &c. I supped last night at Lord L[oughborough]'s with Mrs. Abington,⁵ – a judge and an actress; what would Sir Roger Hill⁶ say? Dinner will be on table at five o'clock next Monday in Bentinck Street.

Saturday night. Brookes's absolutely alone. The town even yet very empty.

⁵ Fanny Barton, Mrs. Abington, first appeared on the stage at the Haymarket in 1755. Her great success was, however, gained at Drury Lane, after her return from Dublin, from 1764 onwards. She was the first Lady Teazle, and acted Ophelia to Garrick's Hamlet. She died in 1815.

⁶ Sir Roger Hill was a Baron of the Court of Exchequer at the time of the Commonwealth, and therefore, it is suggested, would have shrunk from contact with a player. He was an ancestor of Lady Sheffield.

424.
To Lord Sheffield

Friday, two o'clock, 7th Sept., 1781.

FRENCH AND SPANISH FLEETS IN THE CHANNEL.

Lord Hillsborough⁷ tells me that himself and Co. believe that the combined fleets are gone into Brest. Expresses that left Bristol yesterday, and Plymouth, Wednesday, cannot give the least account of them, and a Portuguese ship from Lisbon the 23rd last month, beat several days between Scilly and the Land's end without seeing or hearing of them. However, at all events more than twenty-five swift sailing vessels had been sent out to meet and warn the West India fleets. Adieu.

We shall meet at Brighton on Monday.

E. G.

⁷ Wills Hill, second Viscount Hillsborough, in 1789 created first Marquis of Downshire (1718-1793). In November, 1779, he succeeded Lord Weymouth as Secretary of State for the northern department, and held that office till the resignation of the Government in March, 1782. Walpole, writing on September 11, says the combined French and Spanish fleets were at the entrance of the Channel, "where they certainly will not venture to stay long."

425.
To Lady Sheffield

Bentinck Street, Friday evening, ten o'clock, 1781.

*Oh, ho! I have given you the slip; saved thirty miles, by proceeding directly this day from Eartham to town, and am now *comfortably* seated in my library, in *my own* easy chair, and before *my own* fire; a style which you understand, though it is unintelligible to your Lord. The town is empty; but I am surrounded with a thousand old acquaintance of all ages and characters, who are ready to answer a thousand questions which I am impatient to ask. I shall not easily be tired of their Company; yet I still remember, and will honourably execute, my promise of visiting you at Brighton about the middle of next month. I have seen nobody, nor learned anything, in four hours of a town life; but I can inform you, that Lady * * * [erased] is now the declared mistress of Prince Henry of Prussia, whom she encountered at Spa; and that the Emperor has invited this amiable Couple to pass the winter at Vienna; fine encouragement for married women who behave themselves properly! I spent a very pleasant day in the little paradise of Eartham, and the hermit expressed a desire (no vulgar compliment) to see and to know Lord S. Adieu. I cordially embrace, &c.*

426.
To his Stepmother

Bentinck Street, October 6th, 1781.

Dear Madam,

I have meditated a letter many posts, and the bell of Saturday evening now admonishes or rather reproaches. Allow me only to say that I am perfectly well, and expect very soon some more lines. The season no longer invites me to Brighthelmston, but the Sheffields, &c., insist on my passing another fortnight there, which will carry me (as I shall not go till Sunday seven-night) to the end of the month.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. Gibbon.

427.
To Lord Sheffield

Bentinck Street, Oct. 21st, 1781.

The last ten years by your advice I ensured my farm buildings at Buriton and no accident happened. This year after your example I have ceased my insurance, and – read Hugonin's two letters, which I have just received and answered. I thank him for undertaking the necessary work, press for Harris's immediate resignation, and propose to weigh during the Winter the choice of tenants and the scale of repairs. The present rent is only £50. – If any ideas occur to you, communicate your instructions, and *he* will receive them with deference, but the subject makes *me heavy*. The time is ill chosen. If you go to Coventry you must pass through town – when? But I have *almost* done with Hampton Court. I may see Lord Beauchamp, but do not understand that I have anything to say to him from you. His brother may be a tolerable accession to the Party,⁸ and let me tell you it is no contemptible one. I mean the party of the H. of C. If we ever meet at S. P. you will introduce me to the Lady of whom I hear a very amiable character. Adieu. I arrived this morn from Eden's. Lord Loughborough does not arrive this week. From Cambridge I understand that you have suffered by the fatigues of the Camp.

Inform me of your health.

E. G.

⁸ The Hon. William Conway, afterwards Lord Sheffield's colleague in the representation of Coventry.

428.
To his Stepmother

Brighthelmstone, Nov. 2nd, 1781.

Dear Madam,

If I had not been fortified by the friendly assurances which you sent me, I should indeed have been alarmed by the melancholy account that I heard of your health as soon as I arrived in Sussex. Since that time (an interval somewhat too long) I have been gradually better satisfied with the frequent and favourable dispatches from Bath, and I have now the satisfaction to find (however I might suspect your own friendly dissimulation) that even in Mr. H.'s apprehensive fancy you have in a great measure recovered that situation which I wish you long to preserve.

BRIGHTON IN NOVEMBER.

*I returned to this place with Lord and Lady Sheffield, with the design of passing two or three weeks in a situation which had so highly delighted me. But how vain are all sublunary hopes! I had forgot that there is some difference between the sunshine of August and the cold fogs (though we have uncommon good weather) of November. Instead of my beautiful sea-shore, I am confined to a dark lodging in the middle of the town; for the place is still full, and our time is now spent in the dull imitation of a London life. To compleat my misfortunes, Lord S. was hastily ordered to Canterbury, to suppress smuggling, and I was left almost alone with My Lady, in the servile state of a married man. But he returns to-day, and I hope to be seated in my own library by the middle of next week. However, you will not be sorry to hear that I have refreshed myself by a very *idle* summer, and indeed a much idler and more pleasant winter than the house of Commons will ever allow me to enjoy again.*

I hear of no public changes of administration, but you are perhaps already informed that a grand officer of my household (Mrs. Ford) at length retires on a pension, her wages for her life, with which she seems well contented, though I am ignorant of her plans. Mrs. Porten opened the business to her, but I have not yet sustained the last tender interview which I really dislike very much. Caplin assumes with pleasure the office of prime minister, and we hope that some lessons at White's will turn the housemaid (Edward's sister) into a good Cook for private ordinary days.

I had almost forgot Mr. Hayley; ungratefully enough, since I really past a very simple, but entertaining day with him. His place, though small, is elegant as his mind, which I value much more highly. And Adam might be happy if Eve had never been admitted into the paradise of Eartham. She is resolved (the air of Eartham after fifteen years' residence is found to be too cold) to eat another Bath apple, which as you properly apprehend will not be very wholesome either for her fame or his fortune. *Mrs. H. wrote a melancholy story of an American mother, a friend of her friend, who in a short time had lost three sons: one killed by the savages, one run mad from the fright at that accident, and the third taken at sea, now in England a prisoner in Forton hospital. For *him* something might perhaps be done. Your humanity will prompt you to obtain from Mrs. H. a more accurate account of names, dates, and circumstances; but you will prudently suppress my request, lest I should raise hopes which it may not be in my power to gratify. Lady S. begs to send her kindest Compliments to you.* The persons of Bath by whom and to whom I wish to be remembered are Mrs. Ravaud and the Goulds. What is become of poor Sir John Miller? I foresee very little prospect of visiting Bath at Christmas, but I depend, perhaps with too much confidence, on next Easter.

*I am, dear Madam,
Ever yours.*

429.
To Lord Sheffield

Bentinck Street, ¼ before five, 1781.

HIS ADVICE IN A QUARREL.

I have seen the General. You are both wrong; he first in lending your papers without *special* leave, and then in the real or apparent slight of your messages; you in the serious anger which you expressed on so trifling a business. Unless you wish that this slight scratch should inflame into an incurable sore, embrace the lucky opportunity of his illness and confinement, which will excuse your dignity and should assuage your resentment. Call on him this evening, give and receive, between jest and earnest, a volley of *damns*, and then let the whole affair be no more remembered than it deserves. *Dixi et liberavi animam meam.*

430.
To Lord Sheffield

Bentinck Street, November 20th, 1781.

I came yesterday from Jenkinson's (near Croydon), where I had spent two very agreeable days. We all tremble on the edge of a precipice, and whatever may be the event, the American war seems now to be reduced to very narrow compass both of time and place.

This morning Caplin was sent to reconnoitre: he reports that the *stables* are empty, but as the *coach-house* is full, the close alliance between carriage and horses will render the former circumstance of little avail. Nothing can be had in Parliament Street or the large streets adjoining except one whole house at four Guineas per week. In Fludyer and Downing-streets several indifferent and gloomy lodgings are at your service, but as I should prefer a Pall Mall, &c. situation, Caplin has paused till you send him more peremptory commands. – Your Monday dinner will be ready at five, and Adam, perhaps Batt, will be of the party.

Your Greeks were not carried from Brighton through carelessness, but as you are *seriously* absurd about lending books, I have directed Caplin to send them to S. P. per coach. By way of revenge I may inform you that I have now purchased a copy of Stephen's Greek Poets compared to which yours is very little more than waste paper. Adieu.

I embrace my Lady. I do not approve of her being called *Cat*.

E. G.

431.
To his Stepmother

H. of Commons, December 6th, 1781.

Dear Madam,

I wish most sincerely that it were in my power to give you or myself any comfort on the present state of public affairs, which is indeed deplorable and I fear *hopeless*. But at last I can send you a favourable account of myself: the late, hot, melancholy hours of the house of Commons,⁹ which seem to oppress every body round me, have no effect on my health or spirits, and I feel myself heartily tired (*ennuyé*) without being in the least fatigued. Of Mrs. P. I shall say nothing, as by this time you will have seen her brother and his wife, who set out this morning for Bath. A month without business will be a new and wholesome scene for Sir Stanier. I hear nothing, and want to hear something of Mrs. Hayley. You have heard of Lady Worsley; your old acquaintance Sir Richard labours with copious materials for a divorce.

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

Thanks for the Carpet.

⁹ Parliament met November 27, 1781, and sat till December 20.

432.
To his Stepmother

Bentinck Street, December 26th, 1781.

Dear Madam,

Will you excuse my only transmitting the *needful*, with the necessary assurance that I am well and happy, and the unnecessary addition, that I wish you long to remain so? I envy Sir Stanier and Lady Porten the pleasure which I shall not enjoy till Easter: pray give my love to them. I pity poor Delacour and his friends, above all his Christian wife or daughter. Give my compliments to Mrs. Hayley, and tell her that both song and music have been much applauded. Will she accept this notice as a letter? Adieu, Dear Madam. Believe me,

Most truly yours,
E. Gibbon.

433.
To Lady Sheffield

Bentinck Street, Dec. 29, 1781.

NOISE AND NONSENSE OF PARLIAMENT.

As Sheffalina has modernized herself by securing an unknown Cicisbeo, I have a great mind to propose a *partie quarrée* which might be easily furnished from Ickworth. If that project is rejected and I must make a solitary visit, I shall still obey the gracious mandate, but instead of the third day of the year (may it be more auspicious) 1782, I must delay my attendance till about the 8th or even the tenth, which will still allow me eight or ten days of fresh air and friendly converse, before I again descend into the noise and nonsense of the Pandemonium. At present we are as quiet in London as you can be in Sussex. Mrs. Stuart's shocking adventure is the only event that enlivens conversation; the family whisper insanity (a terrible resource), and strive without success to persuade that the whole scene passed only in her imagination – yet she certainly passed the whole night abroad. I did suppose that the Baron would be tired of his home in a week, but as this visit to the Regiment will abridge the remaining interval he may possibly support it. I hear nothing more of the house in D. S., but still believe that the minister will retire before your superior majesty;¹⁰ the last time I saw him he expressed great apprehension of your displeasure. I too am in pursuit of a house, in Harley Street, somewhat further in the country than my own: it has but one fault, a steep narrow staircase, but where must we seek (except at –) either a house or a wife without *one* fault? I embrace the Angels, Princesses, &c. I believe the elder had rather be a Princess than an Angel. Adieu.

Le Grand Gibbon.

¹⁰ Lord North, while his own house was under repair, occupied Lord Sheffield's house in Downing Street.

434.
To his Stepmother

Jan. 23rd, 1782.

Dear Madam,

I am not sorry that the indiscretion of certain female correspondents should give the opportunity of sending you a very fair but not flattering picture of myself. – It is very true that I have had a fit of the Gout; but if the name of agreeable can ever be applied to the ugly monster, my Gout has deserved it on this occasion. It lasted on the whole no more than ten days, attacked only one foot, was attended with scarcely any fever, loss of appetite, or lowness of spirits, and has left me in perfect health both of mind and body. – Our busy scene commences to-morrow;¹¹ and I am now entering into the hurry of the winter: but I will write again soon.

I am
Most truly yours,
E. G.

¹¹ Parliament met January 21, 1782.

435.
To his Stepmother

March 2nd, 1782.

Dear Madam,

I am much afraid that I have lost all credit by repeated promises and repeated neglects, yet I still persuade myself that you are glad to hear, though in two lines, of my health and good spirits, and that you will postpone more ample conversations to the Easter Holydays, when I can talk more in an hour than I could write in a month. Perhaps I should even have delayed this scrap of an Epistle, were I not apprehensive that the parliamentary events of this week would have given you some uneasiness both on a private and public account. Though I am not in the secret, especially of the adverse party, yet I know more than it is proper to trust to paper.¹²

The situation of the administration, though dangerous, is not *absolutely* desperate, and with some concessions I still think that Lord N. may survive the impending storm of the next fortnight. At all events, if we fall (for, inconsiderable as I am, I am sure of being one of the first victims) I shall meet my fate with resolution. — I remember you asked me an age ago about a report of my having got a house in Harley Street and a wreck of wine on the Coast of Sussex: the former was a fruitless negotiation, the latter related to my aunt's manor of Newhaven, but the wine is contested by the King's officers, and the litigation, if pursued, may cost her more than the object is worth. Adieu. My Dear Madam, on every account I am impatient for the Easter holydays.

I am
Ever yours,
E. G.

¹² Lord North resigned on March 20, and the new ministry, with the Marquis of Rockingham as first Lord of the Treasury, was finally settled on Sunday, March 24. The new Cabinet consisted of the following ministers: —

436.
To his Stepmother

March 20th, 1782.

My Dear Madam,

FALL OF LORD NORTH'S MINISTRY.

All is now over, and Lord North is no more. This day when the armies in the H. of C. were ready to engage, he gave solemn notice that the whole administration was dissolved, and the House has adjourned till Monday next to allow time for the new arrangements. Complaints are vain and useless for the past, and futurity is dark and dismal. It is my intention, unless I should be detained either by *serious* business, or by some threatening symptoms of the Gout, to visit Bath about Sunday sennight, when we may discuss freely and fully the strange events of the times. Till then Adieu. Remember me to Mrs. Hayley. The Eliots whom I see *sometimes* are well, and as you may suppose triumphant.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

437.
To his Stepmother

Bentinck Street, March 28th, 1782.

Dear Madam,

In our common disappointment you will be pleased to hear that the Gout has totally left me, and that it is only the extreme shortness of our adjournment and the busy uncertainty of the times that have prevented my Easter visit to Bath. I am satisfied that Bath is very pleasant in the months of May and June, and you may be assured that I will come down, as soon as our fate is determined and the busyness of parliament has begun to subside. Pray give my compliments to Mrs. Hayley. I fear she will be gone before my arrival.

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

438.
To his Stepmother

May 4th, 1782.

Dear Madam,

HIS LOSS OF OFFICE.

The thunder-bolt has fallen, and I have received one of the circular letters from Lord Shelburne to inform me that the board of trade will be suppressed and that his Majesty has no further occasion for my services. I have been prepared for this event and can support it with firmness. I enjoy health, friends, reputation, and a perpetual fund of domestic amusement: I am not without resources, and my best resource, which shall never desert me, is in the cheerfulness and tranquillity of a mind which in any place and in any situation can always secure its own independent happiness. The business of the House of Commons still continues, and indeed encreases, and though I am heartily tired of the scene, some serious reasons prevent me from retiring at the present season. Yet I still cast a longing eye towards Bath, and though I find it difficult, or rather impossible, to fix the moment of my summer visit, I can most sincerely promise that it will be the first use which I shall make of my freedom. As I have only *one* object, it will be perfectly indifferent to me whether the place be full or empty, dully or lively. Mrs. Holroyd, I suppose, has found, and Mrs. Hayley has left, you. Are you acquainted with Lady Eliza Foster,¹³ a bewitching animal? You have heard of my Gouts, they are vanished, and I feel myself five and twenty years old. Can you say as much? I hope you can. Adieu. Recommend me to the Goulds.

I am

Most truly yours,

E. G.

Next Wednesday I conclude my forty-fifth year, and in spite of the changes of Kings and Ministers, I am very glad that I was born.

¹³ Lady Elizabeth Hervey, daughter of Frederick, Earl of Bristol, and Bishop of Derry, married, in 1776, John Thomas Foster. Her father, says Walpole to Mann in December, 1783, though a rich man, allowed her to be governess to a natural daughter of the Duke of Devonshire. Lady Elizabeth Foster, writes Miss Burney (*Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay*, vol. v. p. 225), "has the character of being so alluring, that Mrs. Holroyd told me it was the opinion of Mr. Gibbon no man could withstand her, and that, if she chose to beckon the Lord Chancellor from his woolsack, in full sight of the world, he could not resist obedience." Lady Elizabeth, who, in October, 1809, married as her second husband William, fifth Duke of Devonshire, died March 30, 1824.

439.
To his Stepmother

Bentinck Street, May 29th, 1782.

Dear Madam,

From the very strong expressions of *anxious expectation* and frequent disappointments, I must think that I am much more guilty than I conceived myself to be on account of my silence. Your apparent indulgence had taught me to believe that you were accustomed to my faults, that you kindly forgave them, and that without the aid of the pen or the post your own heart would inform you of the sentiments of mine. Since my last letter nothing has happened, indeed nothing can happen to affect my situation: in the midst of a plague (such is the present influenza) my health and spirits are perfectly good, and in that tranquil state Saturdays and *Mondays* pass away without waking me from my gentle slumber. Even my curiosity is not excited, as I have frequent opportunities of hearing circumstantial and impartial accounts of the only object that interests me at Bath.

You ask with some anxiety when you may hope to see me. I know not what to say. Though I always foresee and recollect with heartfelt satisfaction the time which I spend at the Belvidere, yet the convenient season of my visit seems to retire before me. Public events have immoderately protracted the present session of Parliament; it will certainly continue the whole of June and a considerable part of July, and as it was my intention to attend it to the last, I began to think that you would excuse me if I delayed my journey (which would suit me far better) till the beginning of Autumn. But if you have any particular reasons that make you wish to see me sooner, say it in ten lines, and I will set off in ten days. I rejoice in every subject of your joy both private and public, and I am better pleased to hear that you are free from pain than that Rodney has destroyed a French fleet.¹⁴ Alas! had he done it two months sooner our poor administration would have stood. Every person of every party is provoked with our new Governors for taking the truncheon from the hand of a victorious Admiral, in whose place they have sent a Commander without experience or abilities.¹⁵ To-morrow they will be exposed to a small fire in the H. of C. on that popular topic. Adieu, Dear Madam, in this sickly season all my acquaintance (masters, mistresses and servants) are laid up except *young* Mrs. Porten and myself.

I am
Most truly yours,
E. G.

¹⁴ On April 12, 1782, Admiral Sir George Rodney "broke the line," and defeated the French under the Comte de Grasse in the West Indies, the French Admiral and his flagship the *Ville de Paris*, the largest ship afloat and the present of the city of Paris to Louis XVI., being taken. "The late Ministry are thus robbed of a victory that ought to have been theirs; but the mob do not look into the almanac" (Walpole to Sir H. Mann, May 18, 1782).

¹⁵ Rodney was superseded by Admiral Pigot, who was one of the Lords of the Admiralty in the new administration.

440.
To his Stepmother

July 3rd, 1782.

Dear Madam,

DEATH OF LORD ROCKINGHAM.

*I hope you have not had a moment's uneasiness about the delay of my Midsummer letter. Whatever may happen, you may rest fully secure, that the materials of it shall always be *found*. But on this occasion I have missed four or five posts; postponing, as usual, from morning to the evening bell, which now rings, till it has occurred to me, that it might not be amiss to inclose the two essential lines, if I only added that the Influenza has been known to me only by the report of others. Lord Rockingham¹⁶ is at last dead; a good man, though a feeble minister: his successor is not yet named, and divisions in the Cabinet are suspected. If Lord Shelburne should be the Man, as I think he will, the friends of his predecessor will quarrel with him before Christmas. At all events, I foresee much tumult and strong opposition, from which I should be very glad to extricate myself, by quitting the H. of C. with honour and without loss. Whatever you may hear, I believe there is not the least intention of dissolving Parliament, which would indeed be a rash and dangerous measure.

I hope you like Mr. Hayley's poem;¹⁷ he rises with his subject, and since Pope's death, I am satisfied that England has not seen so happy a mixture of strong sense and flowing numbers. Are you not delighted with his address to his mother? I understand that She was, in plain prose, every thing that he speaks her in verse. This summer I shall stay in town, and work at my trade, till I make some Holydays for my Bath excursion. Lady S. is at Brighton, and he lives under tents, like the wild Arabs; so that my Country house is shut up. Kitty Porten is gone on a fortnight's frolick to lodge at Windsor.

*I am, Dear Madam,
Ever yours.*

¹⁶ The Marquis of Rockingham died July 2, 1782, aged fifty-two.

¹⁷ The poem to which Gibbon alludes is the *Essay on Epic Poetry in five Epistles to the Rev. Mr. Mason* (London, 1782). Hayley's mother was Mary Yates (1718-1775), who married Thomas Hayley in 1740, and died in 1775. The lines to which Gibbon alludes occur in the fourth epistle (ll. 439 to end). "Nature, who deck'd thy form with Beauty's flowers, Exhausted on thy soul her finer powers; Taught it with all her energy to feel Love's melting softness, Friendship's fervid zeal, The generous purpose, and the active thought, With Charity's diffusive spirit fraught; There all the best of mental gifts she plac'd, Vigor of judgment, purity of Taste, Superior parts, without their spleenful leaven, Kindness to Earth, and confidence in Heaven."

441.

To Lord Sheffield, at Coxheath Camp

Saturday night, Bentinck Street, 1782.

*I sympathise with your fatigues; yet Alexander, Hannibal, &c. have suffered hardships almost equal to yours. At such a moment it is disagreeable (besides laziness) to write, because every hour teems with a new lye. As yet, however, only Charles¹⁸ has formally resigned; but Lord John, Burke, Keppel, Lord Althorpe, &c. certainly follow; your Commander-in-chief stays, and they are furious against the Duke of Richmond.*¹⁹ Why will he not go out with Fox? said somebody; because, replies a friend, he does not like to *go out* with any man. *In short, three months of prosperity has dissolved a Phalanx, which had stood ten years' adversity. Next Tuesday, Fox will give his reasons, and possibly be encountered by Pitt, the new Secretary, or Chancellor, at three and twenty. The day will be rare and curious, and, if I were a light Dragoon, I would take a gallop on purpose to Westminster. Adieu. I hear the bell. How could I write before I knew where you dwelt?*

E. G.

¹⁸ On the death of Lord Rockingham, Fox endeavoured to force on the King, as the new Premier, the Duke of Portland, "a dull man, but a convenient block to hang Whigs on." Failing in his attempt, he resigned.

¹⁹ Lord John Cavendish and Lord Althorpe, two of the Lords of the Treasury, Burke, Paymaster-General, Lord Duncannon and the Hon. John Townshend, Lords of the Admiralty, retired with Fox. Lord Keppel and General Conway continued in office; also the Duke of Richmond, Fox's uncle.

442.
To Lord Sheffield

July 10th, 1782.

LORD SHELBURNE'S MINISTRY.

Authentic List. ²⁰

	{	Lord S[helburne].	
	{	W. Pitt, Chancellor [of the Exchequer].	
Treasury	{	James Grenville.	
	{	Richard Jackson.	
	{	Ed. Eliot, Junior, of Port Eliot.	
	{	Aubrey Duncannon	} Lord Keppel has
Admiralty	{	vice	} not yet resign'd
	{	Pratt Jack Townshend	}
Secretaries of	{	Lord Grantham.	
State	{	T. Townshend.	
— of War.		Sir George Young.	
Treasurer of Navy.		Barré remain.	
Paymaster.		Perhaps Advocate.	
Ireland.		Lord Temple.	

Yesterday *was* a rare day.

Vera Cop,
E. G.

²⁰ Parliament was prorogued on July 11 till December 5, 1782. Gibbon's list of the new Ministry is accurate, except that the Lord Advocate, the Hon. Henry Dundas (afterwards Lord Melville), became Treasurer of the Navy, *vice* Colonel Isaac Barré, who became Paymaster of the Forces. "Places are cheaper than mackerel," writes Lord Loughborough to his cousin William Eden, July 4, 1782 (*Lord Auckland's Journal and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 2).

443.
To Lord Sheffield

July 23rd, 1782.

The papers say you are at Coxheath. Write. Bad news from India; I am afraid that we have lost a ship and that Hyder has won a battle.²¹ None, therefore good, from Lord Howe since every day fortifies him.²² Within this last fortnight prodigious exertions by the Admiralty, till then they were fast asleep. The Advocate arrived last night, but has not *yet* accepted. To-morrow I visit Eden at his farm near Bromley. If you and my Lady could give me a meeting in a *house*, I would run down even for three or four days: but I do not admire canvass. Adieu.

E. G.

Aunt Hester seems to want some intelligence.

²¹ Gibbon probably refers to the defeat of Colonel Brathwaite in the Tanjore district (February, 1782), by Tippoo, Hyder's son, and M. Lally.

²² The combined French and Spanish fleets were collected in the Channel, intending to prevent the relief of Gibraltar and effect a junction with the Dutch. Lord Howe had already driven the Dutch into the Texel, and he now sailed to protect the Jamaica convoy, and watch the enemy, single ships being sent to reinforce him as they could be made ready. On September 11, Lord Howe sailed with a powerful fleet for the relief of Gibraltar, and landed his troops and stores October 13-18.

444.
To his Stepmother

August 10th, 1782.

Dear Madam,

A person whom you would scarcely suspect, General Conway as commander in Chief, is the real author of my silence, which as usual has insensibly lasted far beyond my first intentions. Lord Sheffield is a slave, his master's resolutions are obscure and fluctuating, and I have waited from post to post till he could mark some week for our meeting in Sussex, which might leave the rest of my time at liberty for my Bath expedition. Though I can obtain no satisfaction from him, I must not suffer another *Monday* to slide away without saying that I am alive, well, and unless the Arab should seize (*he* has no choice) that particular moment, in full expectation of gratifying my wishes by a visit to Bath about the 20th of next month. I flatter myself that I shall find you not affected by the long winter which we still feel, though a friend of mine, an Astronomer, assured me that yesterday was the last of the dog days.

It is impossible to know what to say of our public affairs, and the most knowing are only such by the knowledge of their ignorance. The next session of Parliament will be the warmest and most irregular battle that has ever been fought in that place, and each man (except some leaders) is at the moment uncertain of the party which inclination, opinion, or connection will prompt him to embrace. You see that Mr. Eliot, or at least his family, are become courtiers; his son (a very unmeaning youth) is a Lord of the Treasury, an office which was formerly the reward of twenty years' able and faithful service. The Minister has not lost, for he never possessed, the public confidence, and Lord North, if he chuses to act, has the balance of the country in his hands. A propos of the Eliots they are still in town. We meet seldom, but with the utmost propriety and equal regard.

IMMERSED IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

My private life is a gentle and not unpleasing continuation of my old labours, and I am again involved, as I shall be for some years, in the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Some fame, some profit, and the assurance of daily amusement encourage me to persist. I am glad you are pleased with Mr. Hayley's poem; perhaps he might have been less diffuse, but his sense is fine and his verse is harmonious. – Mrs. Porten is just returned from a six weeks' excursion in lodgings at Windsor, which she enjoyed (the Terrace, the Air, and the Royal family) with all the spirit of youth. Her elder brother is quiet in his new employment and apartments in Kensington palace. I envy him the latter, and had there been no Revolution I might have obtained a similar advantage. At present I am on the ground, but the weather may change, and compared with recent darkness, the clouds are beginning to break away.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

445.
To his Stepmother

Bentinck Street, Sept. 14, 1782.

Dear Madam,

As you suffered by the long winter, I may reasonably, as I warmly, hope that your health and spirits have been permanently restored by the milder Spring or Autumn which this month has introduced: – For many reasons you will be surprised, though I think pleased, to hear that I have fixed myself for this season in a country villa of Hampton court. My friend Mr. Hamilton (I must distinguish him by the impertinent epithet of 'single speech') has very obligingly lent me a ready furnished house close to the Palace, and opening by a private door into the Royal garden, which is maintained for my use but not at my expence. The air and exercise, good roads and neighbourhood, the opportunity of being in London at any time in two hours, and the temperate mixture of society and study, adapt this new scene very much to my wishes, and must entirely remove your kind apprehensions of my injuring my health (which I have never done) by excessive labour. I find or make many acquaintance, and among others I have visited your old friend Mrs. Manhood (Ashby) at Isleworth in her pleasant summer-house on the Thames. She overwhelms me with civility, but you need not indulge either hopes or fears: as I hear she is going to accept Sir William Draper²³ for her third husband.

You will naturally suppose, and will not I think be displeased that I should enjoy this new and unexpected situation as long as the fine weather continues, and our past hardships encourage us to depend on the favour, at least the first favours of the month of October. Beyond that period the prospect in every sense of the word is cloudy, and my future motions will be partly regulated by parliament, and the intanglement of some private pursuits with public affairs. I still flatter myself with the hope of securing two or three weeks for Bath; but if I should *again* delay that visit till Christmas, I shall prove my perfect confidence in your indulgent friendship, and in your firm belief of my tender attachment, which can alone justify such freedom of conduct. Of the Sheffields I know little, seldom hear from, and am totally ignorant when I shall see them. The Eliots are gone into Cornwall. They *say* that the son is going to marry Lady Sarah Pitt,²⁴ sister to his intimate friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

From the little I have read I agree with you about Gilbert Stuart's²⁵ book, but I cannot forgive your indifference and almost aversion to one of the most amiable men, and masterly compositions in the world.

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

I lay in town last night, and am just setting out for Hampton Court.

N.B. – I never travel after dark, but our dangers are almost over.

²³ General Sir William Draper is best known from the attack upon him by Junius, his share in the defence of Fort St. Philip in Minorca (1781-2), and his subsequent charges against the Governor. He was twice married, but, after the death of his second wife in 1778, remained a widower. He died at Bath in 1787.

²⁴ Edward James Eliot married, in September, 1785, Lady Harriet Pitt, second daughter of the first Earl of Chatham. She died September 25, 1786, leaving a daughter, born September 20, 1786. Edward Eliot died in 1797, predeceasing his father.

²⁵ Gilbert Stuart (1742-1786) published in 1780 his *History of the Establishment of Religion in Scotland, 1517-1561*; and in 1782 the *History of Scotland from the Reformation till the Death of Queen Mary*. His best-known work was his *View of Society in Europe* (1778). The story of his attack on Robert Henry, and his attempt to ruin him, are related in Disraeli's *Calamities of Authors*. If Gibbon alludes to Stuart, Mrs. Gibbon seems to have been justified in her prejudice.

446.
To Lord Sheffield

September 29th, 1782.

HIS HAMPTON COURT VILLA.

I should like sometimes to hear whether you survive the scenes of action and danger in which a Dragoon is continually involved. What a difference between the life of a Dragoon and that of a Philosopher! and I will freely own that I (the Philosopher) am much better satisfied with my own independent and tranquil situation, in which I have always something to do, without ever being obliged to do any thing. The Hampton Court Villa has answered my expectation, and proved no small addition to my comforts; so that I am resolved next summer to hire, borrow, or steal, either the same, or something of the same kind. Every morning I walk a mile or more before breakfast, read and write *quantum sufficit*, mount my chaise and visit in the neighbourhood, accept some invitations, and escape others, use the Lucans as my daily bread, dine pleasantly at home or sociably abroad, reserve for study an hour or two in the evening, lye in town regularly once a week, &c. &c. &c. I have anounced to Mrs. G. my new Arrangements; the certainty that October will be fine, and my encreasing doubts whether I shall be able to reach Bath before Christmas. Do you intend (but how can you *intend* any thing?) to pass the winter under Canvas? Perhaps under the veil of Hampton Court I may lurk ten days or a fortnight at Sheffield, if the enraged Lady or cat does not shut the doors against me.

The Warden²⁶ passed through in his way to Dover. He is not so fat, and more chearful than ever. I had not any private conversation with him; but he clearly holds the balance; unless he falls asleep and lets it fall from his hand. The Pandæmonium (as I understand) does not meet till the 26th of November. I feel with you that a nich is grown of higher value, but think *that* only an additional argument for disposing of it. And so by this time Lord L.²⁷ is actually turned off. Do you know his partner (Miss Courtenay, the Lord's sister), about thirty, only £4000, not handsome, but very pleasant. I am at a loss where to address my condolence, I would say congratulation. Town is more a desert than I ever knew it. I arrived yesterday, dined at Sir Joshua's with a tolerable party; the chaise is now at the door; I dine at Richmond, lye at Hampton, &c. Adieu.

E. G.

²⁶ Lord North was Warden of the Cinque Ports.

²⁷ Lord Loughborough married as his second wife, on September 12, 1782, the Hon. Charlotte Courtenay, daughter of the first Viscount Courtenay.

447.
To his Stepmother

Hampton Court, October 1st, 1782.

My dear Madam,

I feel your anxiety, and am impatient to assure you that the report of your officious visitor is absolutely without foundation. I had not any complaints when I came down to this place; but the air, exercise and dissipation have given me fresh spirits; and I should be apt to fix on the last month as the part of my life in which I have enjoyed the most perfect health. You may depend on my word of honour, that in case of any real alarm, you shall hear from myself or from Caplen. – Excuse brevity, as I save a day, perhaps more, by sending Caplen with Duplicates to London, one copy for the post, the other to take the chance of greater dispatch by the coach. I wish to know what you think of me and my schemes; if you are not perfectly satisfied with my confidence, you may be somewhat displeased with my seeming neglect. I fear we shall not meet till Christmas.

I am
Ever yours,
E. Gibbon.

448.

To Lord Sheffield at Coxheath Camp

Bentinck Street, October 14th, 1782.

RELIEF OF GIBRALTAR.

*On the approach of winter, my paper house of Hampton becomes less comfortable; my visits to Bentinck Street grow longer and more frequent, and the end of next week will restore me to the town, with a lively wish, however, to repeat the same, or a similar experiment, next Summer. I admire the assurance with which you propose a month's residence at Sheffield, when you are not sure of being allowed three days. Here it is currently reported, that Camps will not separate till Lord Howe's *return* from Gibraltar,²⁸ and as yet we have no news of his arrival. Perhaps, indeed, you have more intimate correspondence with your old school-fellow, Lord Shelburne, and already know the hour of your deliverance. I should like to be informed. As Lady S. has entirely forgot me, I shall have the pleasure of forming a new acquaintance. I have often thought of writing, but it is now too late to repent.

I am at a loss what to say or think about our Parliamentary state. A certain late Secretary of Ireland,²⁹ the husband of Polly Jones, reckons the House of Commons thus: Minister 140, Reynard 90, Boreas 120, the rest unknown, or uncertain. The last of the three, by self or agents, talks too much of absence, neutrality, moderation. I still think he will discard the game.

I am not in such a fury with the letter of American independence;³⁰ but it seems ill-timed and useless; and I am much entertained with the Metaphysical disputes between Government and secession about the meaning of it. Lord Lough[borough] will be in town Sunday sen-night. I long to see him and Co. I think he will take a very decided part. If he could throw aside his Gown, he would make a noble Leader. The East India news are excellent; the French gone to the Mauritius, Heyder desirous of peace, the Nizam and Mahrattas our friends, and 70 Lack of Rupees in the Bengal treasury, while we were voting the recall of Hastings.³¹ Adieu. Write soon.

E. G.

²⁸ Lord Howe arrived at Gibraltar early in October. On September 13 the final effort of the French and Spaniards to capture the Rock had been repulsed by Sir George Eliott, who destroyed their floating batteries. Lord Howe returned to Portsmouth November 15, 1782.

²⁹ Probably William Eden, who had been secretary to the Earl of Carlisle during his Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland. But he married Eleanor, daughter of Sir Gilbert Elliot, and sister of the first Earl of Minto. Eden, who was created Lord Auckland in the Irish peerage in 1789, was advanced to an English peerage in 1793, and died in 1814.

³⁰ The reference probably is to the letter which Fox, before his resignation, wrote to the American agents in Paris, offering "*to recognize the independence of the United States in the first instance, and not to reserve it as a condition of peace.*" Fox interpreted this as an absolute recognition of American independence; Lord Shelburne and his colleagues held that it was a conditional recognition dependent on peace being concluded.

³¹ In September, 1780, Hyder Ali invaded the Madras district; Warren Hastings at once negotiated peace with the Mahrattas in order that he might send all available troops to Madras. Sir Eyre Coote defeated Hyder at Porto Novo (July 1, 1781) and at Pollilore (August 27). The full Treasury was the result of the recent overthrow of Cheyte Singh, Rajah of Benares, and the spoliation of the Begums of Oude. In the summer of 1782 the House of Commons resolved that it was the duty of the Court of Directors to recall Hastings. In compliance with this resolution the directors voted an order of recall, but afterwards rescinded it and maintained the Governor-General at his post. See note to Letter 487, on page 85 of this volume.

449.
To Lady Sheffield

Bentinck Street, October 31st, 1782.

Although I am provoked (it is always right to begin first) with your long and unaccountable silence, yet I cannot help wishing (a foolish weakness) to learn whether you and the two infants are still alive, and what have been the summer amusements of your widowed and their orphan state. Some indirect intelligence inclines me to suspect that the Baron himself has quitted before this time a house of Canvas for one of brick, and that he enjoys a short interval between the fatigues of War and those of Government. Should he happen to find himself in your neighbourhood you may inform him that Hugonin (good creature) came to town purposely on my business and passed three hours with me this morning. Harris has resigned his Case of the conflagration, and either by a sale to Lord Stawell or by a new Tenant we shall make it rather a profitable affair.

ENTHUSIASM FOR SIR GEORGE ELIOTT.

You have doubtless received very accurate accounts of my proceedings from the Cambridges by which channel I have likewise obtained very frequent narratives of your life and conversation, and this mutual Gazette has contributed not a little to stifle the reproaches of my conscience. In my excursions round the Hampton neighbourhood, I have often visited and dined with them, and found him properly sensible of his happyness in the absence of his wife: indeed I never saw a man more improved by any fortunate event. My campaign, and it has been a pleasant one, is now closed, but in the time which remains before the opening of our Pandemonium, I should not dislike to breathe for a week or ten days the air of Sheffield Place, and as the Lord will be accessible in town before Christmas, my attack (according to modern rules) will be chiefly designed for the Lady. About Wednesday or Thursday next would be the day that I should think of moving, but I wish to be informed how far such a plan may consist (as the Scotch say) with other arrangements. Adieu. Is not Elliot³² a glorious old fellow? We suspend our judgment of Lord Howe, yet I like the prospect.

I embrace, &c.,
E. G.

³² Sir George Augustus Eliott, created Lord Heathfield for his defence of Gibraltar.

450. *To his Stepmother*

November 7th, 1782.

Dear Madam,

Last week I finished my Hampton Court expedition, and think myself obliged to the person and to the accident which have thrown that unexpected but not unpleasing variety into my Summer life. I am now fixed in town till Christmas, or if Lord Sheffield who has quitted his camp should drag me into Sussex, it can be only for three or four days.

The Parliamentary campaign is approaching very fast,³³ and a very singular one it must be from the conflict of *three* parties, each of which will be exposed in its turn to the direct or oblique attacks of the other two. As a matter of curiosity I shall derive some gratification from my silent seat, but at present I do not perceive its use in any other light. From honour, gratitude and principle I am and shall be attached to Lord N., who will lead a very respectable force into the field, but I much doubt whether matters are ripe for either conquest or coalition, and the havock which Burke's bill has made of places, &c., encreases the difficulties of a new arrangement. However a month or two may change the face of things, and the faces of men.

WILLIAM PITT AND MRS. SIDDONS.

Among those men surely Will Pitt the second is the most extraordinary.³⁴ I know you never liked the father, and I have no connection public or private with the son. Yet we cannot refuse to admire a youth of four and twenty whom eloquence and real merit have already made Chancellor of the Exchequer without his promotion occasioning either surprize or censure.

³³ Parliament, which had been prorogued to November 26, was further prorogued to December 5, in order that the negotiations for peace might be completed. Peace was provisionally signed with the United States at Paris on November 30, 1782.

³⁴ Pitt's first meeting with Gibbon is thus described by Sir James Bland Burges, Bart. (*Letters and Correspondence*, pp. 59-61). The dinner was given in Lincoln's Inn to the officers of the Northumberland Militia, who were quartered in the Inn during the Gordon Riots. "I invited the four military gentlemen, our committee, and six other persons the best qualified I could meet with, among whom were my father, Lord Carmarthen, and Mr. Gibbon, the historian, who was then at the zenith of his fame, and who certainly was not at all backward in availing himself of the deference universally shown to him, by taking both the lead, and a very ample share of the conversation, in whatever company he might honour with his presence. His conversation was not, indeed, what Dr. Johnson would have called *talk*. There was no interchange of ideas, for no one had a chance of replying, so fugitive, so variable, was his mode of discoursing, which consisted of points, anecdotes, and epigrammatic thrusts, all more or less to the purpose, and all pleasantly said with a French air and manner which gave them great piquancy, but which were withal so desultory and unconnected that, though each separately was extremely amusing, the attention of his auditors sometimes flagged before his own resources were exhausted. . . . He had just concluded, however, one of his best foreign anecdotes, in which he had introduced some of the fashionable levities of political doctrine then prevalent, and, with his customary tap on the lid of his snuff-box, was looking round to receive our tribute of applause, when a deep-toned but clear voice was heard from the bottom of the table, very calmly and civilly impugning the correctness of the narrative, and the propriety of the doctrines of which it had been made the vehicle. The historian, turning a disdainful glance towards the quarter whence the voice proceeded, saw, for the first time, a tall, thin, and rather ungainly-looking young man, who now sat quietly and silently eating some fruit. There was nothing very prepossessing or very formidable in his exterior, but, as the few words he had uttered appeared to have made a considerable impression on the company, Mr. Gibbon, I suppose, thought himself bound to maintain his honour by suppressing such an attempt to dispute his supremacy. He accordingly undertook the defence of the propositions in question, and a very animated debate took place between him and his youthful antagonist, Mr. Pitt, and for some time was conducted with great talent and brilliancy on both sides. At length the genius of the young man prevailed over that of his senior, who, finding himself driven into a corner from which there was no escape, made some excuse for rising from the table and walked out of the room. I followed him, and, finding that he was looking for his hat, I tried to persuade him to return to his seat. 'By no means,' said he. 'That young gentleman is, I have no doubt, extremely ingenious and agreeable, but I must acknowledge that his style of conversation is not exactly what I am accustomed to, so you must positively excuse me.' And away he went in high dudgeon, notwithstanding that his friend [Lord Sheffield] had come to my assistance."

We are much indebted to your Bath Theatre for Mrs. Siddons:³⁵ two years ago, and in the part of Lady Townley, she did not strike me: but I saw her last night with the most exquisite pleasure. She gave sense and spirit to a wretched play (the Fatal Marriage), and displayed every power of voice, action, and countenance to a degree which left me nothing to wish. To-morrow I promise myself still more satisfaction from Jane Shore, as the character is more worthy of her talents. Adieu, Dear Madam. Inform me that the beginning of the winter has not affected your health. Whatever may be the state of my namesake, I hope at Christmas to bring you a sound body, and a mind not dissatisfied with external things, because it is not dissatisfied with itself.

I am
Ever yours,
E. G.

³⁵ Mrs. Siddons first appeared on the London stage in December, 1775, when she acted Portia at Drury Lane. She gained no great success, and in June, 1776, received her dismissal from the managers. In the provincial theatres, and especially at the Bath Theatre, then managed by Palmer, she became famous. At Bath, in 1780, she had twice acted the part of Lady Townly in Vanbrugh's and Cibber's play of *The Provoked Husband*. In 1782 she reappeared in London (October 10) at Drury Lane, in the part of Isabella in Southerne's tragedy of *The Fatal Marriage*. On October 30 she took the part of Euphrasia in Murphy's *Grecian Daughter*. On November 8 she played Jane Shore in Rowe's tragedy of that name. W. Hamilton's picture of Mrs. Siddons as Isabella belongs to the nation.

451.
To his Stepmother

December 21st, 1782.

Dear Madam,

I write a little letter on little paper because I shall soon have the pleasure of conversing with you in a less laborious manner. Next Thursday I propose to begin my journey for Bath, but as the times (in a public and private light) are very *hard*, I shall travel with my own horses, lye two nights on the road, and reach the Belvidere for a late dinner Saturday. You will be so good as to secure me a lodging; the nearness to your house will be its best recommendation, as you are my sole inducement. If any business should detain me two or three days longer in town, you may depend on the earliest notice.

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

452.
To his Stepmother

Bentinck Street, December 26th, 1782.

Dear Madam,

It was not in my power to set out this morning (Thursday), and therefore I cannot hope to reach Bath Saturday. I am not perfectly sure whether Sunday or Monday will be the day of my arrival: for which reason I shall eat a mutton chop at the Devizes, and beg you would not wait dinner for me.

I am

Most truly yours,

E. G.

453.
To Lord Sheffield

Tuesday evening, 1782.

THE DEARTH OF NEWS.

I have designed writing every post. – The air of London is admirable; my complaints have vanished, and the Gout still respects me. Lord L., with whom I passed an entire day, is very well satisfied with his Irish expedition, and found the barbarous people very kind to him: the castle is strong, but the volunteers are formidable. London is dead, and all intelligence so totally extinct, that the loss of an army would be a favourable incident. We have not even the advantage of Shipwrecks, which must soon, with the society of Ham[ilton] and Lady Shelley, become the only pleasures of Brighton. My lady is precious, and deserves to shine in London, when she regains her palace. The workmen are slow, but I hear that the Minister talks of hiring another house after Christmas. Adieu, till Monday seven-night. Shall Caplin get you a lodging?

454.
To his Stepmother

Bentinck Street, Jan. 16th, 1783.

Dear Madam,

I reached London after an easy and pleasant journey, and am now seated in my library before a good fire, and among three or four thousand of my old acquaintance. The prospect of my future life is not *gloomy*: yet I should esteem myself a very happy man indeed, if every fortnight could be of as pure a white as the last which I have spent at Bath in the society of the most sincere as well as amiable of my friends.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

455.
To Lord Sheffield

January 17th, 1783.

As I arrived about five o'Clock on Wednesday last, we were some time in town in mutual ignorance. Unlucky enough: yet our loss will be speedily repaired. Your reason for not writing is worthy of an Irish Baron. You thought Sarah might be at Bath, because you directed letters to her at Clifton, near Bristol; where indeed I saw her in a delightful situation, swept by the winter winds, and scorched by the summer sun. A nobler reason for your silence would be the care of the public papers, to record Your steps, words, and actions. I was pleased with your Coventry oration: a panegyric on the Hertford family³⁶ is a subject entirely new, and which no orator before yourself would have dared to undertake. You have acted with prudence and dignity in casting away the military yoke, yet even if I *had* a right I should try to moderate my indignation. *This next summer you will sit down (if you can sit) in the long-lost character of a country Gentleman.

For my own part, my late journey has only confirmed me in the opinion, that No. 7 Bentinck-street is the best house in the World. I find that peace and war alternately, and daily, take their turns of conversation, and this (Friday) is the pacific day. Next week³⁷ we shall probably hear some questions on that head very strongly asked, and very foolishly answered. I embrace, &c. Give me a line by return of post, and possibly I may visit Downing-street on Monday evening; late, however, as I am engaged to dinner and cards. Adieu.*

E. G.

³⁶ The "Hertford family" included Francis, first Earl and Marquis of Hertford; his brother, General Conway; his eldest son, Lord Beauchamp, M.P. for Orford; and his youngest son, William Conway, who was at this time standing at a by-election for Coventry.

³⁷ The preliminaries of peace were signed at Versailles with France and Spain, January 20, 1783, and Parliament met, after the Christmas recess, January 21.

456.
To his Stepmother

Feb. 19th, 1783.

Dear Madam,

On Monday or rather Tuesday last we gave the first blow to Lord S.'s Government by a majority of sixteen in the House of C. on the Peace, which will be followed by new and decisive attacks.³⁸ The victory was obtained by the union of Lord North with Fox and the Rockingham party. — You would have blamed me for going, or rather being carried, down with flannels and crutches, and sitting all night till past eight in the morning: but I have the pleasure of assuring you that the heat and fatigue have done me no harm, that I have already changed my two crutches into a single stick, which I hope to throw away in three or four days. This fit of the Gout, though severe, has been short, regular, and I think beneficial. Adieu.

I am
Ever yours,
E. Gibbon.

³⁸ On Monday, February 17, 1783, an address of thanks to his Majesty for the peace was moved by Thomas Pitt, M.P. for Old Sarum, and William Wilberforce, M.P. for Kingston-upon-Hull. Amendments were moved by Lord J. Cavendish and Lord North, which were carried at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, February 18, by 224 to 208. On February 21, a resolution, proposed by Lord J. Cavendish, that the concessions made to the United States were excessive, was carried by 207 to 190.

457.
To his Stepmother

March 29th, 1783.

Dear Madam,

RESIGNATION OF LORD SHELBURNE.

Will you credit and excuse the cause of my delay? I came home late and found your letter on my table: meaning to read it the next morning, I slipt it into my drawer, and till this moment it escaped my memory and my eye. – I would not bribe you to prefer my silence, yet you may always take it as an assured proof that the body Gibbon is in a perfect state of health and spirits, as it is most truly at the present moment, and since the entire retreat of my Gout. The state of public affairs is Anarchy without example and without end,³⁹ and if the King does not decide before Monday, the consequences to the House of Commons will be fatal indeed. Every day produces its own lye, and nothing that is probable is true. Yet I believe that Pitt will not accept, and that the Coalition must succeed.

*I am, Dear Madam,
Ever yours,
E. Gibbon.*

³⁹ On February 24, 1783, Lord Shelburne resigned office in consequence of the vote of February 21; and Pitt, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, publicly stated that he only retained his post till his successor was appointed. On March 24, Mr. Coke, M.P. for Norfolk, moved and carried an address to the king, asking for the appointment of a new administration.

458.
To his Stepmother

March 31st, 1783.

Dear Madam,

THE COALITION MINISTRY.

In my last, written like this in a very great hurry, I used (if I am not mistaken) an expression which at a distance might alarm you too much. The *fatal* Monday is past without any *fatal* consequences, yet no Administration is appointed; but as Pitt has formally resigned,⁴⁰ the K. will probably yield without expecting a second and more serious address on Thursday. – I rejoice to hear that you have surmounted your complaint, and hope you will feel every day the genial influence of the spring.

I am
Ever yours,
E. G.

⁴⁰ Pitt, on March 31, resigned the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. On April 2 the new administration was formed; the principal members were —The Great Seal was put in commission. The first seven formed the Cabinet. Lord Townshend said "he had always foreseen the Coalition Ministry could not last, for he was at Court when Mr. Fox kissed hands, and he observed George III. turn back his eyes and ears just like the horse at Astley's, when the tailor he had determined to throw was getting on him" (*Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, vol. ii. p. 28).

459.
To his Stepmother

May 5th, 1783.

Dear Madam,

My cousin Robert Darrel gave me great pleasure by the information that he thought you perfectly recovered from your late indisposition. I depend on his testimony, which removed all my doubts and suspicions of your giving too favourable an account of yourself. For my own part, after paying my annual tribute to the gout, I find myself in the same even course of health and spirits which I have enjoyed for many years. The business of the house of Commons has been postponed by waiting first for peace and afterwards for Government; the long hot days will be crowded, and we shall wrangle with a strong June sun shining through the windows to reproach our folly.⁴¹ I have already made one short visit to my Cottage at Hampton Court; I propose every week to steal away like a Citizen from Saturday till Monday, and persuade myself that I shall be revived by such excursions. You express a kind indignation against the persons for whose sake I acted the devil upon two sticks. Notwithstanding their apparent neglect I have reason to think them well inclined towards me, and have even received some assurances, but as every thing that depends on ministers is precarious and uncertain, I would not raise too much either your hopes or my own. If any situation⁴² permanent and proper could be obtained, incompatible with a seat in parliament, I should retire from that Assembly without the least reluctance.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

⁴¹ The session closed July 16, 1783.

⁴² "Gibbon and I," writes Lord Sheffield to William Eden (*Lord Auckland's Journal and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 53), "have been walking about the room and cannot find any employment we should like in the intended establishment. He agrees with me that the place of dancing-master might be one of the most eligible for him, but he rather inclines to be painter, in hopes of succeeding Ramsay."

460.

A M. Deyverdun, à Lausanne

A Londres, ce 20 Mai, 1783.

*Que j'admire la douce et parfaite confiance de nos sentimens réciproques! Nous nous aimons dans l'éloignement et le silence, et il nous suffit à l'un et à l'autre, de savoir de tems en tems des nouvelles de la santé et du bonheur de son ami. Aujourd'hui j'ai besoin de vous écrire; je commence sans excuses et sans reproches, comme si nous allions reprendre la conversation familière du jour précédent. Si je proposois de faire un *compte rendu* de mes études, de mes occupations, de mes plaisirs, de mes nouvelles liaisons, de ma politique toujours muette, mais un peu plus rapprochée des grands événemens, je multiplierois mes *in quarto*, et je ne sais pas encore votre avis sur ceux que je vous ai déjà envoyés. Dans cette histoire moderne, il seroit toujours question de la décadence des empires; et autant que j'en puis juger sur mes réminiscences et sur le rapport de l'ami Bugnon, vous aimez aussi peu la puissance de l'Angleterre que celle des Romains. Notre chute, cependant, a été plus douce. Après une guerre sans succès, et une paix assez peu glorieuse, il nous reste de quoi vivre contents et heureux; et lorsque je me suis dépouillé du rôle de Membre du Parlement, pour redevenir homme, philosophe, et historien, nous pourrions bien nous trouver d'accord sur la plupart des scènes étonnantes qui viennent de se passer devant nos yeux, et qui fourniront une riche matière aux plus habiles de mes successeurs.

Bornons nous à cette heure à un objet moins illustre sans doute, mais plus intéressant pour tous les deux, et c'est beaucoup que le même objet puisse intéresser deux mortels qui ne se sont pas vûs, qui à peine se sont écrit depuis – oui, ma foi – depuis huit ans. Ma plume, très paresseuse au commencement, ou plutôt avant le commencement, marche assez vite, lorsqu'elle s'est une fois mise en train; mais une raison qui m'empêcheroit de lui donner carrière, c'est l'espérance de pouvoir bientôt me servir avec vous d'un instrument encore plus commode, la langue. Que l'homme, l'homme anglois, l'homme Gibbon, est un sot animal! Je l'espère, je le désire, je le puis, mais je ne sais pas si [je] le veux, encore moins si j'exécuterai cette volonté.

Voici mon histoire, autant qu'elle pourra vous éclairer, qu'elle pourra m'éclairer moi-même, sur mes véritables intentions, qui me paroissent très obscures, et très équivoques; et vous aurez la bonté de m'apprendre quelle sera ma conduite future. Il vous souvient, Seigneur, que mon grandpère a fait sa fortune, que mon père l'a mangée avec un peu trop d'appétit, et que je jouis actuellement du fruit, ou plutôt du reste, de leurs travaux. Vous n'avez pas oublié que je suis entré au Parlement sans patriotisme, sans ambition, et que toutes mes vues se bernoient à la place commode et honnête d'un *Lord of Trade*. Cette place, je l'ai obtenue enfin; je l'ai possédée trois ans, depuis 1779 jusqu'à 1782, et le produit net, qui se montoit à sept cens cinquante livres sterling, augmentoit mon revenu au niveau de mes besoins et de mes désirs. Mais au printems de l'année précédente, l'orage a grondé sur nos têtes: Milord North a été renversé, votre serviteur chassé, et le *Board* même, dont j'étois membre, aboli et cassé pour toujours par la réformation de M. Burke, avec beaucoup d'autres places de l'Etat, et de la maison du Roi.

HIS VIEW OF ENGLISH POLITICS.

Pour mon malheur, je suis toujours resté Membre de la Chambre basse: à la fin du dernier Parlement (en 1780) M. Eliot à retiré sa nomination; mais la faveur de Milord North a facilité ma rentrée, et la reconnaissance m'imposoit le devoir de faire valoir, pour son service, les droits que je tenois en partie de lui. Cet hyver nous avons combattu sous les étendards réunis (vous savez notre histoire) de Milord North et de M. Fox; nous avons triomphé de Milord Shelburne et de la paix,* et mon ami (je n'aime pas à profaner ce nom) a remonté sur sa bête en qualité de secretaire d'Etat. C'est à présent qu'il peut bien me dire ç'etoit beaucoup pour moi, ce n'etoit rien pour nous, et malgré

les assurances les plus fortes, j'ai trop de raison pour avoir de la foi. *Avec beaucoup d'esprit, et des qualités très respectables, notre homme* a la démarche lente et le cœur froid. Il *n'a plus ni le titre, ni le crédit de premier ministre; des collègues plus actifs lui enlèvent les morceaux les plus friands, qui sont aussitôt dévorés par la voracité de leurs créatures; nos malheurs et nos réformes ont diminué le nombre des grâces; par orgueil ou par paresse, je sollicite assez mal, et si je parviens enfin, ce sera peut-être à la veille d'une nouvelle révolution, qui me fera perdre dans un instant, ce qui m'aura coûté tant de soins et de recherches.

Si je ne consultois que mon cœur et ma raison, je romprois sur le champ cette indigne chaîne de la dépendance; je quitterois le Parlement, Londres, l'Angleterre; je chercherois sous un ciel plus doux, dans un pays plus tranquille, le repos, la liberté, l'aisance, et une société éclairée, et aimable. En attendant la mort de ma belle-mère et de ma tante je coulerois quelques années de ma vie sans espérance, et sans crainte, j'acheverais mon histoire, et je ne rentrerois dans ma patrie qu'en homme libre, riche, et respectable par sa position, aussi bien que par son caractère. Mes amis, et surtout Milord Sheffield, (M. Holroyd) ne veulent pas me permettre d'être heureux suivant mon goût et mes lumières. Leur prudence exige que je fasse tous mes efforts, pour obtenir un emploi très sûr à la vérité, qui me donneroit mille guinées de rente, mais qui m'enleveroit cinq jours par semaine. Je me prête à leur zèle, et je leur ai promis de ne partir qu'en automne, après avoir consacré l'été à cette dernière tentative. Le succès, cependant, est très incertain, et je ne sais si je le désire de bonne foi.

Si je parviens à me voir exilé, mon choix ne sera pas douteux. Lausanne a eu mes prémices; elle me sera toujours chère par le doux souvenir de ma jeunesse. Au bout de trente ans, je me rappelle les polissons qui sont aujourd'hui juges, les petites filles de la société du Printemps, qui sont devenues grand-mères. Votre pays est charmant, et, malgré le dégoût de Jean Jacques, les mœurs, et l'esprit de ses habitans, me paroissent très assortis aux bords du lac Léman. Mais un trésor que je ne trouverois qu'à Lausanne, c'est un ami qui me convient également par les sentimens et les idées, avec qui je n'ai jamais connu un instant d'ennui, de sécheresse, ou de réserve. Autrefois dans nos libres épanchemens, nous avons cent fois fait le projet de vivre ensemble, et cent fois nous avons épilé tous les détails du Roman, avec une chaleur qui nous étonnoit nous mêmes. A présent il demeure, ou plutôt vous demeurez, (car je me lasse de ce ton étudié,) dans une maison charmante et commode; je vois d'ici mon appartement, nos salles communes, notre table, et nos promenades; mais ce mariage ne vaut rien, s'il ne convient pas également aux deux époux, et je sens combien des circonstances locales, des goûts nouveaux, de nouvelles liaisons, peuvent s'opposer aux desseins, qui nous ont paru les plus agréables dans le lointain. Pour fixer mes idées, et pour nous épargner des regrets, il faut me dévoiler avec la franchise dont je vous ai donné l'exemple, le tableau extérieur et intérieur de George Deyverdun. Mon amour est trop délicat, pour supporter l'indifférence et les égards, et je rougirois d'un bonheur dont je serois redevable, non à l'inclination, mais à la fidélité de mon ami.

PROPOSES TO SETTLE ABROAD.

Pour m'armer contre les malheurs possibles, hélas! peut-être trop vraisemblables, j'ai essayé de me détacher de la pensée de ce projet favori, et de me représenter à Lausanne votre bon voisin, sans être précisément votre commensal. Si j'y étois réduit, je ne voudrois pas tenir maison, autant par raison d'économie, que pour éviter l'ennui de manger seul. D'un autre côté, une pension ouverte, fut-elle montée sur l'ancien pied de celle de Mesery, ne conviendrait plus à mon âge, ni à mon caractère. Passerois-je ma vie au milieu d'une foule de jeunes Anglois échappés du collège, moi qui aimerois Lausanne cent fois davantage, si j'y pouvois être le seul de ma nation? Il me faudroit donc une maison commode et riante, un état au dessus de la bourgeoisie, un mari instruit, une femme qui ne ressembleroit pas à Madame Pavilliard, et l'assurance d'y être reçu comme le fils unique, ou plutôt comme le frère de la famille. Pour nous arranger sans gêne, je meublerai très volontiers un joli appartement sous le même toit, ou dans le voisinage, et puisque le ménage le plus foible laisse encore de l'étoffe pour une forte pension, je ne serois pas obligé de chicaner sur les conditions pécuniaires. Si je me vois déchu de cette dernière espérance, je renoncerois en soupirant à ma seconde patrie, pour

chercher un nouvel asyle, non pas à Genève, triste séjour du travail et de la discorde, mais aux bords du lac de Neufchatel, parmi les bons Savoyards de Chamberry, ou sous le beau climat des Provinces Méridionales de la France. Je finis brusquement, parceque j'ai mille choses à vous dire. Je pense que nous nous ressemblons pour la correspondance. Pour le bavardage savant ou même amical, je suis de tous les hommes le plus paresseux, mais dès qu'il s'agit d'un objet réel, d'un service essentiel, le premier courier emporte toujours ma réponse. A la fin d'un mois, je commencerai à compter les semaines, les jours, les heures. Ne me les faites pas compter trop long tems. Vale.*

461.

M. Deyverdun à M. Gibbon

Strasbourg, le 10 Juin, 1783.

*Je ne saurois vous exprimer, Monsieur et cher ami, la variété, et la vivacité, des sensations que m'a fait éprouver votre lettre. Tout cela a fini par un fond de plaisir et d'espérance qui resteront dans mon cœur, jusqu'à ce que vous les en chassiez.

Un rapport singulier de circonstances contribue à me faire espérer que nous sommes destinés à vivre quelque tems agréablement ensemble. Je ne suis pas dégoûté d'une ambition que je ne connus jamais; mais par d'autres circonstances, je me trouve dans la même situation d'embarras et d'incertitude où vous êtes aussi à cette époque. Il y a un an que votre lettre, mon cher ami, m'auroit fait plaisir sans doute, mais en ce moment, elle m'en fait bien davantage; elle vient en quelque façon à mon secours.

Depuis mon retour d'Italie, ne pouvant me déterminer à vendre ma maison, m'ennuyant d'y être seul (car je suis comme vous, Monsieur, et je déteste de manger sans compagnie) ne voulant pas louer à des étrangers, j'ai pris le parti de m'arranger assez joliment au premier étage, et de donner le second à une famille de mes amis, qui me nourrit, et que je loge. Cet arrangement a paru pendant longtems contribuer au bonheur des deux parties. Mais tout est transitoire sur cette terre. Ma maison sera vuide, selon toute apparence, sur la fin de l'été, et je me vois d'avance tout aussi embarrassé et incertain, que je l'étois il y a quelques années, ne sachant quelle nouvelle société choisir, et assez disposé à vendre enfin cette possession qui m'a causé bien des plaisirs et bien des peines. Ma maison⁴³ est donc à votre disposition pour cet automne, et vous y arriveriez comme un Dieu dans une machine qui finit l'embroglio. Voilà, quant à moi; parlons de vous maintenant avec la même sincérité.

Un mot de préambule. Quelque intéressé que je sois à votre résolution, convaincu qu'il faut aimer ses amis pour eux-mêmes, sentant d'ailleurs combien il seroit affreux pour moi de vous voir des regrets, je vous donne ici ma parole d'honneur, que mon intérêt n'influe en rien sur ce que je vais écrire, et que je ne dirai pas un mot que je ne vous disse, si l'hermite de la grotte étoit un autre que moi. Vos amis anglais vous aiment pour eux-mêmes; je ne veux moi que votre bonheur. Rappelez-vous, mon cher ami, que je vis avec peine votre entrée dans le Parlement, et je crois n'avoir été que trop bon prophète; je suis sûr que cette carrière vous a fait éprouver plus de privations que de jouissances, beaucoup plus de peines que de plaisirs; j'ai cru toujours, depuis que je vous ai connu, que vous étiez destiné à vivre heureux par les plaisirs du cabinet et de la société, que tout autre marché étoit un écart de la route du bonheur, et que ce n'étoit que les qualités réunies d'homme de lettres, et d'homme aimable de société, qui pouvoient vous procurer gloire, honneur, plaisirs, et une suite continuelle de jouissances. Au bout de quelques tours dans votre salle, vous sentirez parfaitement que j'avois bien vu, et que l'événement a justifié mes idées.

DEYVERDUN'S OFFER OF HIS HOUSE.

Lorsque j'ai appris que vous étiez *Lord of Trade*, j'en ai été fâché; quand j'ai su que vous aviez perdu cette place, je m'en suis réjoui pour vous; quand on m'a annoncé que Milord North étoit remonté sur sa bête, j'ai cru vous voir très mal à votre aise, en croupe derrière lui, et je m'en suis affligé pour vous. Je suis donc charmé, mon cher ami, de vous savoir à pied, et je vous conseille très sincèrement de rester dans cette position, et bien loin de solliciter la place en question, de la refuser, si

⁴³ Part of the grounds of M. Deyverdun's house at Lausanne, in which Gibbon lived from 1783 to 1793, is now occupied by the Hôtel Gibbon. Henry Mathews (*Diary of an Invalid*, p. 317) speaks of a visit to the house paid in June, 1818. "Paid a visit to the house in which Gibbon resided. Paced his terrace, and explored the summer-house, of which he speaks in relating, with so much interesting detail, the conclusion of his historical labours."

elle vous étoit offerte. Mille guinées vous dédommageront-elles de cinq jours pris de la semaine? Je suppose, ce que cependant j'ai peine à croire, que vous me disiez que oui: et la variété et l'inconstance continuelle de votre ministère, vous promettent-elles d'en jouir long tems constamment, et n'est-il pas plus désagréable, mon cher Monsieur, de n'avoir plus 1000 livres sterl. de rente, qu'il n'a été agréable d'en jouir? D'ailleurs ne pourrez-vous pas toujours rentrer dans la carrière, si l'ambition, ou l'envie de servir la patrie, vous reprennent; ne rentrerez-vous pas avec plus d'honneur, lorsque vos rentes étant augmentées naturellement, vous serez libre et indépendant?

En faisant cette retraite en Suisse, outre la beauté du pays, et les agrémens de la société, vous acquererez deux biens que vous avez perdus, la liberté et la richesse. Vous ne serez d'ailleurs point inutile; vos ouvrages continueront à nous éclairer, et indépendamment de vos talens, l'honnête homme, le galant homme, n'est jamais inutile.

Il me reste à vous présenter le tableau que vous trouveriez. Vous aimiez ma maison et mon jardin; c'est bien autre chose à présent. Au premier étage qui donne sur la descente d'Ouchy, je me suis arrangé un appartement qui me suffit, j'ai une chambre de domestique, deux sallons, et deux cabinets. J'ai au plein pied de la terrasse, deux autres sallons dont l'un sert en été de salle à manger, et l'autre de salon de compagnie. J'ai fait un nouvel appartement de trois pièces dans le vuide entre la maison et la remise, en sorte que j'ai à vous offrir tout le grand appartement, qui consiste actuellement en onze pièces, tant grandes que petites, tournées au Levant et au Midi, meublées sans magnificence déplacée, mais avec une sorte d'élégance dont j'espère que vous seriez satisfait. La terrasse a peu changé; mais elle est terminée par un grand cabinet mieux proportionné que le précédent, garnie tout du long, de caisses d'orangers, &c. La treille, qui ne vous est pas indifférente, a embelli, prospéré, et règne presque entièrement jusqu'au bout; parvenu à ce bout, vous trouverez un petit chemin qui vous conduira à une chaumière placée dans un coin; et de ce coin, en suivant le long d'une autre route à l'anglaise, le mur d'un manège. Vous trouverez au bout, un châlet avec écurie, vacherie, petite porte, petit cabinet, petite bibliothèque, et une galerie de bois doré, d'où l'on voit tout ce qui sort et entre en ville par la porte du Chêne, et tout ce qui se passe dans ce Faubourg. J'ai acquis la vigne au-dessous du jardin; j'en ai arraché tout ce qui étoit devant la maison; j'en ai fait un tapis vert arrosé par l'eau du jet d'eau; et j'ai fait tout autour de ce petit parc, une promenade très variée par les différens points de vue et les objets même intérieurs, tantôt jardin potager, tantôt parterre, tantôt vigne, tantôt prés, puis châlet, chaumière, petite montagne; bref, les étrangers viennent le voir et l'admirent, et malgré la description pompeuse que je vous en fais, vous en serez content.

N. B. J'ai planté une quantité d'excellens arbres fruitiers.

Venons à moi; vous comprenez bien que j'ai vieilli, excepté pour la sensibilité; je suis à la mode, mes nerfs sont attaqués; je suis plus mélancolique, mais je n'ai pas plus d'humeur; vous ne souffrirez de mes maux que tout au plus négativement. Ensemble, et séparés par nos logemens, nous jouirons, vis-à-vis l'un de l'autre, de la plus grande liberté. Nous prendrons une gouvernante douce et entendue, plutôt par commodité que par nécessité; car je me chargerois sans crainte de la surintendance. J'ai fait un ménage de quatre, pendant quelque tems; j'ai fait le mien, et j'ai remarqué que cela marchoit tout seul, quand c'étoit une fois en train. Les petites gens qui n'ont que ce mérite, font grand bruit pour rien. Mon jardin nous fournira avec abondance de bons fruits et d'excellens légumes. Pour le reste de la table et de la dépense domestique, je ne demanderois pas mieux que de vous recevoir chez moi, comme vous m'avez reçu chez vous; mais nos situations sont différentes à cet égard; cependant si vous étiez plus ruiné, je vous l'offrirois sans doute, et je devrois le faire; mais avec les rentes que vous aviez, quand j'étois chez vous, en les supposant même diminuées, vous vivrez très agréablement à Lausanne. Enfin à cet égard nous nous arrangerons, comme il vous sera le plus agréable, et en proportion de nos revenus. Toujours serez vous ainsi, à ce que j'espère, plus décemment et plus confortablement, que vous ne seriez par tout ailleurs au même prix.

SOCIETY AT LAUSANNE.

Quant à la société, quoique infiniment agréable, je commence ce chapitre par vous dire que j'évitais de vous y inviter, si vous étiez entièrement désœuvré; les jours sont longs alors, et laissent bien du vuide; mais homme de lettres, comme vous êtes, je ne connois point de société qui vous convienne mieux. Nous aurons autour de nous un cercle, comme il seroit impossible d'en trouver ailleurs dans un aussi petit espace. Madame de Corcelles, Mademoiselle Sulens, et M. de Montolieu, (Madame est morte,) Messrs. Polier et leurs femmes, Madame de Severy, et M. et Madame de Nassau, Mademoiselle de Chandieu, Madame de St. Cierge, et M. avec leurs deux filles jolies et aimables, Mesdames de Crousaz, Polier, de Charrières, &c. font un fonds de bonne compagnie dont on ne se lasse point, et dont M. de Servan est si content qu'il regrette toujours d'être obligé de retourner dans ses terres, et ne respire que pour s'établir tout à fait à Lausanne. Il passa tout l'hyver de 1782 avec nous, et il fut, on ne peut plus, agréable. Vous trouverez les mœurs changées en bien, et plus conformes à nos ages, et à nos caractères; peu de grandes assemblées, de grands repas, mais beaucoup de petits soupers, de petites assemblées, où l'on fait ce qu'on veut, où l'on cause, lit, &c. et dont on écarte avec soin les facheux de toute espèce. Il y a le Dimanche une société, où tout ce qu'il y a d'un peu distingué en étrangères et étrangers, est invité. Cela fait des assemblées de 40 à 50 personnes, où l'on voit ce qu'on ne voit guères le reste de la semaine, et ces espèces de *rout* font quelquefois plaisir. Nous sommes fort dégoûtés des étrangers, surtout des jeunes gens, et nous les écartons avec soin de nos petits comités, à moins qu'ils n'ayent du mérite, ou quelques talens. A cet égard un de nos petits travers, c'est l'engouement; mais vous en profiterez, mon cher Monsieur, comme Edward Gibbon, et comme mon ami; vous serez d'abord l'homme à la mode, et je vois d'ici que vous soutiendrez fort bien ce rôle, sans vous en fâcher, dût on un peu vous surfaire. *Je sens que tu me flattes, mais tu me fais plaisir*, est peut-être le meilleur vers de Destouches.

Voilà donc l'hyver; l'étude le matin, quelques conversations, quand vous serez fatigué, avec quelque homme de lettres, ou amateur, ou du moins qui aura vu quelque chose; à l'heure qu'il vous plaira un dîner, point de fermier général, mais l'honnête épicurien, avec un ou deux amis quand vous voudrez: puis quelques visites, une soirée, souvent un souper. Quant à l'été, vu votre manière d'aimer la campagne, on diroit que ma remise a été faite pour vous; pendant que vous vous y promènerez en sénateur, je serai souvent en bon paysan Suisse, devant mon châlet, ou dans ma chaumière; puis nous nous rencontrerons tout à coup, et tâcherons de nous remettre au niveau l'un de l'autre. Nous fermerons nos portes à l'ordinaire, excepté aux étrangers qui passent leur chemin; mais quand nous voudrons, nous y aurons tous ceux que nous aimerons à y voir; car on ne demande pas mieux que d'y venir se réjouir. J'ai eu, un beau jour d'Avril ce printemps, un déjeuner, qui m'a coûté quelques Louis, où il y avoit plus de 40 personnes, je ne sais combien de petites tables, une bonne musique au milieu du verger, et une quantité de jeunes et jolies personnes dansant des branles, et formant des chiffres en cadence; j'ai vu bien des fêtes, j'en ai peu vu de plus jolies. Quand mon parc vous ennuyera, nous aurons, ou nous louerons ensemble (et ce sera ainsi un plaisir peu cher) un cabriolet léger, avec deux chevaux gentils, et nous irons visiter nos amis dispersés dans les campagnes, qui nous recevront à bras ouverts. Vous en serez content de nos campagnes; toujours en proportion vous comprenez, et vous trouverez en général un heureux changement pour les agrémens de la société, et une sorte de recherche simple, mais élégante. Les bergères du *Printemps*, excepté Madame de Vanberg, ne sont sans doute plus présentables, mais il y en a d'autres assez gentilles, et quoiqu'elles ne soient pas en bien grand nombre, il y en aura toujours assez pour vous, mon cher Monsieur. Peu à peu mon imagination m'a emportée, et mon style s'égaye, comme cela nous arrivoit quelquefois dans nos châteaux en Espagne. Il est bien tems de finir cet article, résumons nous plus sérieusement.

Si vous exécutez le plan que vous avez imaginé, j'aimerois même à dire que vous embrassez, surtout d'après ce que vous marquez vous même, *Si je ne consultois que mon cœur et ma raison, je romperois sur le champ cette indigne chaîne*, &c. Eh! que voulez-vous consulter, si ce n'est votre cœur et votre raison? Si, dis-je, vous exécutez ce plan, vous retrouverez une liberté et une indépendance, que vous n'auriez jamais dû perdre, et dont vous méritez de jouir, une aisance qui ne vous coûtera

qu'un voyage de quelques jours, une tranquillité que vous ne pouvez avoir à Londres, et enfin un ami qui n'a peut-être pas été un jour sans penser à vous, et qui malgré ses défauts, ses foiblesses et son infériorité, est encore un des compagnons qui vous convient le mieux.

Il me reste à vous apprendre pourquoi je vous réponds si tard: vous savez déjà actuellement que ce n'est pas manque d'amitié et de zèle pour la chose; mais votre lettre m'a été renvoyée de Lausanne ici, à Strasbourg, et je n'ai passé qu'une poste sans y répondre, ce qui n'est pas trop, vous l'avouerez, pour un pareil bavardage. Je suis parti de Lausanne la veille de Pâques pour venir voir un M. Bourcard de Basle, fort de mes amis; il est ici auprès du Comte de Cagliostro, pour profiter de ses remèdes. Vous aurez entendu parler peut-être de cet homme extraordinaire à tous égards. Comme j'ai été assez malade tout l'hyver, je profite aussi de ses remèdes; mais comme le tems du séjour du Comte ici n'est rien moins que sûr, le mieux sera que vous m'écriviez à *M. D. chez M. Bourcard du Kirshgarten, à Basle.*

Vous comprenez combien à tous égards, il est nécessaire m'écrire sans perte de tems, dès que vous aurez pris une résolution. Adieu, mon cher ami.*

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A M. Deyverdun

HIS GRATITUDE TO DEYVERDUN.

*Je reçois votre lettre du 10 Juin, le 21 de ce mois. Aujourd'hui Mardi le 24, je mets la main à la plume (comme dit M. Fréron) pour y répondre, quoique ma missive ne puisse partir par arrangement des postes, que Vendredi prochain, 27 du courant. O merveille de la grace efficace! Elle n'agit pas moins puissamment sur vous, et moyennant le secours toujours prêt, et toujours prompt de nos couriers, un mois nous suffit pour la demande et la réponse. Je remercie mille fois le génie de l'amitié, qui m'a poussé, après mille efforts inutiles, à vous écrire enfin au moment le plus critique et le plus favorable. Jamais démarche n'a répondu si parfaitement à tous mes vœux et à toutes mes espérances. Je comptois sans doute sur la durée et la vérité de vos sentimens; mais j'ignorois (telle est la foiblesse humaine) jusqu'à quel point ils avoient pu être attiédies par le tems et l'éloignement; et je savois encore moins l'état actuel de votre santé, de votre fortune et de vos liaisons, qui auroient pu opposer tant d'obstacles à notre réunion.

Vous m'écrivez, vous m'aimez toujours; vous désirez avec zèle, avec ardeur, de réaliser nos anciens projets; vous le pouvez, vous le voulez; vous m'offrez dès l'automne votre maison, et quelle terrasse! votre société, et quelle société! L'arrangement nous convient à tous les deux; je retrouve à la fois le compagnon de ma jeunesse, un sage conseiller, et un peintre qui fait représenter et exagérer même les objets les plus rians. Ces exagérations me font pour le moins autant de plaisir que la simple vérité. Si votre portrait étoit tout à fait ressemblant, ces agrémens n'existeroient que hors de nous mêmes, et j'aime encore mieux les retrouver dans la vivacité de votre cœur et de votre imagination. Ce n'est pas que je ne reconnoisse un grand fond de vérité dans le tableau de Lausanne; je connois le lieu de la scène, je me transporte en idée sur *notre* terrasse, je vois ces côteaux, ce lac, ces montagnes, ouvrage favoris de la nature, et je conçois sans peine les embellissemens que votre goût s'est plu y ajouter. Je me rappelle depuis vingt ou trente ans les mœurs, l'esprit, l'aisance de la société, et je comprends que ce véritable ton de la bonne compagnie se perpétue, et s'épure de père en fils, ou plutôt de mère en fille; car il m'a toujours paru qu'à Lausanne, aussi bien qu'en France, les femmes sont très supérieures aux hommes. Dans un pareil séjour, je craindrois la dissipation bien plus que l'ennui, et le tourbillon de Lausanne étonneroit un philosophe accoutumé depuis tant d'années à la tranquillité de Londres. Vous êtes trop instruit pour regarder ce propos, comme une mauvaise plaisanterie; c'est dans les détroits qu'on est entraîné par la rapidité des courans: il n'y en a point en pleine mer. Dès qu'on ne recherche plus les plaisirs bruyans, et qu'on s'affranchit volontiers des devoirs pénibles, la liberté d'un simple particulier se fortifie par l'immensité de la ville. Quant à moi, l'application à mon grand ouvrage, l'habitude, et la récompense du travail, m'ont rendu plus studieux, plus sédentaire, plus ami de la retraite. La Chambre des Communes et les grands dîners exigent beaucoup de tems; et la tempérance d'un repas anglois vous permet de goûter de cinq ou six vins différens, et vous ordonne de boire une bouteille de claret après le dessert. Mais enfin je ne soupe jamais, je me couche de fort bonne heure, je reçois peu de visites, les matinées sont longues, les étés sont libres, et dès que je ferme ma porte, je suis oublié du monde entier. Dans une société plus bornée et plus amicale, les démarches sont publiques, les droits sont réciproques, l'on dîne de bonne heure, on se goûte trop pour ne pas passer l'après-midi ensemble; on soupe, on veille, et les plaisirs de la soirée ne laissent pas de déranger le repos de la nuit, et le travail du lendemain.

HIS HESITATION TO ACCEPT.

Quel est cependant le résultat de ces plaintes? c'est seulement que la mariée est trop belle, et que j'ose me servir de l'excuse honnête de la santé et du privilège d'un homme de lettres; il ne tiendra qu'à moi de modérer un peu l'excès de mes jouissances. Pour cet engouement que vous m'annoncez, et qui

a toujours été le défaut des peuples les plus spirituels, je l'ai déjà éprouvé sur un plus grand théâtre. Il y a six ans que l'ami de Madame Necker fut reçu à Paris, comme celui de George Deyverdun pourroit l'être à Lausanne. Je ne connois rien de plus flatteur que cet accueil favorable d'un public poli et éclairé. Mais cette faveur, si douce pour l'étranger, n'est-elle pas un peu dangereuse pour l'habitant exposé à voir flétrir ses lauriers, par la faute ou par l'inconstance de ses juges? Non; on se soutient toujours, peut être pas précisément au même point d'élévation. A l'abri de trois gros volumes in-quarto en langue étrangère, encore ce qui n'est pas un petit avantage, je conserverai toujours la réputation littéraire, et cette réputation donnera du relief aux qualités sociales, si l'on trouve l'historien sans travers, sans affectation et sans prétentions.

Je serai donc charmé et content de votre société, et j'aurois pu dire en deux mots, ce qui j'ai bavardé en deux pages; mais il y a tant de plaisir à bavarder avec un ami! car enfin je possède à Lausanne un véritable ami; et les simples connoissances remplaceront sans beaucoup de peine, tout ce qui s'appelle liaison, et même amitié, dans ce vaste désert de Londres. Mais au moment où j'écris, je vois de tous côtés une foule d'objets dont la perte sera bien plus difficile à réparer. Vous connoissiez ma bibliothèque; mais je suis en état de vous rendre le propos de votre maison *c'est bien autre chose à cette heure*; formée peu à peu, mais avec beaucoup de soin et de dépense, elle peut se nommer aujourd'hui un beau cabinet de particulier. Non content de remplir à rangs redoublés la meilleure pièce qui lui étoit destinée, elle s'est débordée dans la chambre sur la rue, dans votre ancienne chambre à coucher, dans la mienne, dans tous les recoins de la maison de *Bentinck-street*, et jusques dans une chaumière que je me suis donnée à *Hampton Court*.

J'ai mille courtisans rangés autour de moi:
Ma retraite est mon Louvre, et j'y commande en roi.

Le fonds est de la meilleure compagnie Grecque, Latine, Italienne, Françoisse, et Angloise, et les auteurs les moins chers à l'homme de goût, des ecclésiastiques, des Byzantins, des Orientaux, sont les plus nécessaires à l'historien de la Décadence et de la Chute, &c. Vous ne sentez que trop bien le désagrément de laisser, et l'impossibilité de transporter cinq ou six milles volumes, d'autant plus que le ciel n'a pas voulu faire de la Suisse un pays maritime. Cependant mon zèle pour la réussite de nos projets communs, me fait imaginer que ces obstacles pourront s'applanir, et que je puis adoucir ou supporter ces privations douloureuses. Les bons auteurs classiques, la bibliothèque des nations, se retrouvent dans tous les pays. Lausanne n'est pas dépourvu de livres, ni de politesse, et j'ai dans l'esprit qu'on pourroit acquérir pour un certain tems, quelque bibliothèque d'un vieillard ou d'un mineur, dont la famille ne voudroit pas se défaire entièrement. Quant aux outils de mon travail, nous commencerons par examiner l'état de nos richesses; après quoi il faudroit faire un petit calcul du prix, du poids et de la rareté de chaque ouvrage, pour juger de ce qu'il seroit nécessaire de transporter de Londres, et de ce qu'on acheteroit plus commodément en Suisse; à l'égard de ces frais, on devroit les envisager comme les avances d'une manufacture transplantée en pays étranger, et dont on espère retirer dans la suite un profit raisonnable. Malheureusement votre bibliothèque publique, en y ajoutant même celle de M. de Bochat, est assez piteuse; mais celles de Berne et de Basle sont très nombreuses, et je compterois assez sur la bonhomie Helvétique, pour espérer que, moyennant des recommandations et des cautions, il me seroit permis d'en tirer les livres dont j'aurois essentiellement besoin. Vous êtes très bien placé pour prendre les informations, et pour faire les démarches convenables; mais vous voyez du moins combien je me retourne de tous les côtés, pour esquiver la difficulté la plus formidable.

HIS FRIEND AND VALET.

Venons à présent à des objets moins relevés, mais très importants à l'existence et au bien-être de l'animal, le logement, les domestiques, et la table. Pour mon appartement particulier, une chambre à coucher, avec un grand cabinet et une antichambre, auroient suffi à tous mes besoins; mais si vous pouvez vous en passer, je me promènerai avec plaisir dans l'immensité de vos onze pièces, qui

s'accommoderont sans doute aux heures et aux saisons différentes. L'article des domestiques renferme une assez forte difficulté, sur laquelle je dois vous consulter. Vous connoissez, et vous estimez Caplen mon valet de chambre, maître d'hotel, &c. qui a été nourri dans notre maison, et qui comptoit d'y finir ses jours. Depuis votre départ, ses talents et ses vertus se sont développés de plus en plus, et je le considère bien moins sur le pied d'un domestique, que sur celui d'un ami. Malheureusement il ne sait que l'Anglois, et jamais il n'apprendra de langue étrangère. Il m'accompagna, il y a six ans, dans mon voyage à Paris, mais il rapporta fidèlement à Londres toute l'ignorance, et tous les préjugés d'un bon patriote. A Lausanne il me coûteroit beaucoup, et à l'exception du service personnel, il ne nous seroit que d'une très petite utilité. Cependant je supporterois volontiers cette dépense, mais je suis très persuadé que, si son attachement le portoit à me suivre, il s'ennuyeroit à mourir dans un pays où tout lui seroit étranger et désagréable. Il faudroit donc me détacher d'un homme dont je connois le zèle, la fidélité, rompre tout d'un coup de petites habitudes qui sont liées avec le bien-être journalier et momentané, et se résoudre à lui substituer un visage nouveau, peut-être un mauvais sujet, toujours quelque aventurier Suisse pris sur le pavé de Londres. Vous rappelez-vous un certain George Suess qui a fait autrefois avec moi le voyage de France et d'Italie? Je le crois marié et établi à Lausanne; s'il vit encore, si vous pouvez l'engager à se rendre ici, pour me ramener en Suisse, la compagnie d'un bon et ancien serviteur ne laisseroit pas d'adoucir la chute, et il resteroit peut-être auprès de moi, jusqu'à ce que nous eussions choisi un jeune homme du pays, adroit, modeste et bien élevé, à qui je ferois un parti avantageux.

Les autres domestiques, gouvernantes, laquais, cuisinière, &c. se prennent et se renvoient sans difficulté. Un article bien plus important, c'est notre table, car enfin nous ne sommes pas assez hermites, pour nous contenter des légumes et des fruits de votre jardin, tout excellens qu'ils sont; mais je n'ai presque rien à ajouter à l'honnêteté de vos propos, qui me donnent beaucoup plus de plaisir que de surprise. Si je me trouvois sans fortune, au lieu de rougir des bienfaits de l'amitié, j'accepterois vos offres aussi simplement que vous les faites. Mais nous ne sommes pas réduits à ce point, et vous comprenez assez qu'une déconfiture angloise laisse encore une fortune fort décente au Pays de Vaud, et pour vous dire quelque chose de plus précis, je dépenserois sans peine et sans inconvénient cinq ou six cens Louis. Vous connoissez le résultat aussi bien que les détails d'un ménage; en supposant une petite table de deux philosophes Epicuriens, quatre, cinq, ou six domestiques, des amis assez souvent, des repas assez rarement, beaucoup de sensualité, et peu de luxe, à combien estimez-vous en gros la dépense d'un mois et d'une année? Le partage que vous avez déjà fait, me paroît des plus raisonnables; vous me logez, et je vous nourris. A votre calcul, j'ajouterois mon entretien personnel, habits, plaisirs, gages de domestiques, &c. et je verrois d'une manière assez nette, l'ensemble de mon petit établissement.

HIS HOPES OF A POLITICAL PLACE.

Après avoir essayé tant de détails minutieux, le cher lecteur s' imagine sans doute que la résolution de me fixer pendant quelque tems aux bords du Lac Léman, est parfaitement décidée. Hélas! rien n'est moins vrai; mais je me suis livré au charme délicieux de contempler, de sonder, de palper ce bonheur, dont je sens tout le prix, qui est à ma portée, et auquel j'aurai peut-être la bêtise de renoncer. Vous avez raison de croire, mais vous ignorez jusqu'à quel point vous l'avez, que ma carrière politique a été plus semée d'épines que de roses. Eh! quel objet, quel motif, pourroit me consoler de l'ennui des affaires, et de la honte de la dépendance? *La gloire*? Comme homme de lettres, j'en jouis, comme orateur je ne l'aurai jamais, et le nom des simples soldats est oublié dans les victoires aussi bien que dans les défaites. *Le devoir*? Dans ces combats à l'aveugle, où les chefs ne cherchent que leur avantage particulier, il y a toujours à parier que les subalternes feront plus de mal que de bien. *L'attachement personnel*? Les ministres sont rarement dignes de l'inspirer; jusqu'à présent Lord North n'a pas eu à se plaindre de moi, et si je me retire du Parlement, il lui sera très aisé d'y substituer un autre muet, tout aussi affidé que son ancien serviteur. Je suis intimément convaincu, et par la raison, et par le sentiment, qu'il n'y a point de parti, qui me convienne aussi bien que de vivre

avec vous, et auprès de vous à Lausanne; et si je parviens à la place (*Commissioner of the Excise or Customs*) où je vise, il y aura toutes les semaines cinq longues matinées, qui m'avertiront de la folie de mon choix. Vous vous trompez à la vérité à l'égard de l'instabilité de ces emplois; ils sont presque les seuls qui ne ressentent jamais des révolutions du ministère.

Cependant si cette place s'offroit bientôt, je n'aurois pas le bon sens et le courage de la refuser. Quels autres conseillers veux-je prendre, sinon mon cœur et ma raison? Il en est de puissans et toujours écoutés: les égards, la mauvaise honte, tous mes amis, ou soi-disant tels, s'écrieront que je suis un homme perdu, ruiné, un fou qui se dérobe à ses protecteurs, un misanthrope qui s'exile au bout du monde, et puis les exagérations sur tout ce qui seroit fait en ma faveur, si sûrement, si promptement, si libéralement. Mylord Sheffield opinera à me faire interdire et enfermer; mes deux tantes et ma belle mère se plaindront que je les quitte pour jamais, &c. Et l'embarras de prendre mon bonnet de nuit, comme disoit le sage Fontenelle, lorsqu'il n'étoit question que de decoucher, combien de bonnets de nuit ne me faudra-t-il pas prendre, et les prendre tout seul? car tout le monde, amis, parens, domestiques, s'opposera à ma fuite. Voilà à la vérité des obstacles assez peu redoutables, et en les décrivant, je sens qu'ils s'affoiblissent dans mon esprit. Grace à ce long bavardage vous connoissez mon intérieur, comme moi même, c'est à dire assez mal; mais cette incertitude, très amicale pour moi, seroit très facheuse pour vous. Votre réponse me parviendra vers la fin de Juillet, et huit jours après, je vous promets une réplique nette et décisive: *je pars* ou *je reste*. Si je pars, ce sera au milieu de Septembre; je mangerai les raisins de votre treille les premiers jours d'Octobre, et vous aurez encore le tems de me charger de vos commissions. Ne me dites plus, *Monsieur, et très cher ami*; le premier est froid, le second est superflu.*

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M. Deyverdun à M. Gibbon

*Me voilà un peu embarrassé actuellement; je ne dois vous appeller ni Monsieur, ni ami. Eh bien! vous saurez qu'étant parti Samedi de Strasbourg, pendant que je venois ici, votre seconde lettre alloit là, et qu'ainsi je reçus votre troisième, Dimanche, et votre seconde, hier. La mention que vous y faisiez du Suisse George, dont je n'ai pu rien trouver dans la première, m'a fait comprendre qu'il y en avoit une seconde, et j'ai cru devoir attendre un courier, la troisième n'exigeant pas de réponse.

Pour votre parole, permettez que je vous en dispense encore, et même jusqu'au dernier jour, je sens bien qu'un procédé contraire vous conviendrait; mais certes il ne me convient pas du tout. Ceci, comme vous le dites, est une espèce de mariage, et pensez vous que malgré les engagements les plus solennels, je n'eusse pas reconduit chez elle, du pied des autels, la femme la plus aimable qui m'eut témoigné des regrets? Jamais je ne me consolerois, si je vous voyois mécontent dans la suite, et dans le cas de me faire des reproches. C'est à vous à faire, si vous croyez nécessaire, des démarches de votre côté, qui fortifient votre résolution; pour moi, je n'en ferai point d'essentielles, jusqu'à ce que j'aye reçu encore une lettre de vous. Après ce petit préambule, parlons toujours comme si l'affaire étoit décidée, et repassons votre lettre. Tout ce que vous dites des grandes et petites villes, est très vrai, et votre comparaison des détroits et de la pleine mer, est on ne peut pas plus juste et agréable; mais enfin, *comme on fait son lit, on se couche*, disoit Sancho Pancha d'agréable mémoire, et qui peut mieux faire son lit à sa guise qu'un étranger, qui, n'ayant ni devoirs d'état ni de sang à remplir, peut vivre entièrement isolé, sans que personne y puisse trouver à redire? Moi même, bourgeois et citoyen de la ville, je suis presque entièrement libre. L'été, par exemple, je déteste de m'enfermer le soir dans des chambres chaudes, pour faire une partie. Eh bien! on m'a persécuté un peu la première année; à présent on me laisse en repos. Il y aura sans doute quelque changement dans votre manière de vivre: mais il me semble qu'on se fait aisément à cela. Les dîners, surtout en femmes, sont très rares; les soupers peu grands; on reste plutôt pour être ensemble, que pour manger, et plusieurs personnes ne s'asseyent point. Je crois, tout compté et rabattu, que vous aurez encore plus de tems pour le cabinet qu'à Londres; on sort peu le matin, et quand nos amis communs viendront chez moi, et vous demanderont, je leur dirai; "ce n'est pas un oisif comme vous autres, il travaille dans son cabinet," et ils se tairont respectueusement.

Pour les bibliothèques publiques, votre idée ne pourroit, je pense, se réaliser pour un lecteur ou même un écrivain ordinaire, mais un homme qui joue un rôle dans la république des lettres, un homme aimé et considéré, trouvera, je m'imagine, bien des facilités; d'ailleurs, j'ai de bons amis à Berne, et je prendrai ici des informations.

Passons à la table. Si j'étois à Lausanne, cet article seroit plus sûr, je pourrais revoir mes papiers, consulter; j'ai une chienne de mémoire. A vue de pays cela pourra aller de 20 à 30 Louis par mois, plus ou moins, vous sentez, suivant la friandise, et le plus ou moins de convives. Marquez moi dans votre première combien vous coûte le vôtre.

SOCIAL HABITS AT LAUSANNE.

Je sens fort bien tous les bonnets de nuit: point de grands changemens sans embarras, même sans regrets; vous en aurez quelquefois sans doute: par exemple, si votre salle à manger, votre salle de compagnie, sont plus riantes, vous perdrez pour le vase de la bibliothèque. Pour ce qui est des représentations, des discours au moins inutiles, il me semble que le mieux seroit de masquer vos grandes opérations, de ne parler que d'une course, d'une visite chez moi, de six mois ou plus ou moins. Vous feriez bien, je pense, d'aller chez mon ami Louis Teissier; c'est un brave et honnête homme, qui m'est attaché, qui aime notre pays; il vous donnera tout plein de bons conseils avec zèle, et vous gardera le secret.

Vous aurez quelquefois à votre table un poète; – oui, Monsieur, un poète: – nous en avons un enfin. Procurez vous un volume 8vo. *Poësies Helvétiques, imprimées l'année passée chez Mouser, à Lausanne*.⁴⁴ Vous trouverez entr'autres dans l'épître au jardinier de la grotte, votre ami et votre parc. Toute la prose est de votre très humble serviteur, qui désire qu'elle trouve grace devant vous.

Le Comte de Cagliostro⁴⁵ a fait un séjour à Londres. On ne sait qui il est, d'où il est, d'où il tire son argent; il exerce *gratis* ses talens pour la médecine; il a fait des cures admirables; mais c'est d'ailleurs le composé le plus étrange. J'ai cessé de prendre ses remèdes qui m'échauffoient – l'homme d'ailleurs me gâtoit le médecin. Je suis revenu à Basle avec mon ami. Adieu; récrivez moi le plutôt possible.*

⁴⁴ *Poësies Helvétiques*. Par M. B * * * * * (i. e. J. P. L. Bridel). Lausanne. 1782. 8°. Épître au Jardinier de la Grotte, pp. 66-72. "Que j'ai passé de charmantes veillées, Dessous ce chaume au fond de ton verger! Loin du fracas d'un monde mensonger, Par le plaisir elles étaient filées. * * * * * Tantôt quittant ce chaume solitaire, Asyle heureux qu'un palais ne vaut pas, Sur ta terrasse accompagnant tes pas, Nous contemplions les jeux de la lumière; L'astre des nuits à nos yeux se levant Se dégageait lentement des montagnes, Poursuivait l'ombre au travers des campagnes; Et scintillait dans les eaux du Léman."

⁴⁵ Cagliostro, whose real name is said to have been Giuseppe Balsamo, came to Strasbourg in 1780. Jean Benjamin de la Borde, in his *Lettres sur la Suisse* (published 1783), expresses enthusiastic admiration for his skill and character. For his share in the Necklace Scandal at Paris in 1785-6, Cagliostro was banished from France. He left the country, saying that he should not return till the Bastille was *une promenade publique*. At Rome he was condemned in the Papal Court to perpetual imprisonment, and died, it is said, in 1795.

464.

A. M. Deyverdun

Hampton Court, ce 1 Juillet, 1783.

HIS DECISION TO LEAVE ENGLAND.

Après avoir pris ma résolution, l'honneur, et ce qui vaut encore mieux l'amitié, me défendent de vous laisser un moment dans l'incertitude. Je pars. Je vous en donne ma parole, et comme je suis bien aise de me fortifier d'un nouveau lien, je vous prie très sérieusement de ne pas m'en dispenser. Ma possession, sans doute, ne vaut pas celle de Julie; mais vous serez plus inexorable que St. Preux. Je ne sens plus qu'une vive impatience pour notre réunion. Mais le mois d'Octobre est encore loin; 92 jours, et nous aurons tout le tems de prendre, et de nous donner des éclaircissemens dont nous avons besoin. Après un mûr examen, je renonce au voyage de George Suess, qui me paroît incertain, cher et difficile. Après tout mon valet de chambre et ma bibliothèque sont les deux articles les plus embarrassans. Si je ne retenois pas ma plume, je remplirois sans peine la feuille; mais il ne faut pas passer du silence à un babil intarissable. Seulement si je connois le Comte de Cagliostro, cet homme extraordinaire, &c. Savez vous le Latin? oui, sans doute; mais faites, comme si je ne le savois point. Quand retournez vous à Lausanne vous même? Je pense que vous y trouverez une petite bête, bien aimable mais tant soit peu mechante, qui se nomme My lady Elizabeth Foster, parlez lui de moi, mais parlez en avec discretion, elle a des correspondences partout. *Vale.*

465.

To Lord Sheffield

July 10th, 1783.

*You will read the following lines with more patience and attention than you would probably give to a hasty conference, perpetually interrupted by the opening of the door, and perhaps by the quickness of our own tempers. I neither expect nor desire an answer on a subject of extreme importance to myself, but which friendship alone can render interesting to you. We shall soon meet at Sheffield.

It is needless to repeat the reflections which we have sometimes debated together, and which I have often seriously weighed in my silent solitary walks. Notwithstanding your active and ardent spirit, you must allow that there is some perplexity in my present situation, and that my future prospects are distant and cloudy. I have lived too long in the world to entertain a very sanguine idea of the friendship or zeal of Ministerial patrons; and we are all sensible how much the powers of patronage are reduced.*

The source of pensions is absolutely stopped, and a double list of candidates is impatient and clamorous for half the number of desirable places. A seat at the board of customs or excise was certainly the most practicable attempt, but how far are we advanced in the pursuit? Could we obtain (it was indeed unprecedented) an extraordinary commission? Have we received any promise of the *first* vacancy? how often is the execution of such a promise delayed to a second or third opportunity? When will those vacancies happen? Incumbents are sometimes very tough. Of the Excise I know less, but I am sure that the door of the Customs (except when it was opened for Sir Stanier by a pension of *equal* value) has been shut, at least during the last three years. In the meanwhile I should be living in a state of anxiety and dependence, working in the illiberal service of the House of Commons, my seat in Parliament sinking in value every day and my expenses very much exceeding my annual income. *At the end of that time, or rather long before that time (for their lives are not worth a year's purchase), our ministers are kicked down stairs, and I am left their disinterested friend to fight through another opposition, and to expect the fruits of another revolution.

But I will take a more favourable supposition, and conceive myself, in six months, firmly seated at the board of Customs; before the end of the next six months, I should infallibly hang myself. Instead of regretting my disappointment, I rejoyce in my escape; as I am satisfied that no salary could pay me for the irksomeness of attendance, and the drudgery of business so repugnant to my taste, (and I will dare to say) so unworthy of my character. Without looking forwards to the possibility, still more remote, of exchanging that laborious office for a smaller annuity, there is surely another plan, more reasonable, more simple, and more pleasant; a temporary retreat to a quiet and less expensive scene. In a four years' residence at Lausanne, I should live within my income, save, and even accumulate, my ready money; finish my history, an object of profit as well as fame, expect the contingencies of elderly lives, and return to England at the age of fifty, to form a lasting independent establishment, without courting the smiles of a minister, or apprehending the downfall of a party. Such have been my serious sober reflections.

PLAN OF JOINING DEYVERDUN.

Yet I much question whether I should have found courage to follow my reason and my inclination, if a friend had not stretched his hand to draw me out of the dirt. The twentieth of last May I wrote to my friend Deyverdun, after a long interval of silence, to expose my situation, and to consult in what manner I might best arrange myself at Lausanne. From his answer, which I received about a fortnight ago, I have the pleasure to learn, that his heart and his house are both open for my reception; that a family which he had lodged for some years is about to leave him, and that at no

other time my company would have been so acceptable and convenient. I shall step, at my arrival, into an excellent apartment and a delightful situation; the fair division of our expences will render them very moderate, and I shall pass my time with the companion of my youth, whose temper and studies have always been congenial to my own. I have given him my word of honour to be at Lausanne in the beginning of October, and no power or persuasion can divert me from this IRREVOCABLE resolution, which I am every day proceeding to execute.

I wish, but I scarcely hope, to convince you of the propriety of my scheme;⁴⁶ but at least you will allow, that when we are not able to prevent the *follies* of our friends, we should strive to render them as easy and harmless as possible. The arrangement of my house, furniture and books will be left to meaner hands, but it is to your zeal and judgment alone that I can trust the more important disposal of Lenborough and Lymington. On these subjects we may go into a Committee at Sheffield-place, but you know it is the rule of a Committee not to hear any arguments against the *principle* of the bill. At present I shall only observe, that neither of these negotiations ought to detain me here; the former may be dispatched as well, the latter much better, in my absence. *Vale*.*

⁴⁶ Lord Sheffield, however, was convinced of the wisdom of Gibbon's plan. "Gibbon," he writes to Mr. Eden, August 7, 1783, "has baffled all arrangements; possibly you may have heard at Bushy or Bedford Square, of a continental scheme. It has annoyed me much, and of all circumstances the most provoking is, that he is right; a most pleasant opportunity offered. His seat in Parliament is left in my hands. He is here [Sheffield Place]. In short, his plan is such, that it was impossible to urge anything against it" (*Lord Auckland's Journal and Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 56.)

466.
To his Stepmother

Bentinck Street, July 26th, 1783.

My Dear Madam,

You have so long been acquainted with my indifference or rather dislike to the house of Commons, that you will not be much surprized, that I should entertain a thought or indeed a resolution of vacating my seat. Your vain hope (a kind and a friendly vanity) of my making a distinguished figure in that assembly has long since been extinct, and you are now convinced by repeated experience that my reputation must be derived solely from my pen. A seat in parliament I can only value as it is connected with some official situation of emolument: that connection which has fortunately subsisted about three years is now dissolved, and I do not see any probability of its being *speedily* restored. Whatever may be the wishes or sentiments of my political friends, their patronage has been extremely circumscribed by the double list of candidates, the reduction of places and the suppression of pensions. The most solid and attainable things (at the boards of Customs or Excise) are incompatible with a seat in parliament, and my prævious retreat (by taking from them a motive of delay) will promote rather than obstruct the accomplishment of my hopes and their promises. Thus restored for some time to the enjoyment of freedom, I propose to spend it in the society of my friend Deyverdun at Lausanne, who presses me in the kindest manner to visit him in the house and garden which he possesses in the most beautiful situation in the World.

I intend going about the middle of September, and though it is not possible to define precisely the time of my absence, it is not likely that I shall pass less than a year in Switzerland. I shall exchange the most unwholesome air (that of the house of Commons) for the purest and most salubrious, the heat and hurry of party for a cool literary repose; and I have little doubt that this excursion, which will amuse me by the change of objects, will have a lasting and beneficial effect on my health. The lease of my house expires next Christmas, and I shall take the opportunity of disengaging myself from an useless expence, and of removing to a hired room my books, and such part of my furniture as may be worth keeping. You will be pleased to hear that the faithful Caplen accompanies me abroad.

HIS DEPARTURE A NECESSITY.

Such is the light in which my journey should be represented to those friends to whom it may be advisable to say any thing of my motives. Every circumstance which I have already stated is strictly true, but you will too easily conceive that it is not the *whole truth*: that this step is dictated by the hard law of æconomy or rather of necessity, and that the moment of my return will not entirely depend on my own choice. You have not forgot how a similar intention some years ago was superseded by my appointment to the board of trade. Perhaps it would have been wiser if I had left England immediately after the loss of my place, and the sense of this imprudent delay urges me more strongly every day to avoid the difficulties of a still longer procrastination. By this resolution I shall deliver myself at once from the heavy expence of a London life, my friend Deyverdun and myself shall join in a moderate though elegant establishment at Lausanne; and I can wait without inconvenience for one of the events, which may enable me to revisit with pleasure and credit my country, and the person, whom in that country, I most value, I mean yourself. Allow me to add (though I know such thoughts will be absorbed in your mind by higher and more tender sentiments), yet allow me to add that at the stated days of Midsummer and Christmas, you may regularly draw for your half year's annuity on Messieurs Gosling in Fleet Street, and that effectual steps shall be taken to secure you from a possibility of disappointment. It would not be my absence, but my stay in England that could create any delay or difficulty on that subject.

And now, my dear madam, let me submit to your consideration and final decision, a question which for my own part I am unable to determine, whether I shall visit Bath before I leave England. If I consulted only my wishes, the mere expence and trouble of the journey would be obstacles of small account, but I much fear, that on this occasion, prudence will dissuade what inclination would prompt, and that a meeting of three or four days (for it could be no more) would tend rather to embitter than to alleviate our unavoidable separation. If you decide for my coming down, it will probably take place between the 20th and 30th of next month, and I must beg that little, or nothing, may be said on the subject of my approaching journey, and that we may (silently) turn our thoughts to the happiness of seeing each other, after an interval of time, less considerable perhaps than those which commonly elapse between my Bath expeditions.

*I am, my Dear Madam,
Ever most truly yours,
E. G.*

467.
To Lord Sheffield

Thursday night, 1783.

Elmsley⁴⁷ and self have been hard at work this afternoon, and about ten quintals are preparing for foreign service. Can you save me ten pounds per annum, such is the rent of a good and safe room in the Strand? You offered me a room in Downing Street (did you mean an entire room?) for plate, china, &c. Is it the apartment on the ground floor from whence you was expelled by odours? If you can lodge my books you must give me a line per Saturday's coach, with a mandate to the maid that she may not scruple to shew and receive. Time presses and Elmsley is on the wing. Pelham⁴⁸ is appointed Irish Secretary in the room of Wyndham⁴⁹ who pleads bad health, but who had written very indiscreet letters at the general election. Adieu. I want to hear of My Lady, her tender frame has been too much agitated.

⁴⁷ Peter Elmsley (1736-1802) succeeded Paul Vaillant as a bookseller opposite Southampton Street, in the Strand. His special department was the importation of foreign books. He was a man of great general knowledge, and possessed a remarkable knowledge of the French literature and language. Gibbon died at his house, 76, St. James's Street, at the corner of Little St. James's Street.

⁴⁸ Thomas Pelham, M.P. for Sussex (afterwards second Earl of Chichester) (1756-1826), served as Irish Secretary under Lord Northington in the Coalition Government from 1783 to 1784.

⁴⁹ William Windham (1750-1810), M.P. for Norwich, resigned the Irish Secretaryship in 1783. He was Secretary at War from 1794 to 1801, and War and Colonial Secretary 1806-7. He was a powerful speaker, a brilliant talker, a patron of pugilism, and, from his irresolution and love of paradox, nicknamed "Weather-cock."

468.
To his Stepmother

Sheffield-place, August 8th, 1783.

Dear Madam,

HIS REASONS FOR LEAVING LONDON.

Your truly *maternal* letters (which I have repeatedly perused) have agitated my mind with a variety of pleasing and painful sensations. I am grieved that you should contemplate my departure in so melancholy a light, but I shall always revere the affection which prompts your anxiety, and magnifies the evil. I receive with more gratitude than surprise your generous offer of devoting yourself and so large a portion of your income to my relief, and I am concerned to find on calmer reflection that such a project is attended with insuperable difficulties. After the mutual and unpleasant sacrifice of our habits and inclinations, I could not, even with your assistance, reduce the expence of a London life to the level of my present income, and the two hundred a year which you so nobly propose would be exhausted by the single article of a Coach.

With regard to the delays which you suggest, you may be assured that I shall take no material step without consideration and advice. Had I staid in London, I should have removed from Bentinck Street. On my return another house may at any time be procured, and I shall carefully preserve the most valuable part of my furniture, plate, linnen, china, beds, &c. My seat in Parliament cannot be vacated till the next Session, and I shall leave the disposal of it to our friend Lord Sheffield, in whose zeal and discretion we may safely confide. On his own account he regrets my departure, but he has been forced to give a full though reluctant approbation to my design. I wish it were in my power to remove all your kind apprehensions which relate to the length of my absence and the choice of my residence. I certainly do not entertain a very sanguine idea of political friendship, but I am convinced that such persons as really wish to serve me will not be discouraged by my temporary retreat to Switzerland. In the leisure and quiet which I shall enjoy at Lausanne, I shall prosecute the continuation of my history, and the care of publishing a work, from whence I may expect both honour and advantage, will secure, within a reasonable space, my return to England. Your idea of the climate of Switzerland is by many degrees too formidable; the air though sometimes keen, is pure and wholesome, the Gout is much less frequent on the Continent than in our Island, and the provoking luxury of London dinners is much more likely to feed that distemper, than the temperance and tranquillity of Lausanne. In the society of my friend Deyverdun, I hope to spend some time with comfort and propriety, but my affections are still fixed in England, and it will be my wish and endeavour to shorten the term of this necessary separation, and in the meanwhile you may depend on the most regular communication of every circumstance that affects my health and happiness.

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

I have some questions to ask you about the disposal of certain pieces of furniture, such as the Clock and Carpet, but I would not mix those trifles with the more serious purpose of this letter.

469.
To Lord Sheffield

Monday, August 18th, 1783.

*In the preparations of my journey I have not felt any circumstance more deeply than the kind concern of Lady S[heffield], and the silent grief of Mrs. Porten. Yet the age of my friends makes a very essential difference. I can scarcely hope ever to see my aunt again; but I flatter myself, that in less than two years, my *sister*⁵⁰ will make me a visit, and that in less than four, I shall return it with a chearful heart at Sheffield-place. Business advances; this morning my books were shipped for Rouen, and will reach Lausanne almost as soon as myself. On Thursday morning the bulk of the library moves from Bentinck-street to Downing-street. I shall escape from the noise to Hampton Court, and spend three or four days in taking leave. I want to know your precise motions, what day you arrive in town, whether you visit Lord Beauchamp before the races, &c. I am now impatient to be gone, and shall only wait for a last interview with you. Your medley of Judges, Advocates, politicians, &c., is rather *useful* than pleasant. Town is a vast solitude. Adieu.*

⁵⁰ Meaning Lady Sheffield.

470.
To Lord Sheffield

Bentinck-street, Wednesday night, August 20th, 1783.

*I am now concluding one of the most unpleasant days of my life. Will the day of our meeting again be accompanied with proportionable satisfaction? The business of preparation will serve to agitate and divert *my* thoughts; but I do not like your brooding over melancholy ideas in your solitude, and I heartily wish that both you and my dear Lady S. would immediately go over and pass a week at Brighton. Such is our imperfect nature, that dissipation is a far more efficacious remedy than reflection. At all events, let me hear from you soon. I have passed the evening at home, without gaining any intelligence.*

471.
To Lord Sheffield

Friday, August 22nd, 1783.

PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE.

*I am astonished with your apparition and flight, and am at a loss to conjecture the mighty and sudden business of *Coventry,* which could not be delayed till next week. *Timeo* *Conways,* their selfish cunning, and your sanguine unsuspecting spirit. Not dreaming of your arrival, I thought it unnecessary to apprize you, that I delayed Hampton to this day; on Monday I shall return, and will expect you Tuesday evening, either in Bentinck or Downing-street, as you like best. You have seen the piles of learning accumulated in your parlour; the transportation will be atchieved to-day, and Bentinck Street is already reduced to a light, ignorant habitation, which I shall inhabit till about the 1st of September; four days must be allowed for clearing and packing; these I shall spend in Downing-street, and after seeing you a moment on your return, I shall start about Saturday the 6th. London is a desert, and life, without books, business, or society, will be somewhat tedious. From this state, you will judge that your plan coincides very well, only I think you should give me the whole of Wednesday in Bentinck-street. With regard to Bushy, perhaps as a compliment to Lord L. you had better defer it till your return.⁵¹*

You have not forgot the model of a letter for Sainsbury, Way, Hearne, &c., with the 200 Guineas reward for the proper sale of Lenborough. I return your three letters with a fourth not less curious, which I have not yet answered. Mrs. G.'s pride is not inferior to her tenderness. *I admire Gregory Way,⁵² and should envy him, if I did not possess a disposition somewhat similar to his own. My lady will be reposed and restored at Brighton; the torrent of Lords, Judges, &c. a proper remedy for you, was a medicine ill-suited to her constitution. I *tenderly* embrace her.*

⁵¹ *I.e.*, probably, before applying direct to Lord North (Bushey), wait to see what Lord Loughborough may do.

⁵² Gregory Lewis Way, son of Lewis Way by his second wife, was half-brother to Lady Sheffield.

472.
To his Stepmother

Hampton Court, August 25th, 1783.

My dearest Madam,

I can easily attribute your silence to the true motive, the difficulty (of which I am likewise conscious) of our present situation. The subject which occupies our minds has been reciprocally exhausted: it is unpleasant to resume a melancholy train of ideas, and it is impossible to write with ease and cheerfulness on indifferent subjects. Yet I almost flatter myself that if you are not satisfied with my reasons, you are at least disposed to acquiesce in a resolution which is the offspring of necessity, and will I trust be the parent of happiness. I repeat my promise that distance shall only render me a more punctual correspondent, and I must again intreat that you would turn your thoughts from the moment of our separation to that of our reunion.

After sending two boxes of books to Lausanne I have deposited the remainder of my library in Lord Sheffield's capacious mansion in Downing Street, whither I shall send next week my plate, linnen, beds, &c. I expect your commands with regard to the Clock and Carpet: if you have not room or occasion for them at Bath, I should probably dispose of the first, as it might be damaged by neglect, but the latter I shall carefully preserve both as your workmanship and as your gift. If among the China, &c. there should be any things you would desire to select, Lord S., their Guardian and mine, is instructed to obey your commands. As far as I can calculate I shall be ready to set out about the 6th of September, the end of next week, but I propose writing to you again before my departure.

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

473.
To Lady Sheffield

Bentinck Street, August 30th, 1783.

My dear Friend,

FAREWELL TO SHEFFIELD PLACE.

*For the names of Sheffalina, &c. are too playful for the serious temper of my mind. In the whole period of my life I do not recollect a day in which I felt more unpleasant sensations, than that on which I took my leave of Sheffield-place. I forgot my friend Deyverdun, and the fair prospect of quiet and happiness which awaits me at Lausanne. I lost sight of our almost certain meeting at the end of a term, which, at our age, cannot appear very distant; nor could I amuse my uneasiness with the hopes, the more doubtful prospect, of your visit to Switzerland. The agitation of preparing every thing for my departure has, in some degree, diverted these melancholy thoughts; yet I still look forwards to the decisive day (to-morrow Se'nnight) with an anxiety of which yourself and Lord S. have the principal share.

Surely never any thing was so unlucky as the unseasonable death of Sir John Russell,⁵³ which so strongly reminded us of the instability of human life and human expectations. The inundation of the Assize must have distressed and overpowered you; but I hope and I wish to hear from yourself, that the air of your favourite Brighton, the bathing, and the quiet society of two or three friends, have composed and revived your spirits. Present my love to Sarah, and compliments to Miss Carter, &c. Adieu. Give me a speedy and satisfactory line.*

I am

Most truly yours,

E. Gibbon.

P.S. – You will find in Downing Street the *Histoire des Voyages* and the musical clock. During my absence I entrust them both to your care, but I desire that neither of them may be removed to Sheffield Place. You must direct to Downing Street, which I shall occupy next Monday.

⁵³ Sir John Russell, Bart., died on his way to Sheffield Place, August 8, 1783.

474.
To his Stepmother

Downing Street, Monday, Sept. 8th, 1783.

Dear Madam,

I am confined to this place (a better place than Dover) by the winds, and they likewise detain two Flanders mails by which I expect a letter from Deyverdun. I thought this advertisement necessary for fear you should suppose me tossing on the seas. I hope to get away by Friday, but you may rest assured that both for your sake and my own I will take very good care of my person.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. Gibbon.

475.
To Lord Sheffield

Downing Street, September 8th, 1783.

THE PEACE OF VERSAILLES.

*As we are not unconscious of each other's feelings, I shall only say, that I am glad you did not go alone into Sussex. An American rebel⁵⁴ to dispute with, gives a diversion to uneasy spirits, and I heartily wished for such a friend or adversary during the remainder of the day. No letter from Deyverdun; the post is arrived, but two Flanders mails are due. Æolus does not seem to approve of my designs, and there is little merit in waiting till Friday. I should wait with more reluctance, did I think there was much chance of success. I dine with Craufurd,⁵⁵ and if anything is decided will send an extraordinary Gazette. You have obliged me beyond expression, by your kindness to Aunt Kitty; she will drink her afternoon tea at Sheffield next Friday. For my sake, Lady S. will be kind to the old Lady, who will not be troublesome, and will vanish at the first idea of Brighton; has not that salubrious air already produced some effects? Peace will be proclaimed to-morrow;⁵⁶ odd! as War was never declared. The buyers of stock seem as indifferent as yourself about the definitive Treaty. Tell Maria, that though you had forgotten the *Annales de la Vertu*, I have directed them to be sent, but know nothing of their plan or merit. Adieu. When you see Mylady, say everything tender and friendly to her. I did not know how much I loved her. She may depend upon my keeping a separate, though not, perhaps, a very frequent account with her. *Apropos*, I think aunt Kitty has a secret wish to lye in my room; if it is not occupied, she might be indulged. Once more, adieu.*

E. G.

⁵⁴ Mr. Silas Deane.

⁵⁵ Probably "Fish" Crauford, a friend of C. J. Fox, and distinguished by his Eton nickname, given him for his curiosity, from his brother "Flesh" Crauford.

⁵⁶ The treaties of peace with the United States, France, Spain, and Holland were signed at Versailles, September 2, 1783.

476.
To Lord Sheffield

Tuesday Night [September 9], 1783.

It is singular, or rather it is natural that we should both entertain the same idea, for I give you my word that I was very near running down to Sheffield and staying there till Wednesday. Another day, and no letter from Deyverdun; indeed the two Flanders mails are still due. I have written to him this post. To-morrow Crauford dines again with the Secretary, and the business is to be decided.⁵⁷ I find Storer is now likely to succeed not so much from the zeal and activity of Lord's N.'s friendship, as because he could resign a place which Fox wants for Colonel Stanhope, to whom however he has given Thomas's company in the Guards. I will write another line to-morrow. Adieu.

E. G.

Newton, I think with reasons postpones any special power of Attorney till we are farther advanced, either with Cromwell's Client or some other purchaser: he says there will be sufficient time to send and return one while the title is under examination.

⁵⁷ Gibbon hoped that he might be appointed either a Commissioner of Excise, or secretary to the British Legation at Paris, where the Duke of Manchester was at this time ambassador. The latter post was given to Anthony Morris Storer, M.P. for Morpeth, one of the Admirable Crichtons of the day, celebrated as a dancer, skater, gymnast, musician, and writer of Latin verse. His magnificent library he left to Eton College at his death in 1799. Fox, no doubt, used his influence on this occasion against Gibbon. His lines have been already quoted. Another illustration of his impression that Gibbon was bought by a place is afforded by the following extract from Walpole's *Journal of the Reign of King George III. from the Year 1771 to 1783*, vol. ii. p. 464. "June 28, 1781: Last week was sold by auction the very valuable library of an honourable representative" (C. J. Fox) "of Westminster, and which had been taken, with all his effects, in execution. Amongst the books there was Mr. Gibbon's first volume of the *Roman History*, and which appeared by the title-page to have been given by the author to his honourable friend, who thought proper to subscribe the following anecdote: — 'The author at Brookes's said, there was no salvation for this country until six heads of the principal persons in Administration were laid on the table. Eleven days after, this same gentleman accepted a place of Lord of Trade under those very Ministers, and has acted with them ever since.' Such was the avidity of bidders for the smallest production of so wonderful a genius, that by the addition of this little record the book sold for three guineas."

477.
To Lord Sheffield

Thursday, September 11th, 1783.

*The scheme (which you may impart to My lady) is compleatly vanished, and I support the disappointment with Heroic patience. Crauford goes down to Chatsworth to-morrow, and Fox does not recommend my waiting for the event; yet the appointment is not yet declared, and I am ignorant of the name and merits of my successful competitor. Is it not wonderful that I am still in suspense, without a letter from Deyverdun? No, it is not wonderful, since no Flanders mail is arrived: to-morrow three will be due. I am therefore in a miserable state of doubt and anxiety; in a much better house indeed than my own, but without books, or business, or society. I send or call two or three times each day to Elmsley's, and can only say that I shall fly the next day, Saturday, Sunday, &c. after I have got my *quietus*.*

Aunt Kitty was delighted with Mylady's letter; at her age, and in her situation, every kind attention is pleasant. I took my leave this morning; and as I did not wish to repeat the scene, and thought she would be better at Sheffield, I suffer her to go to-morrow. Your discretion will communicate or withhold any tidings of my departure or delay as you judge most expedient. Christie writes to you this post; he talks, in his rhetorical way, of many purchasers. Do you approve of his fixing a day for the Auction? To us he talked of an indefinite advertisement.

*No news, except that we keep Negapatnam.⁵⁸ The other day the French Ambassador mentioned that the Empress of Russia, a precious B – , had proposed to ratify the principles of the armed neutrality, by a definitive treaty, but that the French, obliging creatures! had declared that they would neither propose nor accept an article so disagreeable to England. Grey Elliot was pleased with your attention, and says you are a perfect master of the subject.⁵⁹ Adieu. If I could be sure that no mail would arrive to-morrow, I would run down with my aunt. My heart is not light. I embrace My lady with true affection, but I need not repeat it.

E. G.

⁵⁸ By Article IV. of the Treaty with the United Provinces.

⁵⁹ The policy of Great Britain towards America in matters of trade, on which Lord Sheffield had spoken in April, 1783, and, later in the same year, published a pamphlet.

478.
To Lord Sheffield

Downing Street, Friday, September 12th, 1783.

DEPARTURE DELAYED.

*Since my departure is near, and inevitable, you and Lady S. will be rather sorry than glad to hear that I am detained, day after day, by the caprice of the winds. *Three* Flanders mails are now due. I know not how to move without the final letter from Deyverdun, which I expected a fortnight ago, and my fancy (perfectly unreasonable) begins to create strange fancies. A state of suspense is painful, but it will be alleviated by the short notes which I mean to write, and hope to receive, every post. A separation has some advantages, though they are purchased with bitter pangs; among them is the pleasure of knowing how dear we are to our friends, and how dear they are to us. It will be a kind office to soothe Aunt Kitty's sorrows, and to "rock the cradle of declining age." She will be vexed to hear that I am not yet gone; but she is reasonable and chearful.* I am grateful for Maria's attention to me or my corpse. Adieu.

Most truly yours,
E. G.

479.
To Lord Sheffield

Downing Street, Saturday, September 13th, 1783.

**Enfin la Bombe a crevé.*— The three Flanders mails are arrived this day, but without any letters from Deyverdun. Most incomprehensible! After many adverse reflections, I have finally resolved to begin my journey on Monday; a heavy journey, with much apprehension, and much regret. Yet I consider, 1st, That if he is alive and well, (an unpleasant *if*,) scarcely any event can have happened to disappoint our mutual wishes; and, 2dly, That, supposing the very worst, even that worst would not overthrow my general plan of living abroad, though it would derange my hopes of a quiet and delightful establishment with my friend.* Upon the whole, without giving way to melancholy fears, my reason conjectures that his indolence thought it superfluous to write any more, that it was my business to act and move, and his duty to sit still and receive me with open arms. At least he is well informed of my operations, as I wrote to him (since his last) July 31st, from Sheffield-place; August 19th; and this week, September 9th. The two first have already reached him.

As I shall not arrive at, or depart from, Dover till Tuesday night, (alas! I may be confined there a week,) you will have an opportunity, by dispatching a parcel *per* post to Elmsly's, to catch the Monday's post. Let us improve these last short moments: I want to hear how poor Kitty behaves. I am really impatient to be gone. It is provoking to be so near, yet so far from, certain persons. *London is a desert.* I dine to-morrow with the Paynes, who pass through. Lord Loughborough was not returned from Buxton yesterday.* Sir H[enry] C[linton]⁶⁰ found me out this morning; with very little trouble My Lady might rival Betsy; he talks with rapture of visits to be made at Sheffield, and returned at Brighton. I envy him those visits more than the red ribbon* or the glory of his American campaigns.

Adieu.

⁶⁰ Sir Henry Clinton succeeded Sir William Howe as commander-in-chief in America in 1778. He was severely blamed for leaving Cornwallis unsupported in the Southern Colonies, and for the disaster at York Town in 1781. He died in 1795, as governor of Gibraltar. His son, General Sir William Clinton, who served with distinction in the Peninsular War, married Lord Sheffield's second daughter, Lady Louisa Holroyd.

480.
To his Stepmother

Downing Street, Saturday, Sept. 13th, 1783.

My Dear Madam,

You will be surprized to receive another letter from this place, but I have been detained this whole week unpleasantly enough by the daily expectation of a Flanders mail, though considering the state of the winds and weather it is better to be detained in a good house in Downing Street, than at the Ship at Dover. My departure is now finally determined for Monday morning, and I travel with my own horses. I shall lye at Sittingbourne, and not reach Dover till the afternoon of the next day; my farther progress must depend on the caprice of Neptune and Æolus, but the moment I have escaped from their power I will send a line by the return of the packet.

Lord Sheffield spent two or three days with me in his way from Coventry races into Sussex.

KINDNESS OF THE SHEFFIELDS.

Nothing could exceed, both in word and deed, his kindness and that of his consort on the present occasion, which has indeed shewn me how dear I am to my real friends. They have taken poor Mrs. Porten down to Sheffield, and I am sure will contrive every thing that can support and dissipate her spirits. They both expressed to me in the most obliging terms how glad they should have been of a visit from you; but your mind is firmer, and your prospects are far more chearful than those of my poor Aunt. Adieu, my Dear Madam; though I go with pleasure from party and dependence to a Philosophical retreat, I cannot measure without a sigh the difference (in some degree imaginary) between one, and six, hundred miles.

Ever yours,

E. G.

481.

To Lord Sheffield

*Dover, Wednesday, September 17th, 1783,
Ten o'clock in the morning.*

*The best laws are useless without proper guardians. Your letter *per* Sunday's post is not arrived, (as its fate is uncertain, and irrevocable, you must repeat any material article,) but that *per* Monday's post reached me last night. Oliver⁶¹ is more insolent than his grandfather; but you will cope with one, and would not have been much afraid of the other. Last night the wind was so high, that the vessel could not stir from the harbour; this day it is brisk and fair. We start about one o'clock, are flattered with the hope of making Calais harbour by the same tide, in three hours and a half; but any delay will leave the disagreeable option of a tottering boat or a tossing night. What a cursed thing to live in an island! this step is more awkward than the whole journey. The Triumvirate of this memorable embarkation will consist of the grand Gibbon, Henry Laurens,⁶² Esquire, President of Congress, and Mr. Secretary, Colonel, Admiral, Philosopher Thompson,⁶³ attended by three horses, who are not the most agreeable fellow-passengers. If we survive, I will finish and seal my letter at Calais. Our salvation shall be ascribed to the prayers of My lady and Aunt; for I do believe they both pray.

Boulogne, Thursday morning, ten o'clock.

Instead of Calais, the wind has driven us to Boulogne, where we landed in the evening, with much noise and difficulty. The night is passed, the Customhouse is dispatched, the post-horses are ordered, and I shall start about eleven o'clock. I had not the least symptom of sea sickness, while my companions were spewing round me. Laurens has read the pamphlet,⁶⁴ and thinks it has done much mischief – a good sign! Adieu, the Captain is impatient. I shall reach Lausanne by the end of next week, but may probably write on the road.*

⁶¹ Mr. Oliver Cromwell, a solicitor with whom Gibbon and Lord Sheffield had business transactions. The Protector's son, Henry Cromwell, married Lady Elizabeth Russell, and had, among other children, a son, Henry, who was born in 1658. This son, afterwards Major Henry Cromwell, married Mary Hewling. Their grandson was this Mr. Oliver Cromwell of Cheshunt (1742-1821), the great-great-grandson of the Protector.

⁶² Henry Laurens had been detained as a prisoner in the Tower since his capture in 1779.

⁶³ Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count of Rumford (1753-1814), was born in Massachusetts. He was Secretary to the Province of Georgia, and afterwards Under Secretary of State under Lord G. Germain. He fought on the Loyalist side as a Colonel of Dragoons, and also served as a volunteer on board H.M.S. *Victory*, under Sir C. Hardy. His *Essays, Political, Economical, and Philosophical*, were published at London in 1796-1802. He was knighted by George III. in 1784, and became a Count of the Holy Roman Empire in 1791.

⁶⁴ *Observations on the Commerce of the American States*. The pamphlet was written by Lord Sheffield, but published anonymously (London, 1783, 8vo). It reached a sixth edition in 1784, and was translated into both French and German. In it Lord Sheffield opposed Pitt's plan of relaxing the navigation laws in favour of America.

482.
To Lord Sheffield

Langres, September 23rd, 1783.

HIS JOURNEY THROUGH FRANCE.

*Let the Geographical Maria place before you the map of France, and trace my progress as far as this place, through the following towns: Boulogne, (where I was forced to land,) St. Omer, (where I recovered my road,) Aire, Bethune, Douay, Cambray, St. Quentin, La Fère, Laon, Rheims, Chalons, St. Dizier, and Langres, where I have just finished my supper. The Inns, in general, more agreeable to the palate, than to the sight or smell. But, with some short exceptions of time and place, I have enjoyed good weather and good roads, and at the end of the ninth day, I feel so little fatigued, that the journey appears no more than a pleasant airing. I have generally conversed with Homer and Lord Clarendon, often with Caplin and Muff;⁶⁵ sometimes with the French postillions – of the above-mentioned animals the least rational. To-morrow I lye at Besançon, and, according to the arrangement of post or hired horses, shall either sup at Lausanne on Friday, or dine there Saturday. I feel some suspense and uneasiness with regard to Deyverdun; but in the scale both of reason and constitution, my hopes preponderate very much above my fears. From Lausanne I will immediately write. I embrace my lady. If Aunt Kitty's gratitude and good breeding have not driven her away upon the first whisper of Brighton, she will share this intelligence; if she is gone, a line from you would be humane and attentive. "*Monsieur, les Chevaux seront prêts à cinq heures.*" – Adieu. I am going into an excellent bed, about six feet high from the ground.*

⁶⁵ Gibbon's dog.

483. *To Lord Sheffield*

Lausanne, September 30th, 1783.

*I arrived safe in harbour last Saturday, the 27th instant, about ten o'Clock in the morning; but as the post only goes out twice a week, it was not in my power to write before this day. Except one day, between Langres and Besançon, which was laborious enough, I finished my easy and gentle airing without any fatigue, either of mind or body. I found Deyverdun well and happy, but much more happy at the sight of a friend, and the accomplishment of a scheme which he had so long and impatiently desired. His garden, terrace, and *park*, have even exceeded the most sanguine of my expectations and remembrances; and you yourself cannot have forgotten the charming prospect of the Lake, the mountains, and the declivity of the Pays de Vaud. But as human life is perpetually chequered with good and evil, I have found some disappointments on my arrival. The easy nature of Deyverdun, his indolence, and his impatience, had prompted him to reckon too positively that his house would be vacant at Michaelmas; some unforeseen difficulties have arisen, or have been discovered when it was already too late, and the consummation of our hopes is (I am much afraid) postponed to next spring. At first I was knocked down by the unexpected thunderbolt, but I have gradually been reconciled to my fate, and have granted a free and gracious pardon to my friend. As his own apartment, which afforded me a temporary shelter, is much too narrow for a settled residence, we hired for the winter a convenient ready furnished apartment in the nearest part of the Rue de Bourg, whose back door leads in three steps to the terrace and garden, as often as a tolerable day shall tempt us to enjoy their beauties; and this arrangement has even its advantage, of giving us time to deliberate and provide, before we enter on a larger and more regular establishment.

THE ABBÉ RAYNAL.

But this is not the sum of my misfortunes; hear, and pity! The day after my arrival (Sunday) we had just finished a very temperate dinner, and intended to begin a round of visits on foot, *chapeau sous le bras*, when, most unfortunately, Deyverdun proposed to show me something in the Court; we boldly and successfully ascended a flight of stone steps, but in the descent I missed my footing, and strained, or sprained, my ancle in a painful manner. My old latent Enemy, (I do not mean the Devil,) who is always on the watch, has made an ungenerous use of his advantage, and I much fear that my arrival at Lausanne will be marked with a fit of the Gout, though it is quite unnecessary that the intelligence or suspicion should find its way to Bath. Yesterday afternoon I lay, or at least sat, in state to receive visits, and at the same moment my room was filled with four different nations. The loudest of these nations was the single voice of the Abbé Raynal,⁶⁶ who, like your friend, has chosen this place for the azylum of freedom and history. His conversation, which might be very agreeable, is intolerably loud, peremptory, and insolent; and you would imagine that he alone was the Monarch and legislator of the World.

Adieu. I embrace My lady, and the infants.* Inform Maria that my accident has prevented me from looking out for a proper spot for my interment. *With regard to the important transactions for which you are constituted Plenipotentiary, I expect with some impatience, but with perfect

⁶⁶ The Abbé Raynal (1713-1796) published in 1770 his *Histoire philosophique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*. The work was put on the Index for its anti-religious tendency. His book, says Michelet, was for twenty years the Bible of two worlds. Toussaint l'Ouverture learned passages from it by heart; Bernardin de St. Pierre was inspired by it; to its author Napoleon Bonaparte dedicated in 1787 his manuscript *Essai sur l'histoire de la Corse*. Dr. Johnson, according to Hannah More, refused to shake hands with the Abbé. "Sir," he said to a friend, "I will not shake hands with an infidel!" Raynal published a new edition in 1780, which was still more outspoken in its religious and political views. In consequence he was obliged to leave France, and settled in Switzerland. In 1788 he returned to France, and died in 1796.

confidence, the result of your labours. You may remember what I mentioned of my conversation with Charles Fox about the place of Minister at Bern: I have talked it over with Deyverdun, who does not dislike the idea, provided this place was allowed to be my Villa, during at least two-thirds of the Year; but for my part, I am sure that* a thousand guineas *is worth more than Ministerial friendship and gratitude; so I am inclined to think, that they are preferable to an office which would be procured with difficulty, enjoyed with constraint and expence, and lost, perhaps, next April, in the annual Revolutions of our domestic Government. Again Adieu.*

484.
To his Stepmother

Lausanne, September 30th, 1783.

Dear Madam,

As I know you prefer a speedy to a long letter, I write by the first post to inform you that after an easy and pleasant journey of thirteen days, I arrived here on Saturday the 27th instant in perfect health both of mind and body. You will not expect that I should inform you how far my expectations are answered in any or in every respect. The very novelty and beauty of the scene would give a pleasing colour to every object, and the satisfaction of meeting and conversing with an old friend like Deyverdun is alone worth a journey of six hundred miles. He has not forgot his obligations to you, and begs me in his name to say everything that is kind and grateful. We have been so compleatly taken up and satisfied with each other that as yet I have scarcely stirred from home, and as this is the season of the vintage the town is remarkably empty. But the weather is good, and our terrace now affords such a prospect of the lake and mountains, as cannot perhaps be equalled in the World. I most sincerely wish that you were walking there, and you would soon forget the more humble beauties of your Belvidere. But I must content myself with the hope, and not a distant hope, of seeing you again on the hills, not of Switzerland but of Bath.

I am, Dear Madam,

Ever yours,

E. G.

That we may never resume the indelicate subject, I shall say once for all that every Christmas and Midsummer Day, without expecting any draught from me, you need only send your commands to Messrs. Gosling, Bankers in Fleet Street, as thus, Pay to Mr. – the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds, and place to the account of E. G., Esq., for D. G. They are properly instructed.

485.

To Lady Sheffield

Lausanne, October 28th, 1783.

*The progress of my Gout is in general so regular, and there is so much uniformity in the history of its decline and fall, that I have hitherto indulged my laziness, without much shame or remorse, without supposing that you would be very anxious for my safety, which has been sufficiently provided for by the triple care of my friend Deyverdun, my humbler friend Caplin, and a very conversable Physician (not the famous Tissot⁶⁷), whose ordinary fee is ten Batz, about fifteen pence English. After the usual encrease and decrease of my member (for it has been confined to the injured foot), the Gout has retired in good order, and the remains of weakness, which obliged me to move on the rugged pavement of Lausanne with a stick, or rather small crutch, are to be ascribed to the sprain, which might have been a much more serious business.

THE CHARMS OF LAUSANNE.

As I have now spent a month at Lausanne, you will inquire with much curiosity, more kindness, and some mixture of spite and malignity, how far the place has answered my expectations, and whether I do not repent of a resolution which has appeared so rash and ridiculous to my ambitious friends? To this question, however natural and reasonable, I shall not return an immediate answer, for two reasons: 1. *I have not yet made a fair tryal.* The disappointment and delay with regard to Deyverdun's house, will confine us this winter to lodgings, rather convenient than spacious or pleasant. I am only beginning to recover my strength and liberty, and to look about on persons and things; the greatest part of those persons are in the Country taken up with their Vintage: my books are not yet arrived, and, in short, I cannot look upon myself as settled in that comfortable way which you and I understand and relish. Yet the weather has been heavenly, and till this time, the end of October, we enjoy the brightness of the sun, and somewhat gently complain of its immoderate heat. 2. If I should be too sanguine in expressing my satisfaction in what I have done, you would ascribe that satisfaction to the novelty of the scene, and the inconstancy of man; and I deem it far more safe and prudent to postpone any positive declaration, till I am placed by experience beyond the danger of repentance and recantation.

Yet of one thing I am sure, that I possess in this Country, as well as in England, the best cordial of life, a sincere, tender, and sensible friend, adorned with the most valuable and pleasant qualities both of the heart and head. The inferior enjoyments of leisure and society are likewise in my power; and in the short excursions which I have hitherto made, I have commenced or renewed my acquaintance with a certain number of persons, more especially women, (who, at least in France and this country, are undoubtedly superior to our prouder sex,) of rational minds and elegant manners. I breakfast alone, and have declared that I receive no visits in the morning, which you will easily suppose is devoted to study. I find it impossible, without inconvenience, to defer my dinner beyond two o'Clock. We have got a very good Woman Cook. Deyverdun, who is somewhat of an Epicurean Philosopher, understands the management of a table, and we frequently invite a guest or two to share our luxurious, but not extravagant repasts. The afternoons are (and will be much more so hereafter) devoted to society, and I shall find it necessary to play at cards much oftener than in London: but I do not dislike that way of passing a couple of hours, and I shall not be ruined at Shilling whist. As

⁶⁷ Simon André Tissot (1728-1797) was one of the most skilful physicians of the day, excelling, says Madame de Genlis, alike in the theory and practice of his art. Among his voluminous works in Latin and French were *Avis au peuple sur sa santé* (1761), and *De valetudine litteratorum* (1766), which he translated into French under the title of *De la santé des gens de lettre* (1769).

yet I have not supped, but in the Course of the winter I must sometimes sacrifice an evening abroad, and in exchange I hope sometimes to steal a day at home, without going into Company.*

A *PENSION* FOR MISS HOLROYD.

As every idea which relates to you and yours is always uppermost in my mind, I have not forgot our schemes to finish in this School of freedom and equality the education of the future Baroness of Roscommon,⁶⁸ and Deyverdun agrees with me in thinking that a couple of years spent at Lausanne would be of infinite service to her. But as I am convinced that she has attained the age in which it would be the most beneficial and the least dangerous, I would recommend speedy and decisive measures. If you could be satisfied with an ordinary plan (I hate the name and idea of a boarding school) Maria might be entrusted to a Madame Ostervald (Lord S. knew and liked her under the name of Mademoiselle Bourgeois), who educates with reputation and success several young ladies of fashion. But as your daughter deserves a special and superior guide, we have cast our eyes (without knowing whether she would accept it) on a lady, who, by her birth, station, connections, understanding, knowledge, and temper, appears, in the judgment of Deyverdun, her particular friend, to be not unworthy to supply your place. She lives next door to us, and *our* eyes and ears (two pair) would be continually open. If you found an opportunity of sending Maria in the spring with any proper travellers, We would meet her at Geneva, Lyons, &c. With such a hostage, I should be sure of seeing Lord S. and yourself, and a year's trial would determine you to leave or remove her. If you listen seriously to this idea, I will send you more particular accounts, and take every proper step. If you cannot resolve, accept this *bavardage* as a proof of love and solicitude.

*I have all this time been talking to Lord S.; I hope that he has dispatched my affairs, and it would give me pleasure to hear that I am no longer member for Lymington, nor Lord of *Lenborough*. Adieu. I feel every day that the distance serves only to make me think with more tenderness of the persons whom I love.*

On reading what I have written, I must laugh at my sudden and peremptory recommendations about Maria, yet I coolly think it the best scheme. You oblige me beyond expression by your kindness to Aunt Kitty. N.B. I always desire double letters. – I find I shall have some commissions for you (Sheffalina), but I do not suppose you in town till after Christmas.

⁶⁸ Baron Sheffield of Dunamore (1781) was, in September, 1783, created Baron Sheffield of Roscommon, with remainder to his daughters severally. His heir was at this time his daughter, the Hon. Maria Holroyd, afterwards Lady Stanley of Alderley.

486.

To Lord Sheffield

Lausanne, November 14th, 1783.

*Last Tuesday, November 11th, after plaguing and vexing yourself all the morning about some business of your fertile creation, you went to the House of Commons, and passed the afternoon, the evening, and perhaps the night, without sleep or food, stifled in a close room by the heated respiration of six hundred politicians, inflamed by party and passion, and tired of the repetition of dull nonsense, which, in that illustrious assembly, so far outweighs the proportion of reason and eloquence. On the same day, after a studious morning, a friendly dinner, and a cheerful assembly of both sexes, I retired to rest at eleven o'clock, satisfied with the past day, and certain that the next would afford me the return of the same quiet and rational enjoyments. *Which has the better bargain?*

Seriously, I am every hour more grateful to my own judgment and resolution, and only regret that I so long delayed the execution of a favourite plan, which I am convinced is the best adapted to my character and inclinations. Your conjecture of the revolutions of my face, when I heard that the house was for this winter inaccessible, is probable, but false. I bore my disappointment with the temper of a Sage, and only use it to render the prospect of next year still more pleasing to my imagination. You are likewise mistaken, in imputing my fall to the awkwardness of my limbs. The same accident might have happened to Slingsby himself, or to any *Hero* of the age, the most distinguished for his *bodily activity*. I have now resumed my entire strength, and walk with caution, yet with speed and safety, through the streets of this mountainous city. After a month of the finest autumn I ever saw, the *Bise*⁶⁹ made me feel my old acquaintance; the weather is now milder, and this present day is dark and rainy, not much better than what you probably enjoy in England. The town is comparatively empty, but the Noblesse are returning every day from their Chateaux, and I already perceive that I shall have more reason to complain of dissipation than of dulness.

OLD ACQUAINTANCES AT LAUSANNE.

As I told Lady S., I am afraid of being too rash and hasty in expressing my satisfaction; but I must again repeat, that appearances are extremely favourable. I am sensible that general praise conveys no distinct ideas, but it is very difficult to enter into particulars where the individuals are unknown, or indifferent to our correspondent. You have forgotten the *old* Generation, and in twenty years a new one is grown up. Death has swept many from the World, and chance or choice has brought many to this place. If you enquire after your old acquaintance Catherine Crousaz, you must be told, that she is solitary, ugly, blind, and universally forgotten. Your later flame, and our common Goddess, the Eliza,⁷⁰ passed a month at the Inn. The greatest part of the time either in fit or taking the air on horseback. She came to consult Tissot, and was acquainted with Cerjat, but she appears to have made no conquests, and no fountain has been dedicated to her memory.*

And now to business. By this time those who would give me nothing else have nobly rewarded my merit with the Chiltern Hundreds. I retire without a sigh from the Senate, and am only impatient to hear that you have received the sum, which your *modesty* was content to take for my seat. Sir Andrew⁷¹ is an honourable man, yet I am satisfied that you have not neglected any of the necessary precautions. It will be advisable to have the odd hundred in Gosling's shop and to pay the thousand to Messrs. Darrel, Winchester Street, who will vest it for me in the three per cent. We must take

⁶⁹ The north-east wind.

⁷⁰ Lady Elizabeth Foster.

⁷¹ Sir Andrew Snape Hamond, R.N., created a baronet in December, 1783, for his services in the American War, was apparently treating for the seat of Lymington.

advantage of this stupendous fall of the Stocks, which amazes and frightens many poor souls here who apprehend that poor old England is on the brink of ruin. But this same circumstance is equally hostile to the sale of Lenborough, and though £200 or 300 a year and some part of my tranquillity depend on being released from the claws of my Mortgagee, yet I am much afraid that in the present state of things an *equal* purchaser will not easily be found. But your native vigour excited by friendship will remove mountains and perform impossibilities. My salvation would be more assured if I had half as much faith in any body else.

*With regard to meaner cares, these are two, which you can and will undertake. 1. As I have not renounced my Country, I should be glad to hear of your Parliamentary squabbles, which may be done with small trouble and expence. After an interesting debate, Miss Firth or My lady in due time may cut the speeches from Woodfall. You will write or dictate any curious anecdote, and the whole, inclosed in a letter, may be dispatched to Lausanne. 2. A set of Wedgewood China, which we talked of in London, and which would be most acceptable here. As you have a *sort* of a taste, I leave to your own choice the colour and the pattern; but as I have the inclination and means to live very handsomely *here*, I desire that the size and number of things may be adequate to a plentiful table.

If you see Lord North, assure him of my gratitude; had he been a more successful friend, I should now be drudging at the board of Customs, or vexed with business in the amiable society of *the Duke of M[anchester].* To Lord Loughborough present a more affectionate sentiment; I am satisfied with his intention to serve me, if I had not been in such a fidget. I am sure you will not fail, while you are in town, to visit and comfort poor Aunt Kitty. I wrote to her on my first arrival, and she may be assured that I will not neglect her.* Any occasional hints from Bath will be wellcome, but nothing from hence must ever transpire. *To My lady I say nothing; we have now our private Correspondence, into which the eye of an husband should not be permitted to intrude. I am really satisfied with the success of the Pamphlet;⁷² not only because I have a sneaking kindness for the author, but as it shows me that plain sense, full information, and warm spirit, are still acceptable to the World. You talk of Lausanne as a place of retirement; yet from the situation and freedom of the Pays de Vaud, all nations, and all extraordinary characters, are astonished to meet each other. The Abbé Raynal, the grand Gibbon, and Mercier,⁷³ author of the *Tableau de Paris*, have been in the same room. The other day, the Prince and Princess de Ligne,⁷⁴ the Duke and Dutchess d'Ursel, &c. came from Brussels on purpose (literally true) to act a comedy at d'Hermanches's, in the Country. He was dying, and could not appear; but we had Comedy, ball, and supper. The event seems to have revived him; for that great man is fallen from his ancient glory, and his nearest relations refuse to see him. I told you of poor Catherine's deplorable state; but Madame de Mesery, at the age of sixty-nine, is still handsome. Adieu.*

⁷² Lord Sheffield's *Observations*. See note to Letter 481.

⁷³ Sébastien Mercier (1740-1814) was the author, among other works, of *L'An 2440*, a dream of the future (1771), and of the *Tableau de Paris* (1781), in which he advocated many useful reforms. For this latter work he was prosecuted, and took refuge in Switzerland.

⁷⁴ The Prince de Ligne (1735-1814) served with distinction as a general of the Austrian troops in the Seven Years' War and the War of Bavarian Succession. He was noted for his wit, and was a voluminous author both in prose and verse. He died at Vienna during the Congress in 1814.

487.

To Lord Sheffield

Lausanne, December 20th, 1783.

I have received both your Epistles; and as any excuse will serve a man who is at the same time very busy and very idle, I patiently expected the second, before I entertained any thoughts of answering the first.

SALE OF LENBOROUGH.

And so poor Lenborough is at length sold; poor indeed I may call, for I must confess that I am most woefully disappointed in the price. Without going back to the Golden Age in which we looked down with disdain on the round twenty, you may remember that even this summer we scarcely allowed our most timid expectations to sink below seventeen, and this sum for which it is now sold falls £1400 short of that amount, without deducting the promised gratuity to Christie.

You might indeed reckon on my impatience to be delivered from a heavy burden both of fortune and of mind which I have often deplored with so much energy, but that burthen was much alleviated by my *rational* retreat from a scene of tumult and expence, and I always understood that we should take the chance of the winter and of the rise of stocks before we tryed the decisive and almost irrevocable measure of an auction. However the blow is struck, and I have already reconciled my mind to this new loss. I should have been afraid of writing thus much to Hugonin, but your nerves are more firmly strung, and through these expressions of disappointment, you discern, that instead of being displeased with your conduct, however inadequate to my hopes, I feel myself inexpressibly obliged to your pure fervent and persevering friendship. You will watch over the conclusion of this business, and whatever steps on my side may be necessary shall be diligently executed as soon as you send me the proper papers and instruction. When the money is paid (in February) you will leave the residue, a wretched fragment, in the hands of the Goslings on my account. I have not absolutely determined how I shall employ it. Something must be done in the way of annuity, and the French funds which are very fashionable in this country are wonderfully tempting to a poor man by the high interest, but I am aware of their slippery foundation, and you may be assured that I shall do nothing of that kind without full and mature and even cautious investigation. For the same reason, instead of paying the money to Darrel, I could wish that the £1100 or £1000 for Lymington (for we must not haggle about trifles) may likewise slumber for a little while in the shop in Fleet Street. Yet I should not be sorry to hear that the direction comes too late and that they are already more actively employed.

Sure I have been particularly unfortunate in my connections of business, for in good truth, Winton, Lovegrove, and Sir H. Burrard⁷⁵ are more than should fall to the share of one man.

PRIDE IN FOX'S FAME.

Yet the last mentioned beast is no fool, and when that affectionate kinsman has squeezed the Minister to the utmost, he will be satisfied with *all* that he can get, and will not suffer his farm to lye fallow without being of any value either to landlord or tenant. *I therefore conclude, on every principle of common sense, that, before this moment, his own interest and that of the Government, stimulated by your active zeal, have already expelled me from the House, to which, without regret, I bid an everlasting farewell. The agreeable hour of five o'Clock in the morning, at which you commonly retire, does not tend to revive my attachment; but if you add the soft hours of your morning committee,⁷⁶ in the discussion of taxes, customs, frauds, smugglers, &c., I think I should beg to be released and quietly sent to the Gallies, as a place of leisure and freedom. Yet I do not depart from my general

⁷⁵ Sir H. Burrard, Bart., the proprietor of the preponderating interest in borough of Lymington.

⁷⁶ Lord Sheffield was sitting on a Select Committee appointed to inquire into frauds committed on the revenue.

principles of toleration; some animals are made to live in the water, others on the Earth, many in the air, and some, as it is now believed, even in fire. Your present hurry of Parliament I perfectly understand; when opposition make the attack —

– Horæ

Memento cita mors venit, aut victoria læta.

But when the Minister brings forward strong and decisive measure, he at length prevails; but his progress is retarded at every step, and in every stage of the bill, by a pertinacious, though unsuccessful, minority. I am not sorry to hear of the splendour of Fox; I am proud, in a foreign Country, of his fame and abilities, and our little animosities are extinguished by my retreat from the English Stage. With regard to the substance of the business, I scarcely know what to think: the vices of the Company,⁷⁷ both in their persons and their constitution, were manifold and manifest; the danger was imminent, and such an Empire, with thirty millions of subjects, was not to be lost for trifles. Yet, on the other hand, the faith of Charters, the rights of property! I hesitate and tremble. Such an innovation would at least require that the remedy should be as certain as the evil, and the proprietors may perhaps insinuate, that *they* were as competent Guardians of their own affairs, as either *George North or L. Lewisham.^{78*} Their acting without a salary seems childish, and their not being removable by the Crown is a strange and dangerous precedent.

But enough of politics, which I now begin to view through a thin, cold, distant cloud, yet not without a reasonable degree of curiosity and patriotism. From the papers (especially when you add an occasional slice of the Chronicle) I shall be amply informed of facts and debates; from you I expect the causes rather than the events, the true springs of action, and those interesting anecdotes which seldom ascend the garret of a Fleet-Street editor.

LORD NORTH'S INSIGNIFICANCE.

You say that many friends (alias acquaintance) have expressed curiosity and concern; I should not wish to be immediately forgot. That others (you once mentioned Gerard Hamilton) condemn

⁷⁷ Early in 1781 two committees of the House of Commons were appointed to inquire into the affairs of India. One, a Select Committee, considered the best means of governing the British possessions in the East Indies; the other, a Secret Committee, inquired into the causes of the war in the Carnatic, and the condition of the British possessions in those parts. On April 9, 1782, the Lord Advocate, Henry Dundas, the chairman of the Secret Committee, moved that the reports of that committee be referred to a committee of the whole House. On April 25 he laid three sets of resolutions on the table. The first set, which were postponed, related to the general misconduct of the Company; the second set, condemning the administration of the Presidency of Madras, was voted; the third, containing criminal charges against Sir Thomas Rumbold, the President of the Madras Council, was also voted. On these two sets of resolutions was founded a Bill of pains and penalties (April 29) against Rumbold; but on July 1, 1783, a motion was carried to adjourn the further consideration of the Bill till October 1. The proceedings, therefore, fell to the ground and were not resumed. Meanwhile, the resolutions as to the general misconduct of the Company were severally agreed to by the House on May 28, 1782. On them was founded a resolution, calling on the directors to remove Warren Hastings, Governor-General of India, and William Hornsby, President of the Council of Bombay. This resolution being carried, the directors passed an Order of Recall; but the order was rescinded on October 31 by the General Court of Proprietors. Side by side with these proceedings, the reports of the Select Committee were also considered. On April 24, 1782, their chairman, General Smith, presented a series of resolutions which were carried, and on them an address was presented to the king to recall Sir Elijah Impey, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bengal. On November 20 and 26, 1783, Fox brought in two India Bills: (1) vesting the affairs of the Company in the hands of seven commissioners; (2) providing for the better government of the territorial possessions of the Company. The first Bill passed the House of Commons on a division of 208 to 102, after long debates, in which the House frequently sat till 5 a.m., on December 8, 1783, and was carried up to the House of Lords on December 9. The first reading took place on December 9, and the second reading on December 15. A motion for adjournment was carried against the ministers by 87 to 79, and on December 17 the Bill was rejected by 95 to 76. On the following day the king called upon the Secretaries of State to resign their seals; and on the 19th the rest of the Cabinet were dismissed. The new Ministry was thus composed: —William Pitt First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Earl Gower President of the Council. Lord Thurlow Lord Chancellor. Lord Sydney } Secretaries of State. Marquis of Carmarthen } The Duke of Rutland Lord Privy Seal. Lord Howe First Lord of the Admiralty. Duke of Richmond Master of the Ordnance. Henry Dundas Treasurer of the Navy. The first seven on the list formed the Cabinet. The Duke of Dorset replaced the Duke of Manchester as Ambassador at Paris, and Daniel Hailes succeeded Anthony Storer as Secretary to the Legation. Lord Temple, the "stormy petrel" of politics, accepted office as Secretary for the Foreign Department on December 19, but resigned on December 22.

⁷⁸ The Hon. George Augustus North (afterwards Lord Guilford) and Lord Lewisham were two of the seven commissioners named in Fox's India Bill.

Government for suffering the departure of a man who might have done them some credit and some service, perhaps as much as Antony Storer himself. To you, in the confidence of friendship, and without either pride or resentment, I will fairly own that I am somewhat of Gerard's opinion; and if I did not compare it with the rest of his character, I should be astonished that Lord N[orth] suffered me to depart, without even a civil answer to my letter. Were I capable of hating a man, whom it is not easy to hate, I should find myself most amply revenged by the insignificance of the creature in this mighty revolution of India, his own peculiar department. But the happy Souls in paradise are susceptible only of love and pity, and though Lausanne is not a paradise, more especially in Winter, I do assure you, in sober prose, that it has hitherto fulfilled, and even surpassed, my warmest expectation. Yet I often cast a look toward Sheffield-place, where you now repose, if you can repose, during the Christmas recess.

Embrace My Lady, the young Baroness, and the gentle Louisa, and insinuate to your silent Consort, that separate letters require separate answers. Had I an air balloon, the great topic of modern Conversation, I would call upon you till the meeting of parliament. *Vale.**

488.

To his Stepmother. ⁷⁹

Lausanne, December 27th, 1783.

Dear Madam,

Were we strangers to each other, I might amuse myself with deducing the causes of my silence; the long expectation of your answer and the propriety of taking a clear view of the ground on which I stood before I could transmit a just and satisfactory account of my situation. But it will be better to acknowledge that the old man, my ancient and habitual enemy, touched me with his wand, and that I am just awakening from the enchanted slumber. My silence however may be fairly interpreted as an evidence of content. Indeed, my Dear Madam, I *am* happy, with as few exceptions as the condition of human Nature will allow, and among the first of these exceptions I reckon the interval of time and space which separates me from Bath.

Since I formed and executed this plan of retiring into Switzerland I have not once repented, I have not felt a single moment of disappointment, and my only regret is the having so long neglected to obey the dictates of my reason; a more early obedience would have saved me some years of dependance, of anxiety, and of indiscretion. I have always valued far above the external gifts of rank and fortune two qualities for which I stand indebted to the indulgence of Nature, a strong and constant passion for letters, and a propensity to view and to enjoy every object in the most favourable light. The first has composed the daily happiness of my life and ensured the perpetual enjoyment of the most pleasing labours; the success of my works has given me a pure and extensive, perhaps a permanent reputation, and if the more substantial rewards have too easily slipped through my hands, I must ascribe their loss to the obstinacy with which I struggled to support a style of life to which the remains of my fortune were no longer adequate.

My propensity to be happy has been exercised on the most unfavourable materials; you have commonly seen a smile on my conversation and my letters, and as you never distrusted the sincerity of my professions you must have been surprized at the success of my endeavours. Yet what could be more adverse to my character than the life which for some years past I have led in London. With the warmest love of independence I have stooped the slave of Ministers. Without talents, or at least without resolution for a public life, I have consumed days and nights a silent spectator of noisy and factious debates. Conscious that true happiness is founded on œconomy, the disorderly state of my affairs has never allowed me to measure my income and my expence, and I have never dared to cast my eyes on the disbursement of the past or the supplies of the future year. How different is the prospect which I now enjoy. I find myself in a state of perfect independence and real affluence, and if I continue to enjoy a tolerable state of health, I cannot easily discover what event is capable of disturbing my tranquillity.

Among the ingredients of happiness you will agree with me in giving the preference to a sincere and sensible friend; and though you are not acquainted with half his merit, you will believe that Deyverdun answers that description. Perhaps two persons so perfectly fitted for each other were never created by Nature and education. Our studies, occupations, and reflexions have been sufficiently various to ensure a constant fund of entertainment; the lights and shades of our respective characters are happily blended; freedom and confidence are the basis of our union, and a friendship of thirty

⁷⁹ This letter, as printed here, was written by Edward Gibbon to his stepmother; a similar letter, in which some of the same phrases are repeated, is printed in Lord Sheffield's edition of Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Writings* (vol. ii. pp. 340-344), addressed to his aunt, Miss Catherine Porten.

years has taught us to enjoy and to support each other. You have often read and heard the descriptions of this delightful Country, the banks of the lake of Geneva, and indeed it surpasses all description. A stranger is struck with surprize and admiration, and it is endeared to me by the remembrance of my youth and the lively attachment which I have always retained for the place and the people. Our autumn has been beautiful, and the winter has not hitherto been severe, but the season of rural enjoyments is for some time suspended and our comforts are confined to the fireside. M. Deyverdun's house is spacious and convenient, and his garden, which spreads over a various and extensive spot, unites every beauty and advantage both of town and country. But into this paradise we are not yet introduced; the family to whom he had lent or let the larger part of the house have started some difficulties about the time of their removal, and till the month of March or April we are obliged to content ourselves with a convenient ready furnished lodging. When to this disappointment I add that my boxes of books which were sent through France still loiter on the road, you will confess that my felicity in the approaching year is more likely to encrease than to diminish.

DAILY LIFE AT LAUSANNE.

With regard to the daily enjoyments of life, which rolls away in a quiet uniform tenor, they are made to be felt rather than to be related. I rise before eight, and our mornings are commonly invisible to each other. At two (an hour somewhat too early) we dine, one, two, or three agreeably very often enliven our board, which is served with decent elegance. From four to between six and seven we read some amusing book, play at chess, retire to our rooms, look into the Coffee house, or make visits. The assemblies are numerous, and I play my three rubbers at shilling or half-crown whist with tolerable pleasure. They end between nine and ten, and a bit of bread and cheese, with some friendly converse, sends us to bed about eleven. This sober plan is indeed interrupted by too frequent suppers, which I want resolution to refuse, though I behave with exemplary temperance. Instead of lolling in a coach I walk the streets at all hours wrapped in a fur Cloak – the exercise is wholesome, and in my life I never enjoyed more perfect health and spirits. May you be able to say as much! If vanity and Deyverdun do not deceive me, I am already a general favourite, and as likings or dislikes are commonly mutual, I am pleased with the manners of the place, and the worthy and amiable characters of many individuals of both sexes.

Believe me, My dear Madam, I never cast a look on the politics or the amusements of London. The mob of political connections or casual acquaintance are unworthy of the regret of a rational mind. But in the midst of a very pleasant life and society I am not insensible of my separation from yourself, the Sheffields, and two or three real friends. If their zeal should succeed in procuring me any adequate office which I could accept with propriety and exercise without disgust, if Government should find any situation in which I could do them service and myself credit, I would quit (perhaps with a sigh) this agreeable retreat, and obey without hesitation the calls of friendship, of honour, and of my Country.

489.

To Lord Sheffield

Lausanne, January 24th, 1784.

*Within two or three days after your last *gracious* Epistle, your Complaints were silenced, and your enquiries were satisfied, by an ample dispatch of four pages, which overflowed the inside of the cover, and in which I exposed my opinions of things in general, public as well as private, as they existed in my mind, in my state of ignorance and error, about the eighteenth or twentieth of last month. Within a week after that date I epistolised, in the same rich and copious strain, the two venerable females of Newman-street and the Belvidere,⁸⁰ whose murmur must now be changed into songs of gratitude and applause. My correspondence with the holy Matron of Northamptonshire⁸¹ has been less lively and loquacious. You have not forgotten the Atheist's vindication of himself from the foul calumnies of pretended Christians; within a fortnight after his arrival at Lausanne, he communicated the joyful event to Mrs. G. She answered *per* return of post, both letters at the same time, and in very dutiful language, almost excusing her advice, which was intended for my spiritual, as well as temporal, good, and assuring me that *nobody should be able to injure me with her*. Unless the Saint is an hypocrite, possible enough, such an expression must convey a favourable and important meaning: at all events, it is worth giving *ourselves* some trouble about her, without indulging any sanguine expectations of inheritance.

DELIGHT IN LORD SHEFFIELD'S LETTERS.

So much for my females. With regard to my male Correspondents, you are the only one to whom I have given any signs of my existence, though I have formed many a generous resolution. Yet I am not insensible of the kind and friendly manner in which Lord Loughborough has distinguished me: he could have no inducements of interest, and now that I view the distant picture with an impartial eye, I am convinced that (for a Statesman) he was sincere though not earnest in his wishes to serve me. When you see *him*, the Paynes, Eden, Crauford, &c., tell them that I am well, happy, and ashamed. On your side, the zeal and diligence of your pen has surprized and delighted me, and your letters, at this interesting moment, are exactly such as I wished them to be – authentic anecdotes, and rational speculations, worthy of a man who acts a part in the great theatre, and who fills a seat, not only in the general Pandæmonium, but in the private council of the princes of the infernal Regions. With regard to the detail of Parliamentary operations, I must repeat my request to you, or rather to Miss Firth, who will now be on the spot, that she will write, not with her pen, but her Scissars, and that, after every debate which deserves to pass the Sea and the Mountains, she will dissect the faithful narrative of Woodfall,⁸² and send it off by the next post, as an agreeable supplement to the meagre accounts of our weekly papers.

The wonderful revolutions of last month⁸³ have sounded to my ear more like the shifting scenes of a Comedy or Comic Opera, than like the sober events of real and modern history; and the irregularity of our winter posts, which sometimes retarded, and sometimes hastened, the arrival of the dispatches, has encreased the confusion of our ideas. Surely the Lord has blinded the eyes of Pharaoh

⁸⁰ His aunt, Miss Porten, and his stepmother.

⁸¹ His aunt, Miss Hester Gibbon.

⁸² William Woodfall, formerly assistant editor of the *Public Advertiser*, was at this time editor of the *Morning Chronicle*. He was called "Memory Woodfall" from his accuracy in remembering the speeches in Parliament, of which no notes were then allowed to be taken. He was, it is said (*Auckland Correspondence*, vol. iii. p. 165), for many years paid £400 a year, "for giving the speeches of Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan much more at length and better than he did those of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas." He was afterwards editor of a paper called *The Diary*, which failed. He died in 1803. His brother, Henry Woodfall, published the *Letters of Junius*.

⁸³ The fall of the Coalition. See note to Letter 487.

and of his servants; the obstinacy of the last spring⁸⁴ was nothing compared to the headstrong and headlong madness of this Winter. I expect with much impatience the first days of your meeting: the purity and integrity of the Coalition will suffer a fiery trial; but if they are true to themselves and to each other, a Majority of the House of Commons must prevail; the rebellion of the young Gentlemen will be crushed, and the Masters will resume the Government of the School. After the address and answer,⁸⁵ I have no conception that Parliament can be dissolved during the Session; but if the present Ministry can outlive the storm, I think the death Warrant will infallibly be signed in the summer. *Here* I blush for my Country, without confessing her shame. Fox acted like a man of Honour, yet surely his union with Pitt affords the only hope of salvation. How miserably are we wasting the season of peace!

THE SALE OF HIS SEAT.

I have written three pages before I come to my own busyness and feelings. In the first place, I most sincerely rejoyce that I left the ship, and swam ashore on a plank; the daily and hourly agitation in which I must have lived would have made me truly miserable, if I had obtained a place during pleasure, Storer's for instance. On the first news of the dissolution, I considered my seat as so totally and irrecoverably gone, that I have been less affected with Sir Harry's obstinacy.* Yet his absolute refusal to treat throws us at least for the present into a very uncomfortable situation, and besides the danger of shipwreck, every day's voyage diminishes the value of the ship and cargo. You say you are schemeless. I can think only of two expedients.

1. You know or can know Sir Andrew Hammond, who is a fair and honourable character. Talk over the business and kinsman fairly with him, and tempt him to exert himself by the lowness of the price. I should consider even five or six hundred pounds as so much saved out of the fire, and a part of that sum would be most deliciously employed in the embellishment of my new habitation.

2. The other scheme is somewhat more delicate, yet I cannot esteem myself as bound to sacrifice my essential interest to that motley crew surnamed a Coalition, nor does this superiority in Parliament depend on the loss of *half-a-vote*. Perhaps the new Minister would give Sir Harry for his relations those scandalous jobs which our late friends more conscientiously refused, and many a Candidate would purchase their effectual recommendation by giving me the £1000 or £1200. On this occasion remember you are acting for a *poor* friend; dismiss a little of the spirit of faction and patriotism, and stoop to a prudential line of conduct, which in your own case you might possibly disdain. If you attempt the negociation you will easily find the proper instruments, but I should think James Grenville, the Lord of the Treasury, a safe and convenient channel, and I am persuaded that he would embrace the opportunity of serving his party and obliging *me* at the same time. In the business of Lenborough you may be active, but I can only be passive to convey a fair Estate, and to receive a miserable pittance of three thousand and some pounds. I hope nothing will happen to perplex the title or to delay the payment, and that the sum will be safely lodged for my account and in Gosling's hands before the end of February.

Perhaps you will abuse my prudence and patriotism, when I inform you, that I have already vested a part (30,000 Livres, about £1300) in the new loan of the King of France. I get eight per Cent. on the joint lives of Deyverdun and myself, besides thirty tickets in a very advantageous Lottery, of which the highest prize is an annuity of 40,000 Livres (£1700) a year. At this moment, the beginning of a peace, and probably a long peace, I think (and the World seems to think) the French funds at least as solid as our own. I have empowered my Agent, M. de Lessart, a capital banker at Paris, to draw upon Gosling for the money two months hence; and to avoid all accidents that may result from untoward delays, and mercantile churlishness, I expect that you will support my credit in Fleet-street with your own more respectable name. Moreover when Lenborough purchase money is paid, I wish

⁸⁴ The long delay in accepting the Coalition Cabinet. See note to Letter 487.

⁸⁵ The House of Commons, after deferring the third reading of the land-tax Bill, and addressing the king against dissolving Parliament, adjourned from December 26 to January 12, 1784.

it were possible to withhold £1000 or 1500 of their mortgage on our joint bond; I could employ it to my satisfaction at present, and should certainly repay it in three or four years on the conclusion of my History. Perhaps you will be better reconciled to my pecuniary arrangements by the proposal which I seriously make of purchasing Lee's farm at Buriton, if it can be obtained for 25 years' purchase after deducting the Land Tax. My interest without principal will be compensated by principal without interest (you remember Soame Jenyns's definition), and whatever becomes of my French Creditor, my Hampshire acres will be safe, compact, and in due time clear of all incumbrances. You may consult with Hugonin, propose and conclude.

What say you now? Am I not a wise Man? My letter is enormous, and the post on the wing. In a few days I will write to my Lady herself, and enter something more into the details of domestic life. Suffice it to say, that the scene becomes each day more pleasant and comfortable, and that I complain only of the dissipation of Lausanne. In the course of March or April we shall take possession of Deyverdun's house. My books, which by some strange neglect, did not leave Paris till the 3rd of this Month, will arrive in a few weeks; and I shall soon resume the continuation of my history, which I shall prosecute with the more vigour, as the completion affords me a distant prospect of a visit to England. A-propos, if the box which I left in Downing Street for the Swiss Carrier be not already departed, I hope Elmsley and yourself will give it a speedy and vigorous shove; when you see Elmsley ask him whether he has answered my letters: he is almost as lazy as myself. To my Lady's taste I shall entrust the Wedgewood's ware, which in the course of the spring or summer may accompany some other boxes of plate, linnen, books which I shall probably invoke. Adieu. I embrace my Lady and Infants.

Ever yours,

E. G.

490. *To Lord Sheffield*

Lausanne, February 2nd, 1784.

Baron! —

*After my last enormous dispatch, nothing can remain, except some small gleanings, or occasional hints; and thus in order: I am not conscious that any of your valuable MSS. have miscarried, or that I have omitted to answer any essential particulars. They stand in my Bureau carefully arranged, and docketed under the following dates; September 23, October 23, November 18, December 2, December 15, December 19, December 23, December 29, January 16, which last I have received this day, Febr. 2nd. For greater perspicuity, it will not be amiss (on either side) to number our future Epistles, by a conspicuous Roman character inscribed in the front, to which we may at any time refer. But instead of writing by Ostend, the shorter and surer way, especially on all occasions that deserve celerity, will be to direct them to my Banker, M. de Lessert, at Paris, who will forward them to me. Through Germany the passage by Sea is more uncertain, the roads worse, and the distance greater: we often complain of delay and irregularity at this interesting moment.

A FACTIOUS OPPOSITION.

By your last I find that you have boldly and generously opened a treaty with the Enemy, which I proposed with fear and hesitation. I impatiently expect the result; and again repeat, that *whatever* you can obtain* for the seat, *I shall consider it as so much saved out of the fire, &c. &c.* I shall then have completely secured a tranquil though humble station, and my personal happiness will no longer hang in suspense upon every change of Ministry, and every vote of Parliament. I am not surprized that you grow sulky: your free and liberal spirit must disdain a set of Men, whose aim is their own restoration to power, and whose means may affect the principles of the Constitution.⁸⁶ *Do you remember Dunning's motion⁸⁷ (in the year 80) to address the Crown against a dissolution of Parliament? a simple address we rejected, as an infringement on the prerogative; yet how far short of these strong Democratical measures, for which you have probably voted, as I should probably have done: such is the contagion of party. Fox drives most furiously, yet I should not be surprized if Pitt's moderation and character should insensibly win the Nation, and even the house, to espouse his cause.*

Lenborough is a melancholy and unpleasant subject. I am grateful for your endeavours, and lament that your reflexions on the value of land and money are but too true and sensible. Greatly as I have been disappointed in the price, I should now be sorry that anything should happen to break the bargain or to delay the payment. The surmise of such a possible event obliged me to repeat my commands that you would instruct Gosling (in your own name) to accept M. de Lessert's draught on the 20th of March for 30,000 French Livres (about £1300). Whatever you may think of my economical measures, the deed is done, and my honour is now pledged for the performance. The other sum, £1000 or 1500 of the Lenborough price which I wished to deduct from the mortgage, is a more indifferent speculation, which should only take place as far as it is agreeable to all parties.

⁸⁶ As soon as Parliament reassembled after the Christmas recess (January 12, 1784), the House of Commons resolved itself into a committee on the state of the nation in order to prevent an immediate dissolution. Two resolutions were carried: (1) that to pay out public money before the same was appropriated by Act of Parliament was a high crime and misdemeanour; (2) that the Mutiny Bill be postponed till February 23. It was further resolved, that an Administration, which commanded the confidence of the House, was peculiarly necessary in the present situation of the kingdom, and that the late ministerial changes had been preceded and accompanied by reports and circumstances which alienated the confidence of the House. On January 14, Pitt proposed his India Bill, which was rejected (January 23) by 222 to 214. On January 16 a resolution was carried, by 205 to 184, that the continuance of the present ministers in office was "contrary to constitutional principles and injurious to the interests of his Majesty and his people."

⁸⁷ Dunning's motion, here referred to, was proposed April 24, 1780, and rejected by 254 to 203.

ARRIVAL OF HIS LIBRARY.

*Unless when I look back on England with a selfish or a tender regard, my hours roll away very pleasantly, and I can again repeat with truth, that I have not regretted a single moment the step which I have taken. We are now at the height of the Winter dissipation, and I am peculiarly happy when I can steal away from great assemblies, and suppers of twenty or thirty people, to a more private party, of some of those persons whom I begin to call my friends. Till we are settled in our house little can be expected on our side; yet I have already given two or three handsome dinners; and though everything is grown dearer, I am not alarmed at the general view of my expence. Deyverdun salutes you; and we are agreed that few married Couples are better entitled to the flitch of bacon than we shall be at the end of the year. When I had written about half this Epistle my books arrived; at our first meeting all was rapture and confusion, and two or three posts, from the 2nd to this day, the fourteenth, have been suffered to depart unnoticed. Your letter of the 27th of January, which was not received till yesterday, has again awakened me, and I thought the surest way would be to send off this single sheet without any farther delay.

I sincerely rejoice in the stability of Parliament;⁸⁸ and the first faint dawn of reconciliation, which must however be effected by the equal balance of parties, rather than by the wisdom of the Country Gentlemen.^{89*}

Miss Firth,

After due salutations I trouble you with three or four Commissions, which I should not presume to offer to the greatness of the Baron or the delicacy of My Lady, but which I am persuaded you will cheerfully undertake to oblige an old and sincere friend. 1. The employment which I have already hinted of your scissars in carving and despatching occasional debates from Woodfall's paper. 2. You are desired to call on Elmsley to ask him from time to time when he wrote to me last, and to urge him about taking and sending a Catalogue of my library with all convenient or inconvenient speed. 3. As many things will be deficient and as carriage will be less expensive than purchase, I propose sending for my plate, linnen, and China which now lye in Downing Street. My Agent Prendergast, an honest Cabinet maker, has received his instructions from Caplen, and I only desire that when he calls for that purpose he may have free permission to examine, pack, export, &c. A list was entrusted to Lord Sheffield which might be compared, copied, signed by him and transmitted by the post to me.

My Lady! —

But it would be highly incongruous to begin my letter at the bottom of the page. Adieu, therefore, till next post.

⁸⁸ On December 22, 1783, Mr. Bankes, M.P. for Corfe Castle, an intimate friend of William Pitt, assured the House that the Government did not intend to advise the king to dissolve or prorogue Parliament, and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if such advice were offered, would oppose it, and, if it were accepted, would resign.

⁸⁹ On January 16, 1784, Mr. Powys, M.P. for Northamptonshire, proposed a compromise by a coalition between the contending parties. Fox, however, declared that no compromise was possible till Pitt had resigned. The idea of a compromise was taken up on the 20th by the "country gentlemen." Stormy scenes took place on January 23, when Pitt declined to make any statement as to the advice which he might offer the king. But on Saturday, January 24, he stated that, while refusing to pledge himself further, the House should not be dissolved till it had met on Monday, the 26th. Advantage was taken of this statement to call a meeting, attended by seventy members of the "country gentlemen" party, at the St. Alban's Tavern, to consider the possibility of compromise on the basis of a "Broad Bottom administration." The plan proved futile, and was abandoned February 18. The proceedings closed with a dinner given to the seventy members at Carlton House by the Prince of Wales on March 10, 1784.

491.

To Lord Sheffield

Lausanne, March 2nd, 1784.

Your despatch of Feb. 13th arrived safe yesterday, March 1st, and notwithstanding the winter obstacles of seas and roads there is, upon the whole, more delay than danger in the transactions of the posts. I am glad that my last appearance in Downing Street put an end to a course of abuse; but in spite of my profound veneration for dreams and omens, I flatter myself that the silence of *one month* will not always be interpreted as a certain testimony that I no longer exist. Before I quit the subject of dispatches, one word on Miss Firth's scissors whose operation you have so prudently checked. Their use was not intended to be daily but occasional, on some great and memorable debate in the Pandemonium. Such occasions might occur twenty or thirty times in the winter, and at one shilling each time the annual expence might have exceeded *one* Guinea. I had computed that such expence might be supported; but if you persist in a contrary opinion, I must submit.

You had given me notice that the purchase money of Lenborough would be paid in February, and as the title was so perfectly clear, I suppose the surplus (far beyond the amount of the Paris draught) is already in Gosling's hands, payable to my order. In that case I shall have no obligations to them for obeying my Commands. But as I was aware of the delays of the law, and of their narrow mercantile temper, I did conceive that they might scruple paying Mr. de Lessert's draught for 30,000 Livres *some days* before my money was actually in their shop. The French banker will draw at sight, but instead of the 20th of March, I have postponed his draught till the 20th of April. In due time I shall write to the Goose to give them notice not to ask a favour. It is to you only that I wish to be obliged, and if you inform them that you consider yourself as answer for the money, I cannot suspect that even their grovelling spirit will have any scruples. If instead of your word they should require your bond, you can give it in five minutes, and a few days when the purchase money is paid will release you from the obligation. The general comparison of the French and English funds I have not time to discuss. I think them more able, and ourselves more willing, to support our national faith, but if a man must trust his money to the Ocean, I think it more advisable to embark it on two separate bottoms. With regard to the scruples of the two Tabbies, I can only say that first they need not know anything of the matter, and secondly they will be so good as to allow me to think and act for myself.

A HAPPY WINTER OF STUDY AND SOCIETY.

With regard to the purchase of Lee's farm I am serious, and if I am abused for my follies I must have some credit for the more rational parts of my Conduct. At least you will give me credit when I declare that in a happy winter of study and society I have not once regretted the noise of St. Stephen's and the tiresome suspense of your incomprehensible politics, but I do most sincerely regret the decreasing value of my Senatorial commodity. As soon as you can, and as much as you can, is the advice which you will follow without my having the trouble of giving it. But in the meanwhile do not let us quarrel about the disposal of the Bearskin. I am not mad, nor do I mean to settle here for life. A small part of the indefinite price of my seat was destined to embellish my habitation, and if, after enjoying the comforts three or four years, I should leave my friend's house somewhat improved, I can see nothing very extravagant in the idea.

Thus far I have written before the departure of the post, and am preparing to pass the evening at a private representation of the Barbier de Seville, which will be followed by a lively and excellent supper. Embrace My Lady. I think of her often, especially every post day. Say a kind word to Kitty, I shall soon dream that she is dead likewise. – Gosling need not be apprized of the object of the Paris draught. – The additional £1500 which I wished to retain is superfluous, as I have already observed in my last.

You are or will be astonished with some farther orders for the march of plate, linnen, books, &c., but I am of opinion that the present moment is worth enjoying, and that carriage, even double carriage, is less expensive than purchase. – You have nothing to do with Wedgewood, but I shall soon consult My lady. The spring is delightful. I often snatch a walk on Deyverdun's terrace, and visit my books, which are already deposited, but I fear the house will not be accessible before the first of May. He says I am not patient, I say he is indolent; you know that the most harmonious pairs will sometime squabble.

492.
To Lord Sheffield

Lausanne, April 31st, 1784.

Not a post has elapsed without my thinking of Sheffalina and intending her separate letter. This day which had been peremptorily fixed is now so far advanced that I have barely time to relieve my mind from some anxious *English* thoughts, the only ones that disturb the tranquil, chearful scenes of my well-judged retreat. – I have this moment perused the last English papers of the 20th instant, which contain by the bye your smart and as it seems successful dispute with the Minister.

Your adversaries (I fear they are the King, Lords and People) have now conquered, but at this distance I cannot discern the consequences of their victory, whether it will lead to treaty or dissolution.⁹⁰ If the latter, adieu once more to my poor seat and all my little hopes of compensation. Can nothing, nothing be done in any way by direct or indirect, by humble or strenuous measures? Upon my soul, I should consider my election dinner, £100, or 200 pounds as a tolerable conclusion of my cursed political life. But in this business perhaps you can do nothing. I therefore turn to another, which would seriously alarm me, had I less confidence in your friendship. You know (and the Goslings are apprized) that on the 20th of April M. de Lessert of Paris will draw upon them for 30,300 French Livres, and I should feel the deepest shame and affliction if his draught in my name should meet with an unfavourable reception. I am in your hands, and can say no more. Perhaps I have been too hasty, yet you cannot forget that I might reasonably act on your assurance of the Lenborough purchase money being paid before the end of February. Since that notice you have never said a word on the subject. Is the business concluded? what occasions a delay? Have any difficulties arisen? Adieu. You grow an idle correspondent. The winter has been long but not extremely rigorous. – The person who occupies Deyverdun's house is an invalid; yet I think we shall migrate before my birthday, the 8th of May.

E. G.

⁹⁰ An address to his Majesty was presented on February 25, 1784, asking the king to take measures for the formation of such an united administration as the House of Commons had declared to be necessary. The king replied (February 27) that he did not think the dismissal of his present ministers would promote such union. A second address, asking the removal of the present ministers, was carried (March 1) by a majority of twelve, and presented March 4. The king's answer was practically a repetition of his former reply. A representation on the affairs of the nation, addressed to the king, was carried by 191 to 190 on March 8, and, with this last effort, the opposition subsided. The Mutiny Bill passed without a division on March 10, and on March 25 Parliament was dissolved.

493.

To Lord Sheffield

Lausanne, May 11th, 1784.

DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT.

Alas! alas! alas! We may now exchange our mutual condolence, and encourage each other to support with becoming fortitude the stroke of fate. Last Christmas, on the change of administration, I was struck with the thunderbolt of the unexpected event, and in the approaching dissolution I foresaw the loss of the little but precious stock which I had so foolishly embarked in the parliamentary bottom. *The long continuance and various changes of the tempest rendered me by degrees callous and insensible: when the art of the Mariners was exhausted, I felt that we were sinking; I expected the ship to founder; and when the fatal moment arrived, I was even pleased to be delivered from hope and fear, to the calmness of despair.

I now turn my eyes, not on the past, but on the present and the future; what is lost I try to consider as if it never had existed; and every day I congratulate my own good fortune, let me say my prudence and resolution, in migrating from your noisy stage to a scene of repose and content. But even in this separate state, I was still anxious for my friend upon English Earth, and at first was much delighted with your hint, that you were setting off for Coventry, without any prospect of an opposition. Every post, Wednesdays and Saturdays, I eagerly looked for the intelligence of your victory; and in spite of my misbehaviour, which I do not deny, I must abuse *My Lady*, rather than you, for leaving me in so painful a situation. Each day raised and increased my apprehension; the *Courier de l'Europe* first announced the contest, the English papers proclaimed your defeat, and your last letter, which I received four days ago, showed me that you exerted first the spirit, and at last the temper, of a hero. Lord B[eauchamp] behaved as I should have expected, and I am not much surprized that you should have been swept away in the general unpopularity, since even in this quiet place, your friends are considered as a factious crew, acting in direct opposition both to the King and People.⁹¹

For yourself I am at a loss what to say. If this repulse should teach you to renounce all connexion with Kings and Ministers, and patriots, and parties, and parliaments; for all of which you are by many degrees too honest; I should exclaim, with Teague,⁹² your respectable countryman, "By my Shoul, Dear Joy, you have *gained* a loss." Private life, whether contemplative or active, has surely more solid and independent charms; you have *some* domestic comforts; Sheffield is still susceptible of useful and ornamental improvements, (alas! how much better might even the last £1500 have been laid out!) and if these cares are not sufficient to occupy your leisure, I can trust your restless and enterprizing spirit to find new methods of preserving yourself from the insipidity of repose. But I much fear your discontent and regret at being excluded from that Pandæmonium which we have so often cursed, as long as you were obliged to attend it. The leaders of the party will flatter you with the opinion of their friendship and your own importance; the warmth of your temper makes you credulous and unsuspicious; and, like the rest of our species, male and female, you are not absolutely blind to your own merit, or deaf to the voice of praise. Some place will be suggested, easy, honourable, certain, where nothing is wanted but a man of character and spirit to head a superior interest; the opposition, if any, is contemptible, and the expence cannot be large. You will go down, find almost every circumstance falsely stated, repent that you had engaged yourself, but you cannot desert those

⁹¹ Upwards of one hundred and sixty members lost their seats, and of these almost all had supported the Coalition of Fox and North. Among "Fox's Martyrs" was Lord Sheffield. Sir Sampson Gideon, afterwards Lord Eardley, and Mr. John Wilmot were elected for Coventry, the seat previously held by Lord Sheffield and Mr. Conway.

⁹² Teague is the Irish servant of Hermes Wouldbe in Farquhar's play of *The Twin Rivals*.

friends who are firmly attached to your cause; besides, the Money you have already spent would have been thrown away; another thousand will compleat the business: deeper and deeper will you plunge, and the last evil will be worse than the first.

A FREE-SPOKEN COUNSELLOR.

You see I am a free-spoken Counsellor; may I not be a true prophet! Did I consult my own wishes, I should observe to you, that as you are no longer a Slave, you might soon be transported, as you seem to desire, to one of the Alpine hills. The purity and calmness of the air is the best calculated to allay the heat of a political fever; the education of the two princesses might be successfully conducted under your eye and that of my Lady; and if you had resolution to determine on a residence, not a visit, at Lausanne, your worldly affairs might repose themselves after their late fatigues. But you know that *I* am a friend to toleration, and am always disposed to make the largest allowance for the different natures of animals; a lion and a lamb, an eagle and a Worm. I am afraid we are too quiet for you; here it would not be easy for you to create any business; you have for some time neglected books, and I doubt whether you would not think our suppers and assemblies somewhat trifling and insipid.

For myself I am happy to tell, and you will be happy to hear, that this place has in every respect exceeded my best and most sanguine hopes. How often have you said, as often as I expressed any ill-humour against the hurry, the expence, and the precarious condition of my London life, "Ay, that is a nonsensical scheme of retiring to Lausanne that you have got into your head – a pretty fancy; you remember how much you liked it in your youth, but you have now seen more of the World, and if you were to try it again, you would find yourself most woefully disappointed"? I had it in my head, in my heart; I have tried it; I have not been disappointed; and my knowledge of the World has only served to convince me, that a Capital and a Crowd may contain much less real society, than the small circle of this gentle retirement. The winter has been longer, but, as far as I can learn, less rigorous than in the rest of Europe. The spring in all its glory is now bursting upon us, and in our garden it is displayed in all its glory. I already occupy a temporary apartment, and we live in the lower part of the house; before you receive this our lodgers will be gone and we shall be in full possession. We have much to enjoy and something to do, which I take to be the happiest condition of human life.

Now for business, the kind of subject which I always undertake with the most reluctance, and leave with the most pleasure.* I do not thank you for standing between me and Gosling, you would despise my thanks. I know your sentiments, and you are not ignorant of mine. But the step on your side was necessary: even with your security Gosling has not done the thing in a graceful way, and even the letter which informs me that he will honour M. de Lessert's draught is written with unnecessary pertness. In a post or two I shall probably hear the payment acknowledged from Paris. The Goose hopes he shall soon be reimbursed: so do I likewise, and as no difficulties can arise with regard to the title, I should imagine that before you leave town the business, that is the payment, may be finally concluded.

ENGLISH FRIENDS AT LAUSANNE.

Of the persons who already cast a Hawk's eye on the poor surplus. There is one Harris whose bond, since he calls for it, must undoubtedly be discharged, though I should be glad if you could persuade him to be contented with the interest, and trust me some time longer with the principal. I write to Whitehead, the hirer of horses, by this post, and suppose you will hear no more of him. But I must confess that Richard Way's demand of one hundred Guineas fills me with surprize and indignation, and, unless you are decidedly of a contrary opinion, I do most absolutely refuse it. Had he only been useless something might be pleaded; but if you recollect that his entire service was the recommending me to Lovegrove, it would not be easy to compute the damages (for thousands) for which I might equitably sue that Land Jobber. Though I am not very favourably disposed to the Goslings, the surplus money, when the just demands are cleared, must be left in their hands, till I can employ it, but I am serious in my hint about Lee's farm, and wish you would correspond with Hugonin in the summer; by the bye, he has not pressed my tenants this winter. A Swiss Carrier by

name Pache will call in a few days to send away the boxes of plate, linnen, china, which are probably packed for foreign service. The ornamental China was never intended to be sent.

Postscript.

I cannot as yet hear anything of a certain box left at my departure in Downing-place, and repeatedly and vainly demanded; by this time I hope that it is on the road. Elmsley, to whom it was peculiarly committed, is an ingenious, an honest, but a very idle fellow. The box contains some absolute necessaries, such as paper in particular, and you are a sufferer by the delay, as you will pay a double letter for the value, or at least the size, of a single one. The stationer's paper here is so extremely thin that I turned over two leaves at once, and the error is now irreparable. Adieu.

*And now, My Lady.

Let me approach your gentle, not grimalkin, presence, with deep remorse. You have indirectly been informed of my state of mind and body; (the whole winter I have not had the slightest return of the Gout, or any other complaint whatsoever;) you have been apprized, and are now apprized, of my motions, or rather of my perfect and agreeable repose; yet I must confess (and I *feel*) that something of a direct and personal exchange of sentiment has been neglected on my side, though I still *persuade* myself that when I am settled in my new house I shall have more subject, as well as leisure to write. Such tricks of lazyness your active spirit is a stranger to, though Mrs. Frazer complains that she has never had an answer to her last letters.* That aforesaid little Donna Catharina arrived here three or four days with her sister Miss Bristow: the widow is impatient to reach England: the maiden, who is much better, proposes staying here the whole summer with her dear Doctor Tissot, and returning on the approach of Winter to pass another season at Nice. *Poor Lady Pembroke!⁹³ *you* will feel for her; after a cruel alternative of hope and fear, her only daughter, Lady Charlotte, died at Aix at Provence; they have persuaded her to come to this place, where she is intimately connected with the Cerjat family. She has taken an agreeable house, about three miles from the town, and lives retired. But I have seen her; her behaviour is calm, but her affliction —

I accept with gratitude your friendly proposal of Wedgewood's ware, and should be glad to have it bought and packed, and sent without delay through Germany.* To you I leave the absolute and *sole* command, but if you have a mind to consult the Baron with regard to the ornamental, the creature is not totally devoid of taste: the number, choice, pattern, sizes, &c. you will determine, and *I shall only say, that I wish to have a very compleat service for two courses and a desert, and that our suppers are numerous, frequently fifteen or twenty persons. Adieu. I do not mean this as your letter. You are very good to poor Kitty. With you I do not condole about Coventry.*

May 11th, 1784. I wrote the first page of my letter last week.

⁹³ Lady Charlotte Herbert, daughter of Lady Pembroke (formerly Lady Elizabeth Spencer), was born July, 1773, and died in April, 1784.

494.
To his Stepmother

Lausanne, May 28th, 1784.

Dear Madam,

*I begin without preface or Apology, as if I had received your letter by the last post. In my own defence I know not what to say; but if I were disposed to recriminate, I might observe that you yourself are not perfectly free from the sin of laziness and procrastination. I have often wondered why we are not fonder of letter-writing: we all delight to talk of ourselves, and it is only in letters, in writing to a friend, that we can enjoy that conversation, not only without reproach or interruption, but with the highest propriety and mutual satisfaction; sure that the person whom we address feels an equal, or at least a strong and lively interest in the consideration of the pleasing subject. On the subject therefore of *self* I will entertain a friend, to whom none of my thoughts or actions, none of my pains or pleasures can ever be indifferent.

When I first cherished the design of retiring to Lausanne, the loss I can hardly call it of your society, but at least of your neighbourhood, and the fear of your anxiety and disapprobation have always stood before me as the most powerful objections, and I was much more apprehensive of wounding your tender attachment, than of offending Lord Sheffield's manly and vehement friendship. In the abolition of the board of trade, the motives for my retreat became more urgent and forcible; I wished to break loose, yet I delayed above a year before I could take my final resolution; and the letter in which I disclosed it to you cost me one of the most painful struggles of my life. As soon as I had conquered that difficulty, all meaner obstacles fell before me, and in a few weeks I found myself at Lausanne, astonished at my firmness and my success.

THE REIGN OF SINECURES AT AN END.

Perhaps you still blame or still lament the step which I have taken. If on your own account, I can only sympathize with your feelings, the recollection of which often costs me a sigh; If on mine, let me fairly state what I have escaped in England, and what I have found at Lausanne. Recollect the tempests of this winter, how many anxious days I should have passed, how many noisy, turbulent, hot, unwholesome nights, while my political existence, and that of my friends, was at stake; yet these feeble efforts would have been unavailing; I should have lost my seat in Parliament, and after the extraordinary expence of another Year, I must still have pursued the road of Switzerland, unless I had been tempted by some selfish Patron, or by Lord S.'s aspiring spirit, to purchase at a most inconvenient price a new seat; and once more, at the beginning of an opposition, to engage in new scenes of business. As to the immediate prospect of any thing like a quiet and profitable retreat, I should not know where to look; my friends are no longer in power. With *Pitt* and his party I have no connection; and were he disposed to favour a Man of letters, it is difficult to say what he could give, or what I would accept. The reign of pensions and sinecures is at an end, and a commission in the Excise or customs, the summit of my hopes, would give me bread at the expence of leisure and liberty. When I revolve these circumstances in my mind, my only regret, I repeat it again and again, is, that I did not embrace this salutary measure three, five, ten years ago.

Thus much I thought it necessary to say, and shall now dismiss this unpleasing part of the subject. For my situation here, health is the first consideration, and on that head your tenderness had conceived some degree of anxiety. I know not whether it has reached you that I had a fit of the Gout the day after my arrival. The deed is true, but the cause was accidental; carelessly stepping down a flight of stairs, I sprained my ancle; and my ungenerous enemy instantly took advantage of my weakness. But since my breaking that double chain, I have enjoyed a winter of the most perfect health

that I have perhaps ever known, without any mixture of the little flying incommunities which in my best days have sometimes disturbed the tranquillity of my English life. You are not ignorant of Dr. Tissot's reputation, and his merit is even above his reputation. He assures me, that in his opinion, the moisture of England and Holland is most pernicious, the dry pure air of Switzerland most favourable, to a Gouty constitution: that experience justifies the Theory; and that there are fewer martyrs of that disorder in this, than in any other country in Europe.

To face p. 108, Vol. II.

HIS HOUSE, TERRACE, AND GARDEN.

This winter has every where been most uncommonly severe; and you seem in England to have had your full share of the general hardship: but in this corner, surrounded by the Alps, it has rather been long than rigorous; and its duration stole away our spring, and left us no interval between furs and silks. We now enjoy the genial influence of the Climate and the Season; and no station was ever more calculated to enjoy them than Deyverdun's house and garden, which are now become my own. You will not expect that the pen should describe, what the pencil would imperfectly delineate. A few circumstances may, however, be mentioned. My library is about the same size with that in Bentinck Street, with this difference, however, that instead of looking on a paved court twelve feet square, I command a boundless prospect of vale, mountain, and water, from my three windows; my apartment is compleated by a spacious light closet, or store-room, with a bed-chamber and dressing-room. Deyverdun's habitation is pleasant and convenient, though less extensive: for our common use we have a very handsome winter apartment of four rooms; and on the ground-floor, two cool saloons for the summer, with a sufficiency, or rather superfluity, of offices, &c. A Terrace, one hundred yards long, extends beyond the front of the House, and leads to a close impenetrable shrubbery; and from thence the circuit of a long and various walk, carries me round a meadow and vineyard. The intervals afford abundant supply of fruit, and every sort of vegetables; and if you add, that this villa (which has been much ornamented by my friend) touches the best and most sociable part of the town, you will agree with me, that few persons, either princes or philosophers, enjoy a more desirable residence.

Deyverdun, who is proud of his own works, often walks me round, pointing out, with knowledge and enthusiasm, the beauties that change with every step and with every variation of light. I share, or at least I sympathize, with his pleasure: he appears content with my progress, and has already told several people, that he does not despair of making me a Gardener. Be that as it may, you will be glad to hear that I am, by my own choice, infinitely more in motion, and in the open air, than I ever have been formerly. Yet my perfect liberty and leisure leave me many studious hours; and as the circle of our acquaintance retire into the Country, I shall be much less engaged in company and diversion. I have seriously resumed the prosecution of my history; each day and each month adds something to the completion of the great work. The progress is slow, the labour continual, and the end remote and uncertain. Yet every day brings its amusement, as well as labour; and though I dare not fix a term, even in my own fancy, I advance, with the pleasing reflection, that the business of publication (should I be detained here so long) must enforce my return to England, and restore me to the best of mothers and friends.

With health and competence, with a full independence of mind and action, a delightful habitation, a true friend, and many pleasant acquaintance, you will allow, in the meanwhile, that I am rather an object of envy than pity; and if you were more conversant with the use of the French language, I would seriously propose to you to repose yourself with us in this fine country. But my indirect intelligence (on which I sometimes depend with more implicit faith than on the kind dissimulation of your friendship) gives me reason to hope that the last winter has been more favourable to your health than the preceding one. Assure me of it yourself honestly and truly, and you will afford me one of the most lively pleasures* that I am capable of receiving. Write soon, and *indeed* I will not be so tardy in my answer. Caplin presents his duty to you. You will be sorry to hear that he

seems tolerably satisfied, and talks French (when I am not present) like a magpye. The English who have passed the Winter at Nice, Lady Pembroke, &c., are flocking here. I am civil without living among them, but you will rejoyce to hear that Mr. and Madame Necker pass the summer in our neighbourhood. I must request a short delay in your Midsummer draught as I am ignorant whether some money is paid in, but it need not exceed a fortnight or three weeks. Adieu.

495.
To Lord Sheffield

Lausanne, June 19th, 1784.

The Goslings cannot do a handsome thing with a tolerable grace. They have accepted and paid Lessert's draught, but instead of taking your word or note or bond, for the entire sum as a separate loan, they have eked it out by squeezing to the last drop of between £300 and 400 of my cash in their hands without leaving me a shilling to supply the necessary and current demands. Alas, poor Lymington!! By this post I write to them, as well as to the Darrels, and one way or another I must create some temporary credit till the business of Lenborough is settled. When in the Devil's name (for to him most rightfully belong all money transactions) will it be concluded? Originally the purchase-money was to be paid in February, we are now in the middle of June. You have never suggested any impediments; even in your last you say it is in a fair way, yet surely four or five extraordinary months exceed even the common forms and delays of lawyers, auctioneers, and all that unfeeling race of men. I cannot suspect your friendship or diligence, yet possibly the Coventry election and your more early retreat to Sheffield may have thrown you a little out of the road: but I trust that you will soon recover your lost ground (if any) and finish the race with speed and success. You are sensible that it will deliver me from the remnant of my Worldly anxieties. If the purchaser is an honest and responsible man, might he not be persuaded to advance £500 on the purchase-money; no uncommon favour, and which now would be most singularly acceptable. If, on the other hand, he shuffles through weakness of mind or purse, I could support (in my present regular economy) the idea of reserving the Estate till more prosperous times, and of finding some real or *personal* security for the money which the Goslings have advanced.

HIS HOSPITALITIES.

*In this glorious season I frequently give tea and supper to a dozen men and women with ease and reputation, and heartily wish you and My Lady were among them. In this corner of Europe we enjoy, or shall speedily enjoy, (besides threescore English, with Lady Pembroke, and forty French, with the Duchess de Sivrac at their head), M. et Madame Necker, the Abbé Raynal, the Hereditary prince of Brunswick, Prince Henry of Prussia,⁹⁴ perhaps the Duke of Cumberland; yet I am still more content with the humble natives, than with *most* of these *illustrious names*. Adieu. The post is on the wing, and you owe me a long Epistle. I am, as usual, in the firm intention of writing next week to my lady.* I hear from Ostend of the landing of four boxes: but I know not whether the Wedgewood is among them. If not, I hope it will soon follow. Adieu.

Could you not write to Gosling to release my poor Cash, and to take the whole of Lessert's sum on yourself?

⁹⁴ Prince Henry of Prussia, brother of Frederick the Great, was one of the most brilliant soldiers of the day. His relief of Breslau (1760) and victory at Freyberg (1762) were turning-points in the Seven Years' War. In the War of Bavarian Succession he maintained his position in Bohemia against the Austrian troops (1778-9). He was offered the crown of Poland in 1764, and in 1784 had been envoy at the court of Louis XVI. He died in 1802.

496.
To Lord Sheffield

Lausanne, October 18th, 1784.

*Since my retreat to Lausanne our Correspondence has never received so long an interruption; and as I have been equally taciturn with the rest of the English World, it may now be a problem among that sceptical nation, whether the historian of the decline and fall be a living substance or an empty name. So tremendous is the sleepy power of laziness and habit, that the silence of each post operated still more strongly to benumb the hand, and to freeze the *Epistolary* ink. How or when I should have naturally awakened, I cannot tell; but the pressure of my affairs, and the arrival of your last letter, compell me to remember that you are entrusted with the final amputation of the best limb of my property. The subject is in itself so painful, that I have postponed it, like a child's physic, from day to day; and losing whole mornings, as I walked about my library, in useless regret and impotent resolution. You will be amazed to hear that (after peeping to see that you were well, and returned from Ireland) I have not yet had the courage to peruse your letter, for fear of meeting with some gloomy intelligence; and I will now finish what I have to say of pecuniary matters, before I know whether its contents will fortify or overthrow my unbyassed sentiments.*

About three weeks ago I received the conveyance of Lenborough, and immediatly executed the deeds in the presence of the Hon^{ble} and Reverend Edward Conway, and Mr. Jones of Ireland, a nephew of Lord Tyrone. A coach was setting off, and the writings properly packed were directed to Mr. Elmsley, and in the inner Cover to L^d Sheffield to be left till called for: before this time they should be safe in London; the purchaser is said to be impatient. I am so likewise, and nothing (I should apprehend) can prevent you from delivering the land and receiving the Money. The miserable state of the funds must excuse the lowness of the price, and annihilate any probable benefit of a short delay: but when I look back (a foolish retrospect!) to our moderate expectation of £20,000 and calculate the interest, money, costs, vexations, &c., of eleven Years, I cannot look upon myself as a *very* successful man. Consider that since my departure I have fairly or foully lost at least £2000 on which I might depend with the most rational confidence, £1000 on the abatement of the Lenborough price, and £1000 by the dissolution of Parliament. *To what purpose (you will say) are these tardy and useless repinings? To arraign your manager? No, I am satisfied with the skill and firmness of the pilot, and only complain of the untoward violence of the tempest. To repent of your retreat into Switzerland? No, surely, every subsequent event has tended to make it as necessary as it has proved agreeable. Why then these lamentations? Hear and attend.

HIS PECUNIARY AFFAIRS.

It is to interest (if possible more strongly) your zeal and friendship, to justify a sort of avarice, of a love of money, very foreign to my character, but with which I cling to these last fragments of my fortune.* According to the terms of the conveyance, £12,000 are destined for the Goslings and £3500 for me, in all £15,500: yet I am almost sure that you mentioned £15,650 as the entire price. Of this remainder, Gosling will instantly seize his reimbursement of the Paris sum, £300 bond and, as I fear, some small arrears of interest. Besides this Harris's heirs have made a just claim; Way's damned hundred Guineas I cannot digest, and a long unknown bill of Newton rises to my imagination in all its horrors. Of tradesmen's debts I have left none behind me except about 300 pounds for the hire of horses to Whitehead and the purchase of books to Elmsley. When all these demands are summed and discharged, I tremble at the balance, and indeed I have found through life that I had always more to pay, and less to receive, than I expected. *As far as I can judge from the experience of a year, though I find Lausanne much more expensive than I imagined, yet my style of living (and a very

handsome style it is) will be brought *nearly* within my ordinary revenues. I wish our poor Country could say as much! But it was always my favourite and rational wish, that at the winding up of my affairs I might possess a sum from one to two thousand pounds, neither buried in land, nor locked up in the funds, but free, light, and ready to obey any call of interest, or pleasure, or virtue; to defray any extraordinary expence, support any delay, or remove any obstacle. For the attainment of this object, I trust in your assistance.*

First, I must desire you to call in the bills (particularly Newton's) to cast up the amount of all the deductions on the £3500, and to send me the list, but to pay as little of it as you possibly can (except the Goslings), till you have heard again from me. I am sensible however that the residue can scarcely by any contrivance be brought even to the smallest of the above-mentioned sums (£1000), and here your friendship must again interpose to engage the Goslings to supply that deficiency on our Joint-bond. The money (I could wish it were £1500 in all) I should probably vest in India bonds, and the difference of $\frac{1}{2}$ or of 1 per Cent. would be no formidable tax. At the end of three or four years I should be sure of replacing the principal from the profits of my history, without indulging any fanciful expectations from Aunt Hester, who complains a little of your silence. *Thus much of this money transaction; to you I need add no other stimulative, than to say that my ease and comfort very much depend on the success of this plan.*

I have now opened your letter; send them to the Devil if they talk of their moneys lying dead. Have I not been saddled with the interest of my mortgage? From whom has the delay proceeded? did *they* not insist on sending the deeds to Lausanne? Have *I* not returned them with uncommon diligence? Since Hugonin will not write to me himself, I must press and conjure him through you to get the rents paid on or before the 1st of December. I know not what may be this College business, but am glad to hear no more of the scruples of the Chief tenant. Cannot Hug. pick me up some odd money from Wooddyer?

On folding my Epistle, it turned out so minute that a cover became decent, and you will expect a few lines for your additional postage. First of *me*. I cannot esteem myself totally foolish when I reflect on the success of a scheme executed in opposition to the wisest of my friends. I have now given this place a year's tryal, and find that the climate agrees with my health, (I have not had a single return of the gout) and the people, their manners, their way of life, are suited to my Genius: some rubs will intervene, and even in my domestic life neither Deyverdun nor myself are Angels, but on the whole, I shall number *this* among, or rather above, the Happiest of my years, and nothing but your salutary hand to clear and establish my pecuniary concerns is now wanting.

As I thought every man of sense and fortune in Ireland must be satisfied, I did not conceive the cloud so dark as you represent it. If the growth of the Papists could awaken the fears and prejudices of the Protestants, it might be lucky, and the discovery of French gold would do more good than mischief. *I will seriously peruse the 8^o, and in due time the 4^o Edition; it would become a Classic book, if you could find leisure (will you ever find it?) to introduce some kind of order and ornament. You must negotiate *directly* with Deyverdun; but the State will not hear of parting with their only Reynolds.⁹⁵ I embrace My Lady; let her be angry, provided she be well. Adieu. Yours.

P.S. The saving Ireland⁹⁶ may have amused you in the Summer; but how do you mean to employ the Winter? Do you not cast a longing, lingering look at St. Stephen's Chappel? With your fiery spirit, and firm judgment, I almost wish you there; not for your benefit, but for the public. If you resolve

⁹⁵ His picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

⁹⁶ The Constitution of 1782 had not satisfied Ireland. The cry was raised for parliamentary reform, and for the extension of the franchise to Roman Catholics. Napper Tandy and his friends held meetings with French emissaries; and an attempt was made to convene a Congress of three hundred representatives at Dublin in October, 1784, backed by the volunteers. The Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Rutland, acted with vigour, and the proposed Congress collapsed. Lord Sheffield had taken part in the proceedings against the magistrates of Roscommon and Leitrim, who had called the meetings of representatives and signed the resolutions in favour of parliamentary reform during the summer of 1784.

to recover your seat,* pay a specific sum for a certain election, – rather than *listen to any fallacious and infinite projects of interest, contest, return, petition, &c. Dixi.*

497. *To Lady Sheffield*

Lausanne, October 22nd, 1784.

*A few weeks ago, as I was walking on our Terrace with Mr. Tissot, the celebrated Physician, Mr. Mercier, the author of the *Tableau de Paris*; the Abbé Raynal, Mr., Madame, and Mademoiselle Necker,⁹⁷ the Abbé de Bourbon, a natural son of Lewis the fifteenth, the hereditary prince of Brunswick, Prince Henry of Prussia, and a dozen Counts, Barons, and extraordinary persons, among whom was a natural son of the Empress of Russia —

Are you satisfied with this list? which I could enlarge and embellish, without departing from truth; and was not the Baron of Sheffield (profound as he is on the subject of the American trade) doubly mistaken with regard to Gibbon and Lausanne? Whenever I used to hint my design of retiring, that illustrious Baron, after a proper effusion of damned fools, condescended to observe, that such an obscure nook in Switzerland might please me in the ignorance of youth, but that after tasting for so many years the various society of Paris and London, I should soon be tired with the dull and uniform round of a provincial town. In the winter, Lausanne is indeed reduced to its native powers; but during the summer, it is possibly, after Spa, one of the most favourite places of general resort. The voyage of Switzerland, the Alps, and the Glaciers, is become a fashion; Tissot attracts the Invalids, especially from France; and a Colony of English have taken up the habit of spending their winters at Nice, and their summers in the Pays de Vaud. Such are the splendour and variety of our summer Visitors; and *you* will agree with me more readily than the Baron, when I say that this variety, instead of being a merit, is, in my opinion, one of the very few objections to the residence of Lausanne. After the dissipation of the winter, I expected to have enjoyed, with more freedom and solitude, myself, my friend, my books, and this delicious paradise; but my position and character make me here a sort of a public character, and oblige me to see and be seen. However, it is my firm resolution for next summer to assume the independence of a Philosopher, and to be visible only to the persons whom I like.

MDLLE. NECKER AND PRINCE HENRY OF PRUSSIA.

On that principle I should not, most assuredly, have avoided the Neckers and Prince Henry. The former have purchased the Barony of Copet near Geneva; and as the buildings were very much out of repair, they passed this summer at a country-house at the gates of Lausanne. They afford a new example, that persons who have tasted of greatness, can seldom return with pleasure to a private station. In the moments when we were alone he conversed with me freely, and I believe truly, on the subject of his administration and fall; and has opened several passages of modern history, which would make a very good figure in *the*

⁹⁷ Jacques Necker (1734-1804), appointed Director-General of Finance in 1777, published, in 1781, his *Compte Rendu*. In the same year he was compelled to resign his office. In 1784 he published his *Administration des Finances*. He was recalled to office as Director of Finances in August, 1788, was dismissed July 11, 1789, recalled July 16 in the same year, and finally retired in September, 1790. "M. Necker est parti. Il a eu une si belle peur de la menace d'être pendu, qu'il n'a pu résister à la tendresse de sa vertueuse épouse qui le pressoit d'aller aux eaux." Madame Elisabeth à Madame de Bombelles, Sept. 6, 1790 (Feuillet de Conches, vol. i. p. 348). Necker's work, *Sur l'Administration de M. Necker, par lui-même*, was published in 1791. His daughter mentioned here was afterwards Madame de Staël.

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