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THE MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE OF JAMES BOSWELL, 1774-75

City University of New York

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**THE MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE
OF JAMES BOSWELL, 1774-75**

**by
VICTORIA T. MURPHY**

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in English in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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1981

This manuscript has been read and accepted
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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

**THE MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE
OF JAMES BOSWELL, 1774-75**

by
VICTORIA T. MURPHY

Adviser: Professor Frank Brady

One hundred and fifteen letters,
annotated and with an introduction,
from the correspondence of James
Boswell, 1774-75.

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EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

Transcription of the Letters

The letters have been transcribed from photocopies of the original manuscripts. Nearly all these manuscripts are in the Beinecke Library at Yale; in cases of uncertain readings, I have consulted them directly. The method of transcription conforms with the practices of the research edition of the Private Papers of James Boswell: briefly, the text has been rendered as close to the original as possible, and great care has been taken to preserve every aspect of the text which could affect the sense. Editorial intervention has been limited to the following cases:

Addresses: Elements appearing on separate lines in the MS. are run together and punctuated according to modern practice.

Datelines: Places and dates are joined at the head of the letter regardless of their position in the MS., and punctuation has been regularized.

Salutations: Abbreviations have been expanded and punctuation regularized. The salutation is run in to the first line of the letter regardless of its position in the MS.

Complimentary closes: Punctuation has been normalized, and the complimentary close has been transcribed as part of the last paragraph of the letter, regardless of its arrangement in the MS. Abbreviations have been expanded.

Handwriting: Endorsements are in the hand of the recipient, and headings, addresses, and notes are in the hand of the author or copier unless otherwise noted.

Punctuation: Periods occasionally replace commas at the end of complete sentences, but I have tended to retain commas unless they seriously impede the sense. If a writer habitually uses dashes in place of periods, I have substituted periods, but I have tried to retain dashes in cases where the sense is even remotely affected. Periods are supplied after abbreviations.

Spelling and capitalization: The writer's spelling, including capitalization, has been retained, with the one exception of the first word of a sentence, which invariably has been transcribed with an initial capital.

Deletions: All legible deletions are noted.

Lacunae: Words and letters missing because of a tear in the MS., or illegible because of a blot, have been conjecturally supplied within angular brackets

whenever possible. The writer's inadvertent omissions are either given in a note or corrected within square brackets in the text.

Titles: I have underlined titles of periodicals, newspapers, published books and poems even when the writer has not done so.

Abbreviations: The following abbreviations have been silently expanded: Dr. (Dear), Lop. (Lordship), recd. (received), Sr. (Sir), yr. (your), yt. (that), & (and), &c. (etc.).

Annotation

The annotation also conforms to the practices of the research edition of the Boswell Papers. Thus persons, places, and things which are relatively familiar are identified briefly, while the more obscure references are explained at greater length.

When no source is given in a footnote, the reader should assume that the information is readily available in either the Dictionary of National Biography, the British Museum Catalogue of Printed Books, any encyclopedia, or any gazetteer. Cue titles conform to those listed for the entire research edition; thus in this collection, some cue titles may appear only once or twice.

References to all letters in the Boswell Collection are made by correspondent and date, whether or not the letter has yet been published. "Not reported" means that although the letter once existed, there is no indication that it still exists.. References to Boswell's Journal are also by date. I have not consulted the Journal MS., but have used the text as given in the various "trade" editions (Defence, etc.), or in The Private Papers of James Boswell ..., ed. Geoffrey Scott and F. A. Pottle, 1928-36.

CUE TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

- Alum. Cant. I: John and J.A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses, Part I (to 1751),
4 vols., 1922-27.
- Alum. Cant. II: J.A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses,
Part II (1752-1900), 6 vols., 1940-54.
- Ann Reg.: The Annual Register, 1758-1862.
- Army List: A List of the Officers of the Army
etc., 1756--.
- Ayr and Wigton: James Paterson, History of the
Counties of Ayr and Wigton, 3 vols. in 5
parts, 1836-66.
- Ayrshire: Ayrshire at the Time of Burns, ed.
John Strawhorn, Collections of Ayrshire
Archeological and Natural History Society,
vol. v., 1959.
- Bell's Law Dict.: Robert Bell, A Dictionary of
the Law of Scotland, 1807.
- Brunton and Haig: George Brunton and David Haig,
An Historical Account of the Senators of the
College of Justice, 1832.
- Burke's Peerage: Sir Bernard Burke, A Genealogical
and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and
Baronetage, 61st ed., 1899.
- Burton, Camoens: R.F. Burton, Camoens, His Life
and His Lusiads, 1881.
- Cal. Merc.: The Caledonian Mercury, 1720-1867.
- CBEL: Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature.
- College of Physicians: William Munk, Roll of the
Royal College of Physicians of London, 1878.
- Comp. Peer.: G.E. Cokayne, Complete Peerage, 1889.

Consultation Book: Boswell's MS Consultation Book, 1766-72, National Library of Scotland.

Corsica: James Boswell, An Account of Corsica, the Journal of a Tour to that Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli, 1768.

Defence: Boswell for the Defence, 1769-1774, ed. W.K. Wimsatt Jr. and F.A. Pottle, 1959.

DNB: Dictionary of National Biography.

Dictionary of Printers: H.H. Plomer, G.H. Bushnell, E.R. McC. Dix, A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1726 to 1775, 1932.

Earlier Years: F.A. Pottle, James Boswell: The Earlier Years, 1740-1769, 1966.

Edin. Adv.: The Edinburgh Advertiser, 1764-1859.

Edin. Alm.: The Edinburgh Almanack.

Edin. Direct.: Williamson's Edinburgh Directory, 1773-1774.

Edin. Eve. Cour.: The Edinburgh Evening Courant, 1718-1859.

Extremes: Boswell in Extremes, 1776-1778, ed. C. McC. Weis and F.A. Pottle, 1970.

Fasti Scot.: Hew Scott, Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae, 7 vols., 2nd ed. 1915-61.

Fortescue: J.W. Fortescue, A History of the British Army, 1902.

Gent. Mag.: The Gentleman's Magazine, 1731-1905.

Hebrides: Boswell's Journal of A Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D., ed. F.A. Pottle and C.H. Bennett, 1936 (Heinemann).

JB: James Boswell.

Journ.: Boswell's MS. Journal, Yale (see Editorial Procedures).

Laird: Boswell; Laird of Auchinleck, 1778-1782,
ed. J.W. Reed and F.A. Pottle, 1977.

The Last Speech: The Last Speech, Confession, and
Dying Words of John Reid, 1774 (reprinted in
Defence, pp. 343-44).

Lecky, England: W.E.H. Lecky, A History of England
in the Eighteenth Century, 5 vols., 1892-93.

Lond. Mag.: The London Magazine, 1732-85.

Life: Boswell's Life of Johnson, Together with
Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides
and Johnson's Diary of a Journey into North
Wales, ed. G.B. Hill, rev. L.F. Powell, 6
vols., 1934-50; vols v and vi, 2nd ed. 1964.

Lit. Car.: F.A. Pottle, The Literary Career of
James Boswell, Esq., 1929; reprinted 1967.

A.E.M. Macdonald: A.E.M. Macdonald, The Fortunes
of a Family, 1928.

Macdonalds: Alexander Mackenzie, History of the
Macdonalds, 1881.

Maclean: J.P. Maclean, A History of the Clan
MacLean, 1889.

MacLeods: Alexander Mackenzie, History of the
MacLeods, 1889.

Morison's Decisions: W.M. Morison, The Decisions
of the Court of Session, from its First
Institution to the Present Time, etc., 1801-15.

The Mournful Case: The Mournful Case of Poor
Misfortunate and Unhappy John Reid, 1774
(reprinted in Defence, pp. 308-09).

Murray: John Murray, "James Boswell in Edinburgh",
Diss. Yale 1939, 4 vols.

Namier and Brooke: Sir Lewis Namier and John
Brooke, The House of Commons, 1754-1790,
3 vols., 1964.

Notes: JB's notes for his Journal, MS. Yale.

Ominous Years: Boswell: The Ominous Years, 1774-
1776, ed. Charles Ryskamp and F.A. Pottle,
1963.

Parochial Law: J.M. Duncan and C.N. Johnston,
The Parochial Ecclesiastical Law of Scotland,
1903.

Pennant, 1769: Thomas Pennant, A Tour in Scotland
1769, 1771.

Pennant, 1772: Thomas Pennant, A Tour in Scotland,
and Voyage to the Hebrides, 1772, 1774.

Pennant, 1772 ii: Thomas Pennant, A Tour in
Scotland 1772 Part II, 1776.

Pol. Car.: Frank Brady, Boswell's Political Career,
1965.

Pub. Adv.: Public Advertiser, 1752-94.

Reg. Let.: JB's register of letters sent and
received, MS. Yale.

St. James's Chron.: The St. James's Chronicle,
1761-1866.

Scots Mag.: The Scots Magazine, 1739-1817.

Scots Peer.: Sir J.B. Paul, The Scots Peerage,
9 vols., 1904-14.

SJ: Samuel Johnson.

SJ's Dictionary: Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755.

Sketches of the Highlanders: Dugald Stewart, Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland, 1825.

S.R.O., Reid: Scottish Record Office, Justiciary Records, Books of Adjournal 1773-1774, Series D, vol. 38, 1 Aug. 1774; and Processes 1774, Trial of John Reid.

Studies in Law: Thomas Mackenzie, Studies in Roman Law, with Comparative Views of the Laws of France, England, and Scotland, 5th ed., 1880.

Tour: Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides. (References are to the fifth volume of Life unless stated otherwise).

Univ. Glasgow: The Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow, ed. W.I. Addison, 1913.

Walker: The Correspondence of James Boswell and John Johnston of Grange, ed. R.S. Walker, 1966.

Walpole's Correspondence, Yale ed.: The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence, ed. W.S. Lewis and others, 1937-81.

Works SJ, Yale ed.: The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, A.T. Hazen and J.H. Middendorf, general eds., 1958.

Writers: A History of the Society of Writers to H. M.'s Signet, 1890.

A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF JAMES BOSWELL'S LIFE TO 1774

- 29 Oct. 1740: Born in Edinburgh, eldest son of Alexander Boswell, Lord Auchinleck, judge in the Supreme Courts of Session and Justiciary of Scotland.
- 1753-58: Attended the University of Edinburgh.
- 1758-59: Studied law at the University of Edinburgh.
- 1759-60: Lord Auchinleck removed JB to the University of Glasgow in an attempt to discourage his son's growing interest in the theatre.
- Mar.-May 1760: JB ran away to London, joined, briefly, the Roman Catholic Church, and was introduced by the Earl of Eglinton to "the circles of the great, the gay, and the ingenious."
- June 1760 -
Nov. 1762: Studied law in Edinburgh, passing the examination in Civil Law in July 1762.
- Nov. 1762 -
Aug. 1763: Spent the winter in London, unsuccessfully seeking a commission in the Army. Beginning of friendship with Samuel Johnson.
- Aug. 1763 -
June 1764: Studied law at the University of Utrecht.
- June 1764 -
Jan. 1766: JB's Tour of the Continent: Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Corsica, and France.

- Mar. 1766: JB returned to Edinburgh.
- July 1766: Passed examination in Scots Law, was admitted to the Faculty of Advocates, and began to practise law.
- 1766-69: Mostly spent working as an advocate in the Court of Session. Visited London during Court vacations, Mar.-May 1768, Sept.-Nov. 1769.
- 1768: Publication of An Account of Corsica.
- Nov. 1769: JB married Margaret Montgomerie, his first cousin, the daughter of his father's sister Veronica, and David Montgomerie of Lainshaw.
- Mar.-May 1772: JB visited London. Spring jaunts to London occurred nearly annually for the next fifteen years.
- 16 Mar. 1773: Birth of Veronica.
- Mar.-May 1773: Visit to London. Admitted to The Club, 16 Apr.
- Aug.-Nov. 1773: Trip through the Hebrides with SJ.

INTRODUCTION

"Tell me, my dear Temple, if a man who receives so many marks of more than ordinary consideration can be satisfied to drudge in an obscure corner, where the manners of the people are disagreeable to him?" (To W. J. Temple, 12 Aug. 1775).

James Boswell wished to distinguish himself. But as long as he lived in Scotland, so he thought, he would be chained to a life of obscure mediocrity. His future there seemed linked to the gloomy doctrine of predestination that he so abhorred: it was circumscribed by a critical father whom he could never please, a conservative society whose prejudices he could never change, and a career which offered rewards he would never fully appreciate. Thus at every opportunity, he fled to London, a place he had always regarded as the antithesis of Edinburgh, a city of "liberty and whim", which nurtured talent and welcomed new ideas. After attending church on the first Sunday of his London winter, 1762-63, Boswell wrote, "I thought that God really designed

us to be happy." And the same day he recorded "I have discovered that we may be in some degree whatever character we choose."¹ But in Edinburgh he had no choice of character. His roles were pre-ordained.

The letters that follow indicate some of the roles that enchained Boswell and some that liberated him. Boswell wrote only 29 of the 115 letters in this collection. The remainder come from a wide variety of correspondents: family, friends, professional acquaintances, literary and political figures, strangers, even one anonymous "crank". They touch on numerous aspects of Boswell's life at this time and reflect an assortment of his activities and concerns. Together they illustrate the growing tension between what Boswell perceived as his Scottish and his London destinies: the demands of his immediate circle in Scotland and, from the south, the insistent call of his literary genius.

At the beginning of 1774, James Boswell was 33 years old. He had been an advocate at the Court of Session in Edinburgh for eight years, he had

been a married man for more than four years, and father of a family since the birth of Veronica the previous spring. The bonds of society were tightening about him, and in general he accepted them more happily than he and those who loved him might have expected. As an advocate he worked hard and occasionally obtained some distinction; he enjoyed the association with his colleagues in the Faculty of Advocates, and he liked and respected a number of the judges at the Courts of Session and Justiciary. Conversely, his considerable charm and skill in argumentation won the admiration of many. His wife, herself a conservative, unimaginative, but endlessly patient woman, encouraged her husband to lead a regular and conventional life, and most of the time Boswell tried to please her. Although he longed for a son, his infant daughter brought him much pleasure. Fatherhood provided Boswell with one of his happiest and most satisfying roles.

But Boswell was not sinking into a contented and comfortable middle age. In the first place, his relationship with his father continued to be strained, as it had always been. Lord Auchinleck's position as a judge on the Court of Session subjected his son to his supervision in public as well as private life. Father and son not only disagreed on many major issues, but also simply embarrassed each other by their respective styles, a common enough familial situation, but exacerbated here by unavoidable daily association at the Court of Session. At the same time, Boswell benefited professionally and socially by his father's eminence, and this probably made the relationship even more trying for both. If Lord Auchinleck had any suspicions that glory might one day reflect in the other direction, he did not voice them. Thus while becoming a husband and a father with enthusiasm, Boswell continued to struggle resentfully in his role as a son.

A year and a half after he was admitted advocate, Boswell published An Account of Corsica; The Journal of a Tour to That Island; and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli, an adaptation and expansion of the journal he had written during his six-week visit to Corsica in 1765. The book was an immediate success. "I have obtained my desire", wrote Boswell in the preface to the third edition (1768), "and whatever clouds may overcast my days, I can now walk here among the rocks and woods of my ancestors, with an agreeable consciousness that I have done something worthy". Corsica guaranteed Boswell a permanent place in the literary world of London, while it also represented an important step in Boswell's definition of his own genius. It was his first major attempt to combine private and public statement: his Journal, his own story, and the story of the public hero, Pasquale Paoli. Boswell seems always to have been aware that he wrote best about material in which he could include himself, and the success of Corsica confirmed this.

He continued to write on a variety of subjects for the periodical press: political essays, biographical sketches of eminent Scotsmen (here again, his father's connexions helped), book reviews. But in Edinburgh, where the pervasive and inhibiting presence of his father threatened every self-image that Boswell developed, there were few oppor-

tunities for Boswell's particular sort of literary involvement. The precarious symbiosis that was Boswell's genius, his need to figure in his own creations and hence his drive to live in dramatic situations that he might write about them, could not flourish in a critical atmosphere. Artistic as well as social and intellectual necessities prompted the yearning for London and the impatience with the "narrowness" of Edinburgh which permeate this correspondence.

The trip through the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson in the autumn of 1773 afforded Boswell a perfect literary situation, and one which he had long sought. His experiments on this tour with his Journal, his "blurring of life and art",² were a significant step in his literary development. No wonder that when this correspondence begins in January, 1774, Boswell was in an "indolent and listless state".³ He was still recovering from the high excitement of the Hebridean tour, and he glumly recognized the absence of other such opportunities in the barren Edinburgh landscape.

A letter from Sir John Pringle (2 Feb. 1774) indicates that Boswell had originally hoped to publish his Journal of the tour soon after his return. He decided to defer his book in favour of Johnson's, but as soon as A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland appeared in January, 1775, Boswell again solicited advice about his own version of

the trip. Dilly (23 Jan.) and Pembroke (12 Mar.) both urged him to publish at once, and in March Boswell took his manuscript with him to London where he read it aloud and lent it to friends. But Johnson continued to inhibit Boswell from publishing his book: on 27 Mar. Johnson told him not to show his notes of the trip to anyone else (Journ.), and on 10 May Boswell wrote to Temple, "Dr. Johnson does not seem desirous that I should publish any Supplement to the Journey. Between ourselves, he is not apt to encourage one to share reputation with himself". The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides did not appear until 1785, nearly a year after Johnson's death.

Nevertheless, from the time of the trip itself, a public literary image of Boswell as Johnson's companion began to emerge. Boswell had created this image in his own Journal, but it had also been presented to the public in the numerous newspaper accounts of the trip, many written by Boswell. After the publication of Johnson's Journey, Boswell's correspondence shows his interest in this image, an interest which grew out of literary and not wholly egotistical concerns. He was observing a curious sort of reversed reflection of his own unpublished work. "Mr. Johnson

as been very good to me in his book", he wrote Oglethorpe (25 Feb. 1775), "he is pleased to allow me acuteness, frankness, and gayety". George Dempster showed an awareness of Boswell's desire to have his own image defined: "I am pleased with the justice he has done your humour and vivacity" (16 Feb. 1775). Boswell's literary character as Johnson's biographer was beginning to take shape.

This correspondence also includes another result of the trip to the Hebrides: the letters from Highlanders whom Boswell and Johnson had met on their journey. Most of the letters are concerned with Scottish antiquity and some are addressed to Boswell as an intermediary to Johnson. Sir Allan Maclean proposed sending a history of Iona (9 Jan. 1774), the Rev. Donald Macqueen sent "Druidical Stones" (end of Jan. 1774), Hector Maclean sent Gaelic poetry (4 July 1774), John Macleod composed and sent a narrative of the escape of Prince Charles (12 July 1775). Boswell had requested the last, and

later incorporated it into his Tour. The Highlanders acted no doubt in part because of Johnson's interest in history, and a shared awareness that such memories and artifacts were fast disappearing. But they were also responding to Boswell's enthusiasm for his Scottish heritage, a romantic loyalty which remained all his life at least as strong as his yearning towards things English. When at the end of 1775, Boswell wrote to John Macleod to announce the birth of his son Alexander, he called himself a Highlander (11 Oct.), and Macleod's whimsical response in the same vein delighted him. "I am a man of old times", he wrote in his Journal (7 Nov.).

The poverty of the Highland lairds, however, did much to dissipate their romantic aura. Appeals to Boswell as Johnson's friend, as chronicler of the past, as a romantic, were matched by appeals to him as a practical man of affairs, as a lawyer, and as Lord Auchinleck's son. Sir Allan Maclean asked Boswell for help with his lawsuit against the Duke of Argyll (17

June 1774); John Maclean hoped that Boswell would use his influence on behalf of his son (10 Jan. 1774); Allan Macdonald, desperately and unsuccessfully trying to avoid emigrating, sought arbitration in a dispute with Lord Macdonald (2 Mar., 27 June 1774). Boswell responded to some of these appeals, but was not actively concerned about the causes of the Highlanders' distress. Even when solutions to some of Scotland's ills appear in various forms in these letters, they remain peripheral because Boswell's interests lay elsewhere. George Dempster, for example, was deeply concerned with Scottish farming practices, and later became one of the most influential agrarian reformers of his age. But in his letter to Boswell (16 Feb. 1775), sensitive to the attitude of his correspondent, he spoke briefly and casually of his agricultural pursuits. Although ten years later, after inheriting the Auchinleck estate, Boswell tried to develop a knowledge of farming, and enjoyed the image of himself as "an Old Scots Baron",

the realities of modern rural Scotland never appealed to him.

Letters to friends in London reveal Boswell in a congenial role as "friend to the Great", a guise he could not assume comfortably at home. Letters to Oglethorpe, to Pembroke, and to Wilkes in this collection are what Rufus Reiberg describes as "request" letters, "designed to elicit brilliant responses [from] the Great and the Celebrated".⁴ To General Oglethorpe, Boswell wrote twice in these years, each time asking for his opinion on a variety of subjects: the question of copyright, the American situation, Johnson's book. The requests are couched in magnificent language: "You can perceive what is masterly and what is defective, you can confirm by the sanction of your own judgement and illustrate by the stores of your own observation ..." (25 Feb. 1775). He requests a letter from Lord Pembroke: "This is a kind of genteel begging for I really do not see why I might not as well ask to have some of your Champaigne as some

of your pleasantry" (2 Mar. 1775). And similarly to Wilkes: "I should value as curiosities of the first rate sallies from a Lord Mayor of London" (26 May 1775). Boswell analysed his reader carefully, judiciously mixing flattery with humour in just the right amounts to make each palatable. In his requests for letters he prescribed the tone as well as the subject of the response he desired, and he presented an image of himself to which he hoped his correspondent might relate. Thus to Oglethorpe he was deferential, to Pembroke nearly servile, and to Wilkes "classical and gay". The letter to William Mason (730 May 1775) furnishes an amusing contrast: here Boswell assumed a rather different pose, a mixture of arrogance and formal politeness which offended Mason, but produced a response nevertheless.

In all these letters to celebrities there is a stylized posturing, a self consciousness, which is sometimes irritating and sometimes amusing. Boswell was polishing his public image and receiving responses in kind. That he kept copies of his own letters in these exchanges indicates not only his social aspirations but also his concern for his literary identity.

In each of these correspondences, while Boswell sought an intellectual dialogue, he also anticipated a future meeting with his correspondent, or reminisced about a previous one. He hoped to read his Journal to the Oglethorpes, he wished to visit Wilton, he described to Wilkes their last evening together, he invited Mason to visit him in Scotland. The correspondence both framed and moulded experience.

The forty letters concerning the John Reid trial and execution, written from Aug. to Oct. 1774, dramatically interrupt Boswell's correspondence with Highlanders, celebrities, and others. This trial and the events following it absorbed nearly all of Boswell's attention during this period.. Reports of Reid's trial, imprisonment, and execution fill the Journal, and the Register of Letters for this period records little correspondence on any other subject. Boswell's profound reaction to this episode surprised most of his contemporaries, including his wife, and may also seem mysterious to a modern reader. Even the manifest cruelty of the eighteenth-century criminal system in Scotland does not seem sufficient reason for Boswell's anguish.

On 1 August John Reid was tried before the High Court of Justiciary for stealing nineteen sheep and found guilty. The trial itself turned up no clear evidence either for or against the guilt of the defendant beyond the compelling fact that some of the stolen sheep were found in his possession, but it seemed the opinion of both the jury and the judges that Reid's previous difficulties with the law and his reputation as a thief were enough to justify a verdict against him. The judges also easily agreed that the verdict demanded the death penalty. There was nothing unusual in this. Lord Kames was simply echoing the attitude prevalent all over Britain when, agreeing with his colleague, Lord Auchinleck, he said "I have no doubt that theft of nineteen, nay of nine, is capital. If not, as my brother said, it would be dismal as we could not repress it, and there would be no remedy".⁵ English and Scottish law both protected property as much as they protected the sovereignty of the state and human life. The indignant eloquence of John Wilson protesting "the barbarous laws of a civilized nation" (6 Sept.), the shocked reaction of Michael

Nasmith (1 Sept.), both mirroring the outrage of Boswell himself, were small and unheeded voices of liberalism in a world of conservative property owners.

In his Journals and his letters, Boswell does not refer directly to his father's role in the sentencing of Reid. But surely the "narrowness" of Scotland overlapped in his mind with his father's narrowness in the case, for Lord Auchinleck was one of the most vociferous on the Court in condemning Reid to death: "I have ... no sort of difficulty in recommending capital punishment", he remarked, "we have no choice".⁶ This inflexible attitude must have contributed to Boswell's response and may even have caused it. It is nevertheless important also to remember that it was Boswell's attitude, not his father's, that was unusual here; Boswell was among very few who regarded Reid's punishment as unduly harsh.

Among the Reid letters are a number which Boswell wrote to influential acquaintances -- Pembroke, Errol, Queensberry, and Cornwallis, -- asking them to intervene with the King on Reid's behalf. This type

of letter was wholly appropriate at the time, as commonplace as the royal pardon itself. Boswell's appeals failed for two reasons. One was the prevalent opinion that Reid was a habitual thief. The royal pardon was granted as a reward for merit, for good character, or for a history of service to a landlord. Reid had none of these. And just as he had been tried as a man of flawed character in court, so now was he tried again in the minds of those who had the power to save him and was again found wanting. Lord Errol's letter of 27 Aug. states the considerations clearly: Errol had never held a good opinion of Reid's father-in-law, his tenant, and he understood that Reid himself had a bad character. Although Errol recognised the possibility of insufficient evidence, his letter shows it was Reid's lack of merit that weighed most heavily with him, as it had with the jury and as it undoubtedly would with the King. Lord Errol did not wish to risk any part of his own reputation by intervening on behalf of someone as blatantly undeserving as John Reid.

Secondly, Boswell's appeals stressed the unfairness and the prejudice of the Scottish court. He attacked the opinion of the Lord Justice Clerk as biased and "narrow".

He assumed that English attitudes would be fairer, more enlightened. The history of the period does not support this assumption, nor would it be easy for any nobleman, English or Scots, to intervene for a prisoner on the premise that the man had been unfairly tried. Royal clemency did not correct the legal system, it reinforced it, by demonstrating the power and the mercy of the sovereign, the strength and beneficence of the state. An attack on this system would not produce a pardon.

Boswell did not analyse his failure in this way. He simply felt frustrated and angry that his appeals brought no results, and he chiefly blamed the obduracy of the Lord Justice Clerk.

Boswell did achieve one thing by his efforts: he convinced himself that Reid was innocent. This develops clearly in his letters. At first he argued (To Errol, 10 Aug. 1774) that the evidence was circumstantial, and that "the crime of stealing 19 sheep [was] at any rate too small for capital punishment". Writing to Pembroke (20 Aug.) he suggested that his own interest in the case was derived from past history: "Reid was my first client in Criminal Business when he was tried in 1766. I have theerfore a particular concern in his fate and wish much that he should not be hanged". And he added that Reid's crime was not

"atrocious. Typically, Boswell's whimsy grew into strong resolve. (It was mixed, perhaps, with a sense of remote responsibility for Reid's current plight, because in 1766 Boswell and his young colleagues had persuaded Reid not to request transportation, so that they could secure his acquittal.) In subsequent letters he began to emphasize Reid's actual innocence. To Queensberry he wrote (3 Sept.) "I am verily persuaded he is not guilty of the crime for which he was doomed to die." And to Crosbie (6 Sept.) he affirmed "I think he was not guilty".

Boswell's visits to Reid in prison and his interviews with the condemned man fill his Journal. His relationship with his client became more complicated, partly because Reid, however his character is refracted in the Journal and the letters, remained stubbornly evasive and ignoble. W.K. Wimsatt has observed Boswell's "curiously flickering and detached... self-awareness" on this occasion. "His tortured and unselfish engagement in behalf of a doomed client merges with a quite satisfactory consciousness of his own role as eloquent defender and a prolonged exploitation of his opportunity as observer".⁷ In other words, Boswell was again experimenting with his own creative process. Through Boswell's various roles of advocate, humanitarian, and pamphleteer, Reid became an artistic creation and Boswell became part of that creation. He was "exploiting his opportunity"

only by changing from observer to observed and back with typical agility. The broadside The Mournful Case of Poor Misfortunate and Unhappy John Reid, which Boswell published; the portrait of Reid which Boswell commissioned George Ralph to paint; the report of Reid's execution which Boswell wrote for the newspapers:⁸ all are Boswellian studies in "point of view"; Boswell was blurring art and life again: orchestrating interviews with Reid for his Journal, writing a broadside for the public in Reid's own voice, writing to those in power on Reid's behalf, writing to the newspapers as an observer, and recording all these activities in his Journal. But Boswell's complicated involvement in the Reid case came to an abrupt end. His failure to secure Reid's pardon, Lord Auchinleck's considerable responsibility for that failure, and the shocking reality of Reid's execution dealt successive blows to Boswell's professional life, blows which left a permanent legacy of resentment.

The Reid case marked for Boswell the moment at which he finally and irrevocably recognised that he could never fit himself into the mould of advocate, neither the respectable mould which his father had prepared for him, nor the more heroic mould which he had tried to fashion for himself. The drama of the Reid letters lies not so much in the story they tell about Reid as in the gradual unfolding of Boswell's

realization that he had no power to influence that story. His vision of himself as advocate, tempered by auxiliary roles of humanitarian, a friend of the powerful and great, and essayist and pamphleteer, all these were crushed by the words: "the law must take its course". And Boswell saw that law as Scottish, he perceived Reid's sentence as emblematic of all that was wrong with Scotland, and he remained convinced that such miscarriage of justice would not have prevailed in England.

The curtain falls on the John Reid case with the letters describing the difficulties and bizarre misfortunes attendant upon Janet Reid's efforts to bury her husband; it is typical of Boswell's affairs that Reid's poignant story should end on a note of macabre tragi-comedy.

The letters concerning John Reid and the correspondence with political and literary celebrities form the more public segment of this collection. Here we see Boswell in a variety of public poses, reflected in the letters of others and in his own letters as well. He was less inclined to keep copies of the more private part of this collection, the correspondence with family and family friends. So here we have a more one-sided view. But these letters, from Sir John Pringle, Margaret Stuart, Godfrey Bosville, Patrick Preston, and James Campbell of Treesbank, are the most personal, the most charming, and the most humorous of the

collection. All these correspondents reinforced Boswell's position in his family and his community. Pringle and Preston urged reconciliation between Boswell and his father, Mrs. Stuart and Treesbank depended upon Boswell for help with the impecunious Cuninghame cousins, all expressed affectionate interest in Boswell's growing family. These letters show the claims of Boswell's community upon him, and they suggest how easily a less ambitious Boswell could have settled into the roles of husband, father, advocate, and, later, landowner, the roles expected of him and for which he received much support from those who loved him.

Sir John Pringle's letters combine avuncular affection with wit and charm. Curiously, although Pringle was then President of the Royal Society, Boswell does not seem to have regarded him as a celebrity in his correspondence, and their letters seldom touch upon subjects of public interest. Pringle may have attempted quite specifically to avoid becoming cast in a public role; he asked in one letter (26 Jan 1775) that Boswell not quote him "at the bar nor in private companies". Possibly he was protecting his position as friend of both Boswell and his father, for had Boswell quoted him as an authority, Lord Auchinleck might have been embarrassed or offended. Loyalty to Lord Auchinleck may also have prompted Pringle's attempts to dissuade Boswell

from pursuing his plan to move to London; he repeatedly urged Boswell to seek his father's counsel and approval, an approval which Pringle realized Boswell would never obtain.

Pringle was a part of both Boswell's worlds, Edinburgh and London, and he seems to have understood his young friend's dilemma better than anyone else. He recognized the stability that Boswell's wife provided, and he felt, too, that an open break with Lord Auchinleck would not resolve Boswell's quandary. Pringle's humour was part of his tact. He administered advice with a light touch, and teased Boswell about all the most important subjects: the conflict between Boswell and his father over male succession, Boswell's legal career, and Samuel Johnson, whom Pringle disliked. His affectionate and humorous letters urging moderation are among the most appealing in this collection.

Mrs. Stuart's letters are also charming and sympathetic. She too was a part of both Scotland and London. Her professed interest in Mrs. Boswell and the Boswell children was secondary to her interest in Boswell himself. Virtually abandoned by her husband, bored by long sojourns in the country, homesick for old friends, she flirted with Boswell in her letters while inquiring solicitously after Mrs. Boswell, "my most excellent friend". Boswell enjoyed the flirtation

and chose to perceive his wife's friendship as sanctioning it. "She is my wife's dearest friend, so you see how beautiful our intimacy is", he wrote to Temple (22 May 1775).

But besides coquetry, Mrs. Stuart's letters show a real admiration for Boswell's kindness and sense of family. She commended Boswell for his efforts to help the Cuninghames, and she shared his concern over Treesbank's illness. Treesbank himself wrote Boswell an amusing, affectionate, and appreciative letter. Two years later, Boswell would assume responsibility for Treesbank's two orphaned sons.

Godfrey Bosville of Yorkshire and London was not in fact a relative, but Boswell chose to regard him as "chief" of the Boswell clan, and Bosville good-naturedly accepted the role. His letters are those of a fond if somewhat self-centered older cousin. The Bosville family had a talent for inheriting money, and Bosville could write, "Whatever I have wished for I have commonly had" (13 Feb. 1775). His complacently conservative views included severe criticism of the American rebels and a scornful distrust of John Wilkes and his followers. But his value to Boswell lay not in his politics, but in his Yorkshire warmth and simplicity, his love of family, and his willingness to include Boswell in his family circle. A genial optimist, Bosville had a confidence bred of continual good fortune. If he was aware

of a conflict between Boswell and Lord Auchinleck, he chose to ignore it, and in his letters he spoke warmly of "that old father of yours". Boswell enjoyed Bosville's friendship because of the Yorkshireman's lack of alignment with any faction in Boswell's life, because of his simple pleasure in money and its comforts, and because of his uncomplicated affections. In London, Boswell found in the Bosville household a familiar warmth, without the embarrassing "Scotch tones and freedom of manners" that he often complained of among his real relatives abroad.

With the possible exception of Pringle, Boswell's family and friends did not perceive him as a writer, but as an occasionally erratic, often amusing advocate and a convivial companion. Yet the affectionate support reflected in these personal letters, and particularly the efforts to improve relations with his father, surely helped Boswell overcome his periods of despondency, languor, and resentment and enabled him to retain his literary ambitions.

Even without his father's pervasive disapproval, Boswell could never have fulfilled these ambitions in eighteenth century Scotland. As we read these letters with all the advantages of retrospection, events and personalities fall into patterns that were invisible to those close to them. Thus these letters show us Boswell's yearnings towards the

glamour of London, and his early steps toward assuming the role of Samuel Johnson's biographer. They show how he merged that role with being a "friend to the great". The John Reid letters illustrate the stranglehold of a conservative, property-conscious society on its more liberal younger generation, a repression which Boswell took personally because of his father's position and because of his own self-dramatized relationship with Reid. The letters from those within the family circle show how Boswell, despite his resentments and desire for liberation, was deeply and in many ways happily rooted in his Scottish community.

Yet perhaps what is most remarkable about these letters is not the information they provide about contemporary events, nor the facts they reveal about Boswell's life, nor even the insights they give into Boswell's mind. Most striking are the characteristics of the writers themselves: the solidity of Godfrey Bosville, the wit of John Pringle, the outrage of John Wilson and Michael Nasmith, the affection of Dempster, the kindliness of Oglethorpe, the antiquarian enthusiasms of Donald MacQueen, and above all, the

touches of humour that embellish nearly every letter. Ephemeral qualities all, they are caught and preserved in these letters as they could never be in a less intimate setting. The demands and stresses on Boswell were many; these letters reveal this, but they also suggest some of the less obvious forces that sustained him.

NOTES

¹Journ. 21 Nov., 5 Dec. 1762.

²Frank Brady, "The Strategies of Biography and Some Eighteenth-Century Examples", Literary Theory and Structure, ed. F. Brady, J. Palmer, M. Price, 1973, p. 262.

³"Review of My Life for Some Time Previous to This Period", Journ. June 1774.

⁴"James Boswell's Personal Correspondence: The Dramatised Quest for Identity", The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century, ed. H. Anderson, P. B. Daghljan, I. Ehrenpreis, 1966, p. 251.

⁵Lg. 22:6.

⁶Idem.

⁷Defence, p. xix.

⁸To which he refers in Journ. 21 Sept.

From the Lord Justice Clerk,¹

Wednesday 5 January 1774

MS. Yale (C 2023).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr., Advocate, Edinburgh.²

Barskimming,³ 5 Janry 1774

DEAR SIR: I thank you for your Indulgence.⁴ I can plead no other excuse for my delay but the dissipation that attends a meeting of friends and neighbours⁵ at this season in the Countrey.⁶

You have taken the Substance of my Speech with accuracy and propriety. But as you desired me to make what alterations I thought proper, I have accordingly to save scoreing and Interlineations made out a new Copy from my Notes which I brought with me. In which I have kept to my own argument in as few words as I could, and have dropt some illustrations which had occurred to me in the Course of speaking, and as they were not in my notes I did not think it material to the Argument to insert them. I hope the Copy inclosed will come in time⁷ and I am with great regard, Dear Sir, Your most Obedient, humble Servant,

THO. MILLER

¹Thomas Miller (1717-89). He had been appointed to the Court of Session as Lord Justice Clerk in 1766, succeeding Lord Minto, and took the title of Lord Barskimming, which he later changed to Lord Glenlee. In 1788 he succeeded Robert Dundas as Lord President. He was made a baronet in 1789, six months before his death (Brunton and Haig, pp. 530-31).

²Since May 1771 the Boswells had been living at James's Court; in May 1773 they had moved to a larger flat in the same building, where they lived until 1786 (Walker, p. 265 n. 6; Life v. 463).

³The Miller seat in Ayrshire. It adjoined Auchinleck and was noted for a remarkable bridge, ninety feet high, over the River Ayr. Bennet Langton assumed that JB had shown the bridge to SJ during the latter's sojourn at Auchinleck (From Langton, c. 17 Nov. 1773), but there is no evidence that he did so. The house is now owned by the Roman Catholic Brothers of the Christian School, and the bridge still exists (J. E. Shaw, Ayrshire 1745-1950, 1953, p. 56). For a visit JB made to Barskimming, see Journ. 17 Nov.

⁴JB had written Miller on 28 and 30 Dec. (Reg. Let.); presumably these letters contained JB's version of Miller's speech on Literary Property and a request for his corrections and comments. JB was collecting from all the Lords of Session their speeches on Literary Property delivered the previous July in a landmark case, Hinton v. Donaldson. JB had been among the counsel successfully defending the bookseller Alexander Donaldson, who was now bringing the English version of his case to an appeal before the House of Lords. JB was not representing Donaldson in England, but he hoped to influence the case anyway by having the opinions of the Scottish judges printed in London before the case was decided there. Journal Notes show that he was working on this project on 22, 23, and 25 Dec. JB's The Decision of the Court of Session on the Question of Literary Property . . . containing the Speeches and Arguments of the Judges appeared

in Edinburgh on 31 Jan. and about the same time in London. The London case opened in the House of Lords on 4 Feb.; on 22 Feb. the Lords reversed the previous English ruling and decided in favour of Donaldson. They thus upheld the ruling of the Court of Session that copyright existed through statute, not in common law as had been assumed previously. Most of English and American copyright law is still based on this decision (Lit. Car., pp. 98-101; Life v. 50, 474-75; see also post To Oglethorpe, 2 Apr.).

⁵MS. "neighbous"

⁶The Court of Session was enjoying a three-week Christmas recess; it reconvened 11 Jan. (Murray iii. pt.1. 239).

⁷Apparently it did; Miller's speech is among the ten included in The Decision of the Court of Session, although it is not among those published, probably at JB's instigation, in the Cal. Merc. (5,7,9,12,14 Feb.).

From Sir Allan Maclean,¹

Sunday 9 January 1774

MS. Yale (C 1856). Received 10 Feb. (Reg. Let.).

HEADING: James Boswell younger of Auchenleck Esquire.

Inch,² 9th Janry. 1774

DEAR SIR: Inclosed, agreeable to promise, I send the Antient Inscriptions in Icolumnkill drawn off by Mr. Campbell, together with a general view of the plan of the History of that place done by him.³ He says he means the Inscriptions as a compliment to your friend Dr. Johnson; and that it is but a small acknowledgement for the Doctors high Encomium on our Countrymen; for which every true Highlander ought to venerate his name.⁴ And if you please to patronize the History, the Manuscript will be sent you in a few weeks: for from your Character and parts you must be allowed to be a Competent judge how to act.⁵ This if his endeavours merit your approbation, especially seeing he is the first who ever attempted any thing of the kind.⁶ Please communicate to me in course of Post what your Sentiments are; as Mr. Campbell depends entirely upon you: as I am perswaded Dr. Johnson

will patronize a thing of [this] nature, if you but only signify your opinion. If you desire to have the Manuscript transmitted you, you may have it [in] course. If more Inscriptions be required they will be sent.⁷ I am wishing you and Mrs. Boswell⁸ many happy returns of the season. Dear Sir, Your most obliged and obedient humble servant,

ALLAN MACLEAN

¹Sir Allan Maclean (c. 1710-83) was chief of the Macleans of Duart. He entertained JB and SJ on their tour of the Hebrides and accompanied them to Iona (Journ. 17-22 Oct. 1773; Life v. 322-43, 556.).

²Inchkenneth, where Maclean lived, an island off the Isle of Mull. Its ownership was currently being contested by Maclean and the Duke of Argyll (Journ. 6 and 18 Oct. 1773. See also post From Sir Allan Maclean, 17 June, n. 3).

³Dugald Campbell (1746-1824) was a young schoolmaster at Kilfinichen on Mull. During JB and SJ's visit to Mull, another Campbell, tacksman to the Duke of Argyll, had shown them a manuscript account of Iona written by Campbell the schoolmaster. SJ expressed interest in it, and Neil Macleod, their host, promised to have a copy sent to him via JB (Journ. 21 Oct. 1773; Fasti Scot. iv. 113). The inscriptions and "general view" are not reported. Thomas Pennant, who visited Iona in 1772, described some Latin inscriptions and some in Gaelic, the majority faint and nearly illegible (Pennant 1772, pp. 163-64). Sacheverell reported that "The Dean of the Isles, Mr. John Frazer, an honest episcopal minister . . . told me his father, who had been Dean of the Isles, left him a book with above 300 inscriptions, which he had lent to the late Earl of Argyle, a man of incomparable sense and great curiosity, and doubts they are all lost by that great man's afflictions" (William Sacheverell, An Account of the Isle of Man with a Voyage to I-Columb--Kill, 1702, Reprinted for the Manx Society, 1859, p. 101.

⁴"Dr. Johnson being asked, how he liked his entertainment in the Highlands, answered, That the sauce to every thing was the benevolence of the inhabitants, which, he said, could not be enough praised" (Cal. Merc. 30 Oct. 1773, p.[3]; also quoted in Edin. Adv. 2 Nov. 1773, p. 284).

⁵There is no indication that the manuscript ever was sent either to JB or to SJ. The Fasti Scot. reports that Campbell "left in MS. a History of Iona" at his death (Ibid.).

⁶This statement is surprising, as a number of descriptions and histories of Iona were known at the time. A description of Iona was subjoined to William Sacheverell's An Account of the Isle of Man (1702), and both JB and SJ had read this before visiting the island. JB also mentions as authorities Dr. Richard Pococke (1704-65), Dr. John Walker (1674-1747), Joseph Banks (1743-1820), Martin Martin (d. 1718), and Thomas Pennant (1726-90) (Journ. 10, 20 Oct. 1773).

⁷Further correspondence on this subject is not reported. The next known letter from Maclean (post From Sir Allan Maclean, 17 June) is on a different topic, so the question of Campbell's manuscript must have been resolved in some way.

⁸Margaret Montgomerie Boswell (c. 1738-89), JB's wife since 25 Nov. 1769.

From John Maclean of Lochbuy,¹

Monday 10 January 1774

MS. Yale (C 1860). Received 10 Feb. "Lochbuy" (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell younger of Achinleck Esquire at his Lodging, Edinburgh.

Moy,² 10th Janry 1774

DEAR SIR: I give you The Trouble of This Letter by my son who was very sorry that he was not at home when you and Dr. Johnson was here however I hope you and him shall make up your Acquittance beffore he Leaves Edinbr.³ I am hopefull and depend upon you that you'll assist him in anything that Concerns the Interest of his family and that you'll give Him your best advise how to manage his affairs there.⁴ Youll give me Leave tho unaquented to offer my Compliments to your Lady and family and belive me to be, Dear Sir, your assured friend and most Humble Servant,

JOHN MACLAINE OF LOCHBUY

¹Seventeenth laird of Lochbuy (d. 1785). See Life v. 341 for JB and SJ's visit to this "bluff, comely, noisy old gentleman".

²Castle Moy was no longer inhabited, although its cellars and dungeons were still in use (Life v. 343). Maclean built Lochbuy House nearby just after he inherited the estate in 1749; it was completed and occupied in 1752, but Maclean was never able to pay off the debts which he had contracted in building what JB called "a poor house, though of two storeys indeed" (Hebrides, p. 343-44; Maclean, pp. 243-44).

³Archibald (d. 1784) had been at a cattle fair, JB thought at Falkirk, when JB and SJ visited Lochbuy. There is no evidence besides this letter that Archibald and JB ever met, although JB dined with "Lochbowie, Dr. and Mrs. Grant, Grange etc." on 28 Feb. (Notes).

⁴Both John Maclean and his son seem to have been frequently involved in debts and in lawsuits; furthermore, Archibald was said to possess "a harsh, quarrelsome nature". About this time Maclean made over his estate to Archibald who, finding it heavily in debt, appointed trustees to handle it, obtained a lieutenant's commission in the Army, and in 1776 left for Canada to join the 84th Regiment of Foot, the Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment. He subsequently rose to the rank of Captain, but he quarrelled with his commander, Lt.-Col. Allan Maclean of Torloisk, attempted unsuccessfully to bring charges against him, and was dismissed from the Army. He left America in 1784, but perished on the voyage home as a result of a fight with one Daniel Monroe, who ran him through with a sword. Monroe was later acquitted of murder, since the attack had been provoked. Archibald had married Barbara Lowther of Boston, who was returning to England with him; when she applied to her father-in-law for part of her late husband's estate, Maclean claimed that she was not entitled to any of it under Scottish law because she had been married for less than a year. John Maclean's first cousin, Murdoch Maclean, became the next laird (Maclean, pp. 246-47; Army List, 1777, 1783).

From Sir John Pringle,¹

Saturday 29 January 1774

MS. Yale (C 2307). Received 4 Feb. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esquire, Advocate, Edinburgh.

FRANK: Free J. Walsh.²

POSTMARK: [London] 29 IA, FREE.

London, 29 Jan. 1774

DEAR SIR: I have been too long in answering your friendly letter,³ but I delayed doing it till I should be able to tell you that I am to put your professions to the test, by employing your assistance in dispersing at Edinburgh such copies of my late Discourse as I had to dispose of, at least the full proportion of them.⁴ I think there are in all about 23. The names of those I could recollect that were, for one reason or another, most entitled to my attentions in this way, are written on the covers on the outside, except in those that have gilt covers, in which the names are on the inside. The whole are for Edinb. except those to Sir James Clerk,⁵ Dr. Brisbane,⁶ and the University of St. Andrews,⁷ and I beg that you would be so good as to transmit the respective copies to those several places. May I add another request, that about each book you would employ our Jeanny⁸ to wrap a Sheet of brown paper, and I hope that she will likewise not grudge to do me this other friendly office.

I write this from a friends house,⁹ and just ready to be called for dinner, so have only to add for the present, that you will soon hear from me again, that I offer my best respects to Mrs. Boswel and love to Jeany, and that I am most sincerely, Dear Sir, Your affectionate and faithful humble servant and friend,

JOHN PRINGLE

P.S. I have caused the Copies to be packt up and sent to Foote,¹⁰ to put on board the first Ship for Leith.¹¹

¹Distinguished Scottish physician and a close friend of Lord Auchinleck's, Pringle had left Edinburgh in 1742 to accompany the British Army on the Continent, first as physician to the second Earl of Stair, and later as Physician General to His Majesty's Forces in the Low Countries during the War of the Austrian Succession. He returned to London in 1748 and had been living there ever since. He was appointed physician to Queen Charlotte in 1763, became a baronet in 1766, and was elected President of the Royal Society in 1772, a post he held until 1778. He died in 1782, age 75. His "Life" by Andrew Kippis is prefixed to Six Discourses delivered by Sir John Pringle, Bart., 1783. For a modern biography, see Sydney Selwyn, "Sir John Pringle", Medical History (July 1966) x. no. 3. 266-274.

²John Walsh (?1725-95) had been secretary to his cousin by marriage, Robert Clive, during the latter's second residency in India, 1757-60. Walsh returned to England in 1760 and through Clive's influence became M.P. for Worcester (1761-80). His scientific interests led to his becoming a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1770, and Pringle awarded him the Copley medal on 30 Nov. 1774 for his work on the torpedo, electric ray, or cramp fish (Mark Bence-Jones, Clive of India, 1974, pp. 7, 85, 192).

³Not reported. Probably JB had replied to Pringle's humorous letter to Jeanny Campbell (29 Dec. 1773), which began: "As there is some difference between your Uncle and me in point of ceremony, whether he ought to write me first, or I to him ..."

⁴A Discourse on the Different Kinds of Air Delivered at the Anniversary Meeting of the Royal Society November 30, 1773. By Sir John Pringle Bart. President. Published at their Request (1774). The speech had been delivered when Pringle awarded the Copley medal to Joseph Priestley for his "Observations on Different Kinds of Air", and set a precedent in length and formality for subsequent presentation speeches (Kippis, p. xxxvii).

⁵Sir James Clerk of Penicuik, third Bt. (c. 1710-82). For JB's later visit to Penicuik, see Journ. 2 Sept.

⁶Dr. John Brisbane (c. 1725-75) was probably living at Balbegno Castle, Fettercairn, Kincardineshire, an estate which his wife, Girsell Ogilvy, had inherited in 1756. Brisbane received his medical degree in Edinburgh in 1750 and in May 1758 became physician to the Middlesex Hospital in London, where he remained until 1772. His career after that is obscure; he took a series of leaves of absence from the Hospital and the post was declared vacant in 1773. He was the author of Select Cases in the Practice of Medicine, 1762, and Anatomy of Painting, 1769. His precise connexion with Pringle is unknown. There is a memorial inscription to him, his father, and grandfather, "Three Eminent Physicians", in the graveyard of St. Mungo's Cathedral, Glasgow; it is reprinted in Scots Mag. (June 1809) lxxi. 444 (A. C. Cameron, The History of Fettercairn, 1899, p. 102; College of Physicians, ii. 274; Univ. Glasgow, p. 13).

⁷Pringle attended St. Andrews before he entered the University of Edinburgh in 1727. The University Library at St. Andrews has a copy of Pringle's Discourse. Although the date of its addition to the collection is not known, it is almost certainly the volume mentioned here, for it is inscribed on the flyleaf in Pringle's hand: "To the University Library of St. Andrews, these Discourses [~~is deleted~~] are most respectfully presented by the author". Mr. A. G. Mackenzie, Librarian at the University Library, kindly supplied this information.

⁸Jean Campbell (c. 1764-89), Mrs. Boswell's sister's stepdaughter, daughter of James Campbell of Treesbank. She was living with the Boswells at this time, and had become a particular favourite of Pringle's during his visit to Edinburgh in the summer of 1772. For other affectionate references to her, see From Pringle, 19 Sept., 1 Dec. 1772; 4, 25 March 1773; From Pringle to Jean Campbell, 29 Dec. 1773.

⁹Unidentified; possibly John Walsh's house in Chesterfield Street.

¹⁰Samuel Foote (1720-77), actor, dramatist, and theatre manager, had just returned to London from Dublin and was about to depart for Edinburgh to fulfill a three-week engagement at the Theatre Royal. He travelled to Scotland overland, but sent his luggage by sea, probably accompanied by a servant who could look after Pringle's package as well. Foote arrived in Edinburgh on 4 Feb.; he dined with JB on 9 and 23 Feb. (Notes; Cal. Merc. 5 Feb. p. [2], 7 Feb. p. [3]; Simon Trefman, Sam. Foote, Comedian, 1971, p. 217).

¹¹Possibly the Success, which was to sail from London to Leith between 30 Jan. and 5 Feb. (Edin. Adv. 31 Dec. 1773, p. 421; Cal. Merc. 29 Jan., p. [4]). Its arrival at Leith was reported in the Cal. Merc. 19 Feb. p. [3].

From Donald Macqueen¹

end of January 1774

MS. Yale (C 1877). Received 17 Feb. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr. Younger Achinleck,
Advocate, Edinr.

Kilmuir, Janry the 1774²

DEAR SIR: I had the pleasure to Understand by the public prints,³ that you and your Fellow-traveller the Doctor arrived Safe post varios casus, post tot discrimina rerum⁴ on the west coast and came at Length to the Metropolis without Any Accident. Let me assure you without any compliment, that this piece of Intelligence gave me great pleasure: that two Men I Esteem so much should Escape Every hazard by Sea and Land, in the most tempestuous and Uncertain weather I ever saw in this variable dismal Climate. You are surely both reserved for doing further good and I wish how long, because I know Neither of You will be Idle. I wrote the Doctor according to his desire to the care of Mr. Drumond⁵ and know Nothing further About it. I put it upon him to Acquaint You, that I had some small trinke^ts to send you, Which will now be delivered you by Dr. MacLean --⁶ There is a

Sacrificial knife, an Elf or Druidical Spade, which was Used in Opening up the Ground at one of the Annual Solemnities, a Sling Stone, so I am <to>ld, of which You are a better Judge, if You have been in the Balearcan Islands,⁷ but all these were Indeed Used here when they knew nothing of Mettals.⁸ There is also another Crusted stone, which I lately picked Up at the foot of one of our Mountains.⁹ If Any of these or the Whole of them may be thought a Curiosity by the Honble. Faculty of which you are a member, I desire they May be Laid Up in their Library, as a Small Expression of my Gratitude for the access I had to their Books in Mr. Thomas Ruddiman's time.¹⁰ I believe I could send You the Serpent's Stone, to which our Women attribute great virtues, particularly in Child-bearing And in procuring Success to our Undertakings when we carry it About Us. I am afraid, however, You woud Use it in time of Your pleadings, Which your Judges woud not perhaps reckon a fair way of carrying a Cause. That Ludibrium Aulae Augusti, the Deified Claudius put a Roman Knight to death for no better reason than that he trusted the gaining of his Suit to this stone or Egg. See Pliny C. 29th

Chap. the 12th. Where You will Also Observe, that a little Priest-craft was practised by the barbarous Ecclesiastics called the Druids, who I doubt not gave rise to Several of our Superstitious Customs and Articles of Belief that have been. Our Tradition about the formation of the Egg differs Little from Pliny's Account.¹¹

I remember I said something to you about Perkin v --.¹² Whether there is Any Impropriety in declaring against the Established System, you know best. I think there Shoud be None, because our present political faith has so little connection with or dependance on that Circumstance.

Sure I am, none of Your Judges would pronounce Sentence Upon Such Obscure Evidence -- Face it with the conduct of some of the greatest men of the Court of England, of some of Henry's best friends and of the Scots Monarch, who was Above being duped by the Supposed Knight Errant: add to this the Appearance and behaviour of the Adventurer himself and you will Easily See where the ballance Inclines -- had Success gone the other way, Historians had

gone Along with it. How will you Justify the Character given of the Patron of your Family, perhaps One of the best and greatest of our Kings,¹³ by Erasmus a Forreigner,¹⁴ a man of the purest Morals, after the batle of Flowdon and the young King a minor,¹⁵ when no favour was to be Expected, without at Least Supposeing that he¹⁶ was convinced by appearances and that the appearances were very strong.¹⁷ Reasons of State will not do, for he was in no hazard from England and woud he sacrifice a Young, Amiable, Innocent Lady, a cousine of his own, as a Complement to the King of France who had himself Openly deserted the Unhappy Itinerant?¹⁸ The Case ought to be fairly stated on both sides And Every One Left to Judge for Himself. That will at Least give An Air of Novelty to a beaten Subject. Tho I believe Don Sebastian of Portugal who was supposed to have Lost his Life at the Unlucky batle of Alcazor among the Moors, and Several years thereafter was said to have appeared at Venise to be much in the same Predicament with Perkin,¹⁹ you²⁰ are not to Suppose me a Hunter of Chimeras; for I believe Smerdis the Magian was a downright Imposter,²¹ As I do the three Demetriuses

who One After Another Personated the Prince of Muscovy.²² The Neros also and Simnel I despise as base Counterfeits.²³ It is indeed a Piece of foolhardiness which comes very near to Madness, to cast Up as a pretender to a Crown When one or two Imposters Are Already discharged or Employed in a Kitchen to dress meat for the Family -- So Romantic an attempt could not be Undertaken by a Calm Sensible Man unless Truth Lay at the bottom of it. This Species of Knight Errantry prevailed Only in the Days of Ignorance and Barbarity When Criticism was Low and Kingdoms Little connected with One Another.

You will pardon My Intrusion, when I divert you for a few minutes from attending to the Estate of, perhaps, an honest Man which May be [in] Jeopardy or defending the Life of a real or Nominal Criminal. Please make offer My best respects to Dr. Johnson when you write him. I am with my best wishes for your prosperity and happiness, Dear Sir, Your most obedient and very humble Servant,

DON. MACQUEEN

If you write me by post which is the Surest

conveyance, please direct -- by Sconser.²⁴

The druidical remains sent herewith, have been transmitted from one family to Another like an Heritage for they have been supposed to have many virtues -- the preservation of Cattle have been of late the principal of them. Did I give you an Elf-arrow or do you think it worth the sending.²⁵

[Footnotes to this letter are on pp. 509-13.]

From Sir John Pringle,

Wednesday 2 February 1774

MS. Yale (C 2308). Received 7 Feb. (Reg. Let.).

Lond.¹ 2 Feb. 1774

DEAR SIR, A few days ago I wrote to you in a hurry, to acquaint [you] with the trouble I had presumed to give you about a trifling affair, the dispersion of some copies of my Discourse.² I now send you inclosed the bill of Lading:³ and still I will venture to give you more trouble, the sending the inclosed letter as directed, to a man I know nothing about, who has asked me a favour it is not in my power to procure for him (a place in the gift of the crown.)⁴ I have, in considerations of his Wants, saved him the paying postage for a refusal.

Your letter⁵ made me very happy in two respects, Veronica's getting well through the smallpox, and the prospect there is of your having another child, be it a son or another daughter.⁶ I should, for more than one reason, wish for the former; but I was sorry to find that you should so obstinately continue Goth and Vandal with regard to your feudal system.⁷ I was in hopes that more reflection, your attachment to English manners, and parental affection, would have by this time conquered those prejudices, which none should preserve but a parliament-house agent.⁸ How will it sound 100 years hence in the annals of these times, "that J.B. of A. after

making his tour through Europe, being the friend of Paoli⁹ and of Johnson,¹⁰ and a member of the Wits club at the Turk's head,¹¹ should have left his estate to the son of a dancing Master, of his own name;¹² in preference to his own daughter, a dutiful child, married to a gentleman of character, and the mother of a fine family of children, and of that number, three boys of the greatest hopes." So strange and weak an action could never otherwise be accounted for,¹³ than by supposing that he had entertained suspicions of the fidelity¹⁴ of his spouse, tho' a Lady in the opinion of the World of the most unspotted character; or else, by his having had unlawful commerce with the dancing Master's wife, who it is reported was not a woman of the greatest chastity (more than beauty) but on the contrary had several gallants, and yet had the art to make Mr. Boswell believe he was the only one; and even the father of that son to whom he bequeathed his fortune. Several other reflections have been thrown out upon that gentleman's character, which in all probability had never been believed, nor sullied it; had it not been for that strange (nay unnatural!) disposition of his Lands in the shire of Air, & -- from the direct line of an honoured family, to a pretended collateral, who, at the best, would have disgraced it, by being the reputed son of a Maitre

a dancer: fil fil fil

As your companion is the older man, I think he has the right to write first the account of your travels; and I am humbly of opinion that you would do well to let him. For were you to begin and to write well, you yourself have contributed to raise his character so high, that the merit of the composition would be ascribed to him solely.¹⁵

I still find you set upon fixing¹⁶ here: possibly it may answer; but the hazard I should think would be too great for a man with a wife and a growing family of children. The person you quote for favouring the scheme has certainly wit; but it is wisdom that is wanted in a counsellor on this occasion.¹⁷ I shall keep your secret, and I would advise you to tell it to as few as possible; because if people get a notion that you are so unsettled they will become shy of employing one whose head, they will imagine is turned¹⁸ upon other objects. But of all things obtain your father's consent; for possibly he may have reasons for going in to the scheme; and if so, you will have the world on your side in going; and a good apology for you, if you should go and fail.¹⁹

Once more I offer my best respects to Mrs. Boswell, and congratulations on the two occasions above mentioned: and once more my love to Jeanie too. I am, Dear Sir, most sincerely, your very affectionate old friend and humble servant,

J.P.

¹Presumably Pall Mall, where Pringle lived (Journ. 5 June 1780).

²Ante From Pringle, 29 Jan.

³Not reported.

⁴The letter is not reported, and the man and the "place" are unidentified.

⁵Not reported. See, ante From Pringle, 29 Jan., n. 3.

⁶Apparently Veronica had been successfully inoculated for smallpox in November 1773. Euphemia Boswell was born the following May.

⁷Pringle is here referring to the fierce dispute between JB and Lord Auchinleck over the entail of the Auchinleck estate. JB wished to limit the entail to heirs male, while his father wanted to extend it to "heirs whatsoever", male or female, of his own body. JB based his position partly upon a contemporary notion that only males could transmit family characteristics, and partly upon the history of the entail, in which the female line had been excluded once already. Later JB sought SJ's opinion on this matter (Life ii. 414-423). In 1776, JB and his father signed an entail which settled the estate on heirs male, and JB discovered with some bitterness that no other arrangement had ever been possible because his great-grandfather had already entailed the estate to heirs male. Thus Lord Auchinleck's opposition to JB sprang apparently from simple perversity, or perhaps from a desire to place the blame for excluding JB's daughters on JB himself (Journ. 5 Aug. 1776).

⁸"English manners" refers to English traditions of inheritance, which frequently included females. "A parliament-house agent", like a Scottish "writer", might prefer "feudal" principles as the more complicated and thus more lucrative system.

⁹General Pasquale Paoli (1725-1807), the Corsican patriot leader whom JB had visited in 1765 and celebrated in Corsica. He had fled to England in 1769, and was now living in London, where JB saw him regularly during London jaunts.

¹⁰MS. "being" deleted after "Johnson,"

¹¹Since April 1773, JB had been a member of SJ's literary club, which met weekly at the Turk's Head Coffee House on Gerrard Street (Life i. 477-79; ii. 235-40).

¹²David Boswell, a distant cousin living in Leith, was a dancing master, and a possible heir to Auchinleck if JB had no sons and adhered to the principle of male succession. David Boswell's eldest son was names James (Journ. 24 Mar. 1772; 30 Oct. 1775).

¹³MS. "except" deleted after "for,"

¹⁴MS. originally "infidelity"; "in" deleted.

¹⁵The coolness between SJ and Pringle is mentioned in the Life (iii. 65; v. 376); here it is given further credence by Pringle's avoiding use of SJ's name, and by his somewhat cynical tone. "Have contributed" may be the conditional and refer to the effect JB's account of their travels might have, or it may refer to JB's praise of SJ already in print, as in the preface to Corsica: "The illustrious Mr. Samuel Johnson, who has alone executed in England what was the task of whole academies in other countries ..." (1768, 2nd ed., pp. xix-xxx). Other friends whom JB consulted on the matter urged him to publish his version of the Hebridean tour at once; see post From Oglethorpe, 15 June; post From Edward Dilly, 23 Jan. 1775; post From Pembroke, 12 Mar. 1775.

¹⁶MS. "coming" deleted after "upon"

¹⁷"The person" is unidentified; F. A. Pottle and W. K. Wimsatt suggest that it may have been SJ (Defence, p. 203 n. 9). Pringle's argument against JB's cherished plan of

moving to London was one which JB himself had already recognized (Journ. 30 Mar. 1772). In 1786 he was called to the English bar and moved to London, but he was unable to attract clients (Life iii. 179 n. 1).

¹⁸MS. "out" deleted after "turned"

¹⁹"Remember in all cases of opposition, I shall be on the ministerial side; I mean on that of your father's my oldest and best friend" (From Pringle, 4 Mar. 1773).

From Allan Macdonald,¹

Wednesday 2 March 1774

MS. Yale (C 1836). Received 18 Mar. "Kingsburgh" (Reg. Let.).

Kingsburgh, 2 March 1774

DEAR SIR: The bearer my poor Brother,² goes to your Town, with papers which contain his all; will you but look at them, and thereafter endeavoure if possible, bring them to a final period -- you'll See Sir Alexr. McDonald³ is the man who (I may venture to Say) hurts him, which I am Sory for, [he] is more unfriendly than he ought be. It is not only Just, but even Charitable, to suport one honest, plaine, good natured easy man, who is oppress'd; and I am Sure hath Justice on his Side, which you'l See from his papers. He'l come in to any reasonable terms Sir Alexr. thinks proper, reather than go into your house⁴ nay he'l take much less than the Sum decreted in his Favors, or he'l Submitt his cause to any Two friends, or Lawrers you, Sir Alexr., and his friends will advise. Is it either to Sir Alexr. credit or honour, to hurt a poor man, with a wife and Seven poor Children,⁵ and hath not a Single Sixpence, excepting this poor myte, which his father rested⁶ him, and Sir Alexr. to his father.⁷ For the love of god exert your power with Sir Alexr., and endeavoure to bring this matter to a period, and do not let it into your house.

This I advise for fear of being Disagreeably obliged,
to discover to the world, papers which were in the
keeping of the familys old faithfull Servant my father --
of Sir Alexr.s brothers, fathers, grandfathers, grand
Unkles and grand Unkles Son⁸ -- all whome he Served --
most faithfully as Some of them papers will attest -- and
-- of much more -- for by his faithfull Services in time
of this Sir Alexr. father's minority;⁹ as for what he did
in his Brothers minority the world will attest it, with
the many Letters which can be exhibited of Eglingtons,
Lady Margt. McDonalds, Delvins, Abbercormes etc. etc.¹⁰
and the Late Sir James McDonald of Blessed memory.¹¹

¹Macdonald (1726-92) lived at Kingsburgh on Skye, where SJ and JB had visited him during their tour. He was married to Flora Macdonald, famous for her daring exploits when she helped Prince Charles escape to Skye in 1746. Driven by the financial disasters to which this letter alludes, the Macdonalds set out for America in August and settled in North Carolina. Allan Macdonald became a Captain in the Royal Highland Emigrant Regiment and was taken prisoner by the colonists during the American War. Flora returned to Scotland in 1780 and in 1783 Allan rejoined her in Skye (Journ. 12-13 Sept. 1773; Life v. 184-206; Macdonalds, 271-72, which gives Allan Macdonald's date of death as 1795).

²James Macdonald of Knockow, whom JB and SJ had met at Kingsburgh (Life v. 257).

³Sir Alexander Macdonald (c. 1745-95), ninth Bt. of Sleat and Chief of the Macdonalds, whom JB and SJ had visited in Skye from 2-6 Sept. 1773. One source states that Macdonald of Knockow was Sir Alexander's factor (Life v. 147-49; Macdonalds, p. 268).

⁴That is, Parliament House, Edinburgh. The exact nature of this dispute is unknown.

⁵This refers not to James, who had only three daughters, but to Allan Macdonald himself, his wife Flora, and their seven children ranging from Charles (b. 1751 and named for the Pretender) to Fanny (b. 1766). This letter supplies further evidence to disprove the legend, current in North Carolina, that the Macdonalds had two more children who died of typhus there in 1776 (A. R. Macdonald, The Truth about Flora Macdonald, 1938, pp. 105-06; E. G. Vining, Flora, 1966, pp. 109-10, 129).

⁶"rested" presumably means "vested in", a now obsolete usage (OED s.v. "rest").

⁷James and Allan Macdonald's father, "Old Kingsburgh", had been tutor and guardian to Sir Alexander's older brother James during the latter's minority. (See

post n. 11). For his faithful service, James granted Kingsburgh an annuity of fifty pounds a year; when James died in 1766, Alexander continued this pension until Old Kingsburgh's death in 1772. JB transcribed the preamble to this pension when he saw it at Corrichatachin (Macdonalds, 270-71; Life v. 257-58). For letters from Allan Macdonald describing his own financial difficulties resulting from bad management, an increasingly poor cattle market, and mounting rents, see A. R. Macdonald, pp. 107-09.

⁸Read brother's or brothers', father's, grandfather's or grandfathers', grand Unkle's or Unkles' and grand Unkle's son. Sir Alexander's brothers were Sir James, and Archibald, later Chief Baron of the English Court of Exchequer. His father was Sir Alexander Macdonald, seventh Bt., son of Sir James Macdonald of Oransay and Janet, daughter of Alexander Macleod of Grishernish. His mother (Sir Alexander's second wife) was Lady Margaret Montgomerie, daughter of the ninth Earl of Eglinton and Susannah, daughter of Sir David Kennedy. Sir Alexander had only maternal "grand Unkles"; they were Hugh and John Eglinton, who both died without issue, and Sir John, David, and Lewis Kennedy. The "grand Unkles Son" was most probably one of Sir John's sons, Sir John of Culzean, Bt. (d. 1744), or Thomas or David, the ninth and tenth Earls of Cassillis (Scots Peer. ii. 490-91; Macleods, p. 265; William Fraser, Memorials of the Montgomeries, 1859, i. 98-99).

⁹Sir Alexander Macdonald, seventh Bt. of Sleat, inherited the barony in 1723 when he was twelve.

¹⁰The Mackenzies of Delvine were not related to the Macdonalds, but had traditionally acted as business agents for the family (and for the Eglintons also). Currently John Mackenzie, W. S. (1709-78) was Law Agent for the Barony of Macdonald. In 1724 they purchased the Sleat estates and held them "for behoof of the family" during the minority of Sir Alexander (Macdonalds, pp. 231-33; A. R. Macdonald, p. 80). The Earls of Abercorn were connexions through the Eglinton and Hamilton branches of Lady Margaret Macdonald's family.

¹¹Sir James Macdonald (1742-66) became the eighth Bt. of Sleat in 1746. JB had met him in London in 1762, "a remarkable young man of good parts and great application". Because of his exceptional learning, he was called "the Marcellus of the North". He died in Rome in 1766. When JB mentioned Sir James during his tour, "The Highlanders fairly cried" (Journ. 26 Nov. 1762; Hebrides, p. 116).

From Godfrey Bosville,¹

Saturday 5 March 1774

MS. Yale (C 188). Received 9 Mar. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esquire at Edinburgh.

POSTMARKS: [London] 5 MR, 5 MR.

London,² March 5th 1774

DEAR SIR: Our Correspondence wants a little renewing, but I cannot expect to hear often from you, for I hope you are exceeding busy, and I heartily wish you success in your gainful profession.³ You have got another recruit in your Science, for the Church has lost that Militant Member of it, Mr. Horne. He is now admitted of the Temple, and has given a pretty good Specimen of what we may expect from him when he is called to the Bar, by puzzling the house of Commons.⁴ When he and Wilks were friends he expounded how a man might be of the utmost integrity in Public life without the least share of it in his private affairs; perhaps being all applyd to one place it was so much the stronger.⁵ But the Goverment do not seem inclineable to trye the experiment, whether he may be perswaded to send that Odd kind of honesty after the other honesty he has parted with so long ago.⁶ Mr. Horne dos wisely to get into another line, for Mr. Wilks has made all that can be got in that branch of business. The

trade is totally decayd, and the Bill of Rights might as well remove from Bishopsgate Street⁷ to Boston in New England, and some of them will make their Estates a pretty portable commodity. I like not this exportation of Law, to carry their Quibbles to Bengal, that place did very well without them.⁸ Surely that Country has been sufficiently plundered before! When they get so far of[f] from an Appeal to the House of Lords, I doubt they will not give much satisfaction. The Sobriety of this age is commendable, but they have Vices; Gaming to destroy their Estates and Whoring their Constitutions; by one, they entail Poverty, and by the other the Kings Evil upon their Posterity; I had rather have my sons return to the old Saxon vice of drinking. This new mode of Elections without either treats or bribes will be productive of one mischief,⁹ for it will stop the proper evacuation of Purse so necessary at this time to reduce Nabobs Contractors Lords and West Indians to a suitable degree of moderation, and as to the morals of the people, it makes them no worse than the Methodists woud make them; they sin a great deal, and of Course are supplyd with sufficient materials for repentance, and are so much better than honest men. I just long to see that old father of yours, if I had not such a multiplicity of business I shoud be coming over in Summer to Edenburgh,

for Sir Tho. Wentworths account of him pleasd me much, and I am sure he and I shoud drink a bottle very jovially and not want for Confab neither.¹⁰ I have Estates to sell, and Debts to pay, for that is the regular succession, and I do not know whether to fix at my old house or my new one.¹¹ Capt. Bosville¹² recomends some new books, but I can find no time even for that amusement; Diversions I can dispense with, for they were wrote upon my Ideas in my youth with ink so faint that they have quite disapeard from my imagination, and I shoud be as little entertaind at a London Masquerade, or an Edenburgh dancing as a Cow woud be at a Consort. The Lord Mayors Arms and my Crest are the same, so I suppose he is a branch of our family that chose to shew their learning by translating the first sillable of their name, or perhaps to stand clear of reflexion, for if any of the race was to be qualifyd for singing in the Italian manner he might still be Bos, but could not be Bull.¹³ He is a good naturd little man, and endeavourd to do me Justice in regard to a City Lease, but it was not in his power:¹⁴ Mrs. Bosville and the Young

ones¹⁵ desire their best respects to you and Your Lady, to whom I beg you woud transmit mine and believe me to be, Dear Sir, Your <most> Affectionate Kinsman,

GODFREY BOSVILLE

I was vastly concernd for the melancholly death of my poor little granddaughter: but thank God the young highland Chief is still alive.¹⁶

¹Bosville (1717-84) was a prosperous landowner of Gunthwaite, Yorks. JB had first met him in London in 1766, and chose to regard him as chief of the Boswell clan, although no specific connexion between the two families was ever proved (Journ. 16 Feb. 1766).

²Great Russell Street, the Bosvilles' London home (Journ. 22 Mar. 1772, post From Bosville, 13 Feb. 1775, n. 10).

³The last exchange of letters, concerning the birth of Veronica, had occurred the previous March (Reg. Let.).

⁴John Horne, later Horne-Tooke, (1736-1812), was a political agitator and pamphleteer, often supposed to be "Junius", the radical essayist. He took orders in 1760 and obtained a living at New Brentford, which he resigned in 1773 in order to study for the bar. It is doubtful, however, that he was "admitted of" either the Inner or the Middle Temple. His name does not appear in their records until 1779-82, when he was repeatedly denied admission to the bar, ostensibly because of an obscure rule excluding ecclesiastics, but actually because of his controversial political activities. Bosville refers here to Horne's attempt to prevent the passage of an enclosure bill which would damage the interests of his friend and subsequent benefactor, William Tooke. Horne had written an anonymous attack on the Speaker of the House, Sir Fletcher Norton, suggesting that the Speaker had yielded to special interests in presenting the bill. Horne's authorship was discovered and he was summoned before the House on 17 February, but he succeeded in confusing the members over legal fine points so that after some muddled debate he was dismissed on the grounds that his authorship was unproven. Horne was later imprisoned because of his support of the American colonists; JB described him as a "seditious delinquent", but SJ respected some of his philological observations (Alexander Stephens, Memoirs of Horne Tooke, 1813, i. 419-30; Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple, 1949; A Calendar of the Inner

Temple Records, ed. R. A. Roberts, 1936, v. 369, 422; Gent. Mag., Feb. 1774, xliv. 91-92; Life iii. 314 and n. 6, 354 and nn. 1-3).

⁵John Wilkes (1727-97), the controversial politician, had been a friend of JB's since 1763; JB recorded as one of his greatest triumphs the meeting which he arranged between Wilkes and SJ in 1776 (Life iii. 64-79). Wilkes led a notoriously scandalous private life and Horne, who had been a leading supporter of Wilkes during the Middlesex elections of 1768, defended him against the personal attacks of the government. On 27 February 1769, Horne placed an advertisement in some London newspapers urging public subscription to pay Wilkes's debts and asking for support of Wilkes's cause "so far as it was a public cause". In 1771, Horne pursued the distinction between public and private behaviour in a number of published letters to Wilkes (Percy Fitzgerald, The Life and Times of John Wilkes, M.P., 1988, p. 77; Louis Kronenberger, The Extraordinary Mr. Wilkes, 1974, p. 117; Stephens, i. 198).

⁶This sentence refers to Wilkes. Although he had been recently elected M.P. for Middlesex, the House had refused to permit him to take his seat (Lond. Chron. 15-17 Feb. 1774, p. 166).

⁷From 1769 until 1771, the Society for Supporting the Bill of Rights, or the Bill of Rights Club, had met at the London Tavern on Bishopsgate Street. Its members included Horne, Wilkes, and about a dozen others. In 1771, the Club was disbanded because Horne and his adherents felt that it was only furthering the political ambitions of Wilkes, rather than promoting the political rights of all citizens. From this time on, Wilkes and Horne were bitter and noisy enemies (Stephens, i. 175; The Controversial Letters of John Wilkes, Esq. The Rev. John Horne, and Their Principal Adherents, 1771).

⁸ Bosville's meaning is a little clouded here. He appears to be saying that professional patriots have exhausted all possibilities of Bill of Rights agitation in England and might find more fertile ground in Boston, and that such people regrettably make their living off political disturbances all over the world. "Quibbles to Bengal" probably refers to the debate of the previous year in the House of Commons over Clive's conduct in India. Bosville appears to think that applying English law to distant countries is impractical and foolish.

⁹ On 25 Feb. the House had moved to make perpetual George Grenville's Controverted Elections Act of 1770, under which disputed House seats were adjudicated in committee, rather than voted on by the full House. This was a first step toward election reform. Both Lord North and the King had opposed the Act, but the King signed it into law on 31 Mar. (Gent. Mag. Mar. 1774, xliv. 137; D. L. Keir, *The Constitutional History of Modern Britain*, 9th ed., 1938, p. 343).

¹⁰ Bosville visited Edinburgh and Auchinleck in August and September 1777 (Journ. 29, 31 Aug., 4 Sept. 1777). Sir Thomas Wentworth (1726-92) was Bosville's wife's older brother. He later took the name Blacket when he inherited from that family through his mother vast properties in Northumberland and Durham. He died unmarried, leaving a large estate among his three illegitimate daughters and his male heir, Thomas Blacket=Bosville, Godfrey Bosville's second son (J. B. Burke, Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England, Ireland and Scotland, 1841, pp. 558-59). Wentworth had visited Edinburgh during the summer of 1769 (Journ. 11 Aug. 1769).

¹¹ The "old house" is Gunthwaite, owned by the Bosville family since the 14th century, and inherited by Godfrey upon his father's death in 1724. In 1773 the family also inherited the estate of Thorpe in the East Riding from a relative of Mrs. Bosville's (From Sir Alexander Macdonald, 12 July 1773). "The acquisition of Thorpe proved the ruin of Gunthwaite. Mr. Bosville, assisted by his lady, an

amiable and ingenious woman, had made various improvements at Gunthwaite, but the house, never a good one, was incapable, by any additions that might be made to it, of being made a residence adequate to the demands for convenience of a family whose wealth had been in a regular course of accrescence since the time of the Commonwealth. The temptations of a modern house erected to their hands at Thorpe seduced them to remove thither, and Gunthwaite, soon abandoned to tenants, began to sink into a state in which it owes its chief charms to nature and the recollections of departed consequence" (Joseph Hunter, South Yorkshire, 1831, p. 349). On 7 June 1773, Sir Thomas Wentworth wrote to Mrs. Bosville: "Surely you may let a Body a House now except you'll keep 'em all to remove from one to t'other like King and Queen" (quoted by A. E. B. Macdonald, The Fortunes of a Family, 1928, p. 139). Gunthwaite was torn down in the early 19th century.

¹²William Bosville (1745-1813), a Captain in the Coldstream Guards, was Godfrey's older son. JB had first met him in London in 1763, and through him met the Bosville family (Journ. 18 Apr. 1763).

¹³Frederick Bull (d. 1784) had become Lord Mayor of London on 16 November 1773; he was a partisan of Wilkes and a former member of the Bill of Rights Club. His arms consisted of a bull's head. The Bosville crest is described variously as an ox or a bull issuing from a wood. In 1769, JB had obtained a "Bull in the Bush" Boswell seal from the Herald's office, which supported the hypothesis that the Boswells and Bosvilles were related (From Bosville, 16 Dec. 1769; J. B. Burke, The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, 1883, i. 103, 142). Bosville assumed here that the "Bos" of his name was from the Latin bos rather than from the French bois; his son William thought differently (Journ. 18 Apr. 1763). An Italian castrato might be able to call himself "Bos" (ox) but not "Bull".

¹⁴The lease is unidentified.

¹⁵ Mrs. Bosville (d. 1780), Godfrey's wife, was formerly Diana Wentworth; "the young ones" are the two Bosville children still at home, Thomas (d. 1793), since 1772 working as a merchant in London, and Julia (1754-1833), later Lady Dudley and Ward (Journ. 22 Mar. 1772; A. E. B. Macdonald, p. 143; Comp. Peer. iv. 488; see also post From Bosville, 13 Feb. 1775, n. 15; From Wilkes, 10 Aug. 1775, n. 5).

¹⁶ Written on the cover. Godfrey's eldest daughter, Elizabeth Diana, had married Sir Alexander Macdonald on 3 May 1768. Their first child, a daughter, was born in October 1769 (Scots Mag. Oct. 1769, xxxi. 558); a second daughter was born about fourteen months later (From Godfrey Bosville, 10 Jan. 1771). Alexander Wentworth, the "young Highland Chief", was born in Edinburgh 9 Dec. 1773 (Scots Mag. Dec. 1773, xxxv. 670); the Macdonalds were on their way to Edinburgh to await this confinement when JB and SJ met them at Armadale (Life v. 148). The names of the daughters are not known, nor is it known which daughter's death Bosville here referred. For a list of names, but no dates, of daughters who lived to adulthood, see Macdonalds, p. 247.

To General James Edward Oglethorpe,¹

Saturday 2 April 1774

MS. Yale (L 997). A copy in Lawrie's hand.² Sent 5 Apr.
(Reg. Let.).

HEADING: To General Oglethorpe.

Edinburgh, 2 Aprile 1774

MY DEAR SIR: Not having a member of Parliament near me to whom I can apply for a frank, I put this packet under cover to my Bookseller Mr. Dilly³ who I am sure will take care to convey it safely to you. I return the quotations which you sent me from Mr. Speed,⁴ and along with them I enclose a note which I received from Sir David Dalrymple a Judge in the Court of Session, by the title of Lord Hailes, one of our best antiquaries in Scotland, if not the very best.⁵ I beg you may present my compliments to Mr. Speed, and tell him that I have never heard any mention in this country of the History of Queen Mary which he supposes may have existed, and that by communicating to him a note from Lord Hailes, I have done the best that I could. If I can in any other particular in the least contribute to the satisfaction of a Gentleman of such respectable learned genealogy, and of whom you who are so good a Judge speak so highly, I shall be happy.

I now find that it will not be in my power to leave Scotland this Spring.⁶ So that I must defer the pleasure of reading to you and Mrs. Oglethorpe⁷ the Journal of that curious Tour made by Mr. Johnson and me through the Highlands and Hebrides.⁸

What is your opinion of the great Question of Literary property which made so much noise and engaged so long the attention of the House of Lords? I was Counsel against it in Scotland. But, to tell you the truth I have wavered not a little in my ideas upon the subject, though I rather incline to think that it is too refined a claim for a Court of Law.⁹

You whose Benevolence still "flies from pole to pole"¹⁰ will no doubt have taken a warm concern in the affair of the Bostonians. I am a High Tory of the School of Johnson. Yet as an old Roman, though ever so firmly tenacious of the Patria Potestas,¹¹ would, if a wise man, be unwilling to treat his children with excessive or indiscriminate severity I am afraid that our parliament is proceeding with too much violence and precipitation.¹²

Goldsmith's natural History I observe is soon to be published.¹³ I expect much entertainment from it. Mr. Johnson said of him very justly as well as genteely that he has an enchanting way of telling any thing that he has to tell. I have the honour to be with respect and gratitude, My Dear General, Your much obliged humble servant,

(signed) JAMES BOSWELL

¹Colonist, philanthropist, and a senior general in the Army, Oglethorpe (1696-1785) had retired from public life in 1754, and thereafter divided his time between London and Cranham in Essex, his wife's estate (L. F. Church, Oglethorpe, 1932, p. 298). An admirer of Corsica, he had introduced himself to JB in 1768 (Life ii. 350 n. 2). JB valued his acquaintance highly and noted, "It is the more pleasing to me that I owe it entirely to my own merit" (Journ. 6 Apr. 1773).

²John Lawrie, JB's clerk.

³Edward Dilly (1732-79) of the Poultry, London.

⁴John Speed M.D. (1703 or 1704-81), great-great-grandson of the more famous historian John Speed (1552-1629), is remembered now as the historian of Southampton. He took his M.A. at Oxford in 1729, his M.B. in 1732, and his M.D. in 1740, and spent the rest of his life in Southampton practising medicine and writing on a variety of subjects. He violently opposed attempts of the Town Council to improve the water supply (1747), and repave the streets (1769), and his petitions and speeches against these seemingly worthy aims still exist in town records. He left a number of unpublished works, now owned by the Corporation of Southampton, which include a history of Southampton, a Latin treatise on sea water, "Pyrrhus, King of Sicily, a Play in Five Acts", and an essay on the culture of mushrooms. The origin and extent of his acquaintance with Oglethorpe are not known ("The History and Antiquity of Southampton by John Speed, M.D.", ed. E. R. Aubrey, in Publications of the Southampton Record Society, ed. F. J. C. Hearnshaw, 1909, viii, xx-xxxvii). The quotations (not reported) were from the letters of Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614) and Jacques de Thou or Thuanus (1553-1617). Speed had assumed that a remark of Casaubon's referred to a hitherto unknown history of Queen Mary; Hailes replied that he thought the reference was to William Camden's Annals of the Reign of Elizabeth (From Oglethorpe, 16 Sept. 1773; To Lord Hailes, 21 Dec. 1773, with a note from Hailes superscribed, in the collection of Sir Mark Dalrymple, Bt., Newhailes;

From Lord Hailes, 23 Dec. 1773. For further annotation of Speed's inquiry, see C. McC. Weis, "The Correspondence of James Boswell and Sir David Dalrymple", Diss. Yale 1952, pp. 112-14a).

⁵Hailes (1726-92) was one of JB's revered older friends. He had been raised to the Court of Session in 1766, and he was currently working on what was to prove his best-known work, Annals of Scotland (1776). The note (not reported) was a copy of From Lord Hailes, 23 Dec. 1773.

⁶On account of Mrs. Boswell's approaching confinement and JB's limited funds. In March, SJ had advised him that "the reasons for which you are inclined to visit London, are, I think, not of sufficient strength to answer the objections" (Life ii. 276).

⁷Elizabeth (c. 1713-87), only daughter and heiress of Sir Nathan Wright, m. 1743 (L. F. Church, Oglethorpe, 1932, p. 298).

⁸Oglethorpe had hoped that in the spring JB would visit them at Cranham "giving the Treasure of the Journal double Grace, by your Reading it" (From Oglethorpe, 16 Sept. 1773).

⁹See ante From the Lord Justice Clerk, 5 Jan., n. 4.

¹⁰Pope, Imitations of Horace, Ep. ii. 276-77: "One, driven by strong benevolence of soul, Shall fly, like Oglethorpe, from pole to pole". JB slightly misquotes these lines in Life ii. 350 n. 2.

¹¹"Paternal Authority".

¹²In retaliation against the "Boston Tea Party", 16 Dec. 1773, the Boston Port Act, the first of the "Intolerable Acts", was read before the House of Commons by Lord North on 18 Mar. In it he called for an embargo of the port, because "the people of Boston alone ought to feel the weight of the resentment of government" (Gent. Mag. Mar. 1774, xliv. 140). The Act was signed into law by King George on 31 Mar.

¹³Goldsmith died two days after this letter was written (see From Oglethorpe, 15 June 1774). His An History of the Earth and Animated Nature in eight volumes was published posthumously on 30 June. See post From Maclauren to Pringle, 26 Dec. 1775, n. 4.

From Clemente Vasco,¹

Sunday 1 May 1774

MS. Yale (C 3026). Received 7 June. "Padre Vasco

Domenicano" (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: A Monsieur, Monsieur Jacque Boswell, Edemburg,
en ecosse.

POSTMARKS: MILAN F.; [London] 21 MA, MA. 21.

Di V. S. Illmo.

S. Domenico, Torino, 1 Maggio 1774

ILLUSTRISSIMO SIGNOR PADRON COLENDISSIMO ED AMICO CARISSIMO:

Il piacere che ho provato nel leggere il chiaro nome di V.S. in fronte di un'opera intitolata Relazione della Corsica ha risvegliato in me la dolce rimembranza di que' giorni felici ne' quali ho avuto l'onore di conoscerla, e contrarre seco lei amichevole nodo. Corre, se non erro, il nono anno, dacché ho fatto la dolorosa perdita del commercio letterario con V. S. in questa guisa. Nell'ultima che lei mi scrive di Genova a Bologna, nella quale m'impone di fare inserire in quella gazzetta un'articolo spettante al suo viaggio nella Corsica (lo che io ho pontualmente eseguito) mi avverte d'indirizzare la mia in risposta a Parigi chez Mr. Naters banquier. Abbiamo comesso un'errore ambedue: io perché ho diretta la mia, nella quale ho

acchiuso la gazzetta contenente l'articolo di V.S. a Mr. Neotiers,² in luogo di Naters;³ lei, perché non mi ha indicato il quartiere che abita il detto banchiere in Parigi. In fatti dopo alcuni mesi scoperto il mio errore non ho mancato d'inviare una lettera allo stesso banchiere Mr. Naters, ma per ignoranza del quartiere, che non ho perciò potuto esprimere nell'indirizzo non ho avuto alcun riscontro. Ora io mi lusingo che questa avrà la sorte di giungere felicemente alle sue mani, sì perché in codesta Città benché rispettabile per qualunque riguardo, meno vasta però di Parigi non farà d'uopo indicare il quartiere, sì perché quantunque ciò si richiedesse non si potrebbe smarrire una lettera diretta a un personaggio così illustre, e per conseguenza noto ad ognuno della stessa Città. La dolce ricordanza dell'antica nostra amicizia cagiona in me una continua inquietudine prodotta da un vivo desiderio di rivederla: ma poiché la fortuna non mi concede quanto si richiede per intraprendere un così lungo e dispendioso viaggio, mi sarà intanto di un grandissimo solievo una lettera, tanto più se come credo, scorgerò in quella di essere tuttavia annoverato fra' i suoi amici e di tutto cuore sono.

Le plaisir que vous m'avez signifié pour notre langue

italienne est la cause que j'ai voulu la préférer a la
francaise. Umilissimo, ed Obbligatissimo Servo, ed
Affezionatissimo Amico,

F. PIO CLEMENTE VASCO DOMENICANO

[To a most Illustrious Sir

S. Dominico, Turin, 1 May 1774

ILLUSTRIOUS, HONORED SIR AND DEAR FRIEND: I saw with pleasure your famous name on a work entitled An Account of Corsica,⁴ and I was reminded of the happy days when I had the honour of meeting you and we became friends. Unless I am mistaken, it is now nine years since I suffered the loss of my literary business with you. In your last letter, sent from Genoa to Bologna, you urged me to insert in that Gazette an article about your trip to Corsica (which I did),⁵ and you told me to reply to Paris chez M. Naters, banquier. Both of us made a mistake: I sent my letter, enclosing the Gazette containing your article, to M. Neotiers instead of Naters and you never told me the quarter of Paris in which this banker lived. In fact, when after some months I discovered my mistake, I quickly sent a letter to the same banker, M. Naters, but because I didn't know the quarter and thus could not write it on the address, I have not received any answer.⁶ Now I hope that this letter will be fortunate enough to reach your hands. It should not be necessary to write the quarter for your city, which although considerable, is smaller than Paris, and even if it were necessary, no

letter would miscarry that was addressed to such an illustrious person, known to everyone in town. I remember our former friendship with pleasure and I am anxious to see you again. But fortune hasn't granted me what is needed to undertake such a long and expensive journey, so I should be most relieved, meanwhile, to receive a letter from you, especially if I saw by it, as I believe I should, that I am still reckoned among your friends.^{7]}

Le plaisir que vous m'avez signifié pour notre langue italienne est la cause que j'ai voulu la préférer a la francaise.⁸ [I am most heartily your very humble and obliged servant and affectionate friend.

HOLY BROTHER CLEMENTE VASCO, DOMINICAN]

¹Father Clemente Vasco (fl. 1765-75) was a Dominican monk whom JB had met in Bologna in February 1765: "Wed. 6 Febry. Yesterday young Padri Vasco came. Had Chocolate. Then drove in chaise to Monte della Guarda" (Notes for Journal of Italian Tour). Vasco came from a Piedmontese family of liberal, even radical views; his brother Giambattista (1733-96) was a friend of Cesare Beccaria and a noted economist and social reformer; two other brothers, Dalmazzi Francesco and Nicolo, took part in the unsuccessful attempt of 1768-69 to defend Corsica against the French. In 1773-74 Clemente Vasco was a reader in philosophy and theology at the Convent of S. Domenico, Pinerolo, Turin (Gianni Marocco, Giambattista Vasco, 1978, pp. 9, 15-16, 33).

²MS. "e non" deleted after "Neotiers,"

³MS. "V.S. non" deleted after "Naters;"

⁴The Italian translation appeared in 1769 as Relazione della Corsica di Giacomo Boswell (Lit. Car. p. 74).

⁵The Modena Gazette carried the article first; other Italian newspapers later copied it (post From Vasco, after 1 May). These articles have not been found, but Alexandre Deleyre reported hearing of one in the Lugano Gazette (From Deleyre, 1 Mar. 1766). JB's letter is not reported, but presumably was sent during his stay in Genoa, 30 Nov. - 10 Dec. 1765 (Journ.).

⁶JB's Paris banker was John Waters, rue de Verneuil. He was the son of George Waters who had been banker to Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, and had lent him £ 40,000 to buy arms and equipment for the Rising of the '45. Later Charles Edward used the Waters banking house as his mailing address under cover to "Mr. John Douglas" (Almanach de la Poste de Paris pour l'annee 1762; W. D. Norie, The Life and Adventures of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, 1903, i. 113, 122; David Dalches, Charles Edward Stuart, 1973, pp. 281-82).

⁷No letters to Vasco are reported. The only other known letters in this correspondence are From Vasco, 23 May 1765, in which Vasco expresses his hope of seeing JB again, and post From Vasco, no date but after 1774.

⁸JB took Italian lessons in April and May 1765 during his visit to Rome, and again for a few weeks in Siena, but his Italian remained rudimentary. He probably conversed with Vasco in French (Earlier Years, pp. 211, 239, 509).

From Clemente Vasco ,

no date, but after 1774¹

MS. Yale (C 3027).

ADDRESS: A Monsieur, Monsieur Jacque Boswell, Edimbourg.

POSTMARK: AUG 19.

De vous Monsieur

S. Eustorgio, Milan²

MONSIEUR: C'est envain que je desire votre amitié, mes soupirs sont si inutiles, tandis que je ne sai me resoudre a vous ecrire. Par votre derniere lettre, que je conserve fidellement, comme un precieux tresor, vous m'avez envoyé une chapitre m'ordonnant de le faire publier dans les gazettes de Boulogne. Je l'ai fait publié dans celles de Modene, et ensuite on l'a publié aussi sur les autres gazzettes d'Italie: je vous ai envoyé une copie des gazzettes de Modene contenant le dit chapitre selon vous ordres a Paris mais hélas! je me suis trompé dans l'adresse, et au lieu de l'adresser a Mr. Naters banquier a Paris je l'ai adresse a Mr. Neotiers.³ Je me suis appercu de ma faute apres long temps que je ne voyez point ?comparer votre response, j'ecrivis une lettre a Mr. Naters, mais envain, il ne m'a point daigné de reponse, apres cela j'ecrivis une lettre a Edimbourg et je l'adressai

a votre persone,⁴ je crains qu'elle ne vous soit arrivé en consequence de tout cela je ne scavois me resoudre a vous ecrire autre lettre. L'extreme envie que j'ai toujours conservé de jouir de votre amitié me contraint enfien a vous repliquer⁵ cette lettre. Ayez donc pitié de moi, ne me refusez point vos graces. Faites vous souvenir des heures agreables que nos passammes ensemble a Boulogne, et persuadez vous que si je n'ai point executez vos ordres ce n'a point été faute de volonté, et que l'estime et l'amour que j'ai concu pour votre aimable persone des la premier fois que j'ai eu l'honneur de vous connoitre je l'ai toujours conservé et je le conserverai eternellement, je suis Tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur, et ami,

F. PIE CLEMENTE VASCO DES PRECHEURS

¹This letter seems to follow From Vasco, 1 May, and apparently was written after Vasco had left Turin, where he is known to have been until at least 1775 (letters in the General Archive of the Order of Preachers (Rome): A.G.O.P. iv. 246. pp. 115, 148, 162, 338).

²The Church of St. Eustorgia, built in the fourth century, faces the square of the same name.

³See ante From Vasco, 1 May, nn. 6, 7.

⁴Presumably this was From Vasco, 1 May.

⁵MS. possibly this should read "a vous expliquer".

To Henry Thrale,¹

Friday 13 May 1774

MS. Murdock Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University (MS. 5).

ADDRESS: To Henry Thrale Esq. M.P., Southwark, London.²

POSTMARK: [Edinburgh] 17 MA, FREE.

Edinburgh, 13 May 1774

DEAR SIR: I know not if I should make an apology for troubling you with so many packets to our friend Mr. Johnson.³ I believe you are very willing to take trouble either on his account or mine. But at present <you> are troubled for the benefit of the Publick. I rejoice to hear that his Northern Tour is well advanced.⁴ As I am not to have the pleasure of being under your hospitable roof this spring, it would be kind if you would favour me with a few lines informing me how you all are, and how Mr. Johnson is.⁵

Poor Goldsmith will be much missed at your Literary Parties. The news of his death came upon me very suddenly and affected me more than any thing that has happened of a long time.⁶

I hope to be with you before you set out on your tour to Italy, of which Mr. Johnson talked to me.⁷ If you are

to go early in the spring before I can get to London, I may perhaps take a trip to Stretham in Autumn.⁸ I offer my best compliments to Mrs. Thrale with whom I long to compare notes as to Mr. Johnson's Northern tour, and I am
· with most sincere esteem, My dear Sir, your obliged,
humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL

¹Henry Thrale (1728 or 1729-81), M.P. for Southwark (1765-80), brewer, and friend of SJ; husband of Hester Lynch Thrale, later Mrs. Piozzi. At this time, SJ was spending several days a week at their house.

²Thrale had a house near his brewery in Southwark, but SJ usually visited the family at their more elaborate residence in Streatham.

³JB had previously "troubled" Thrale with a letter to SJ on 29 July 1773, and with a letter to Mrs. Williams care of SJ on 22 Nov. 1773 (To Thrale, 29 July 1773, MS. John Rylands Library, R-542-1; To Thrale, 22 Nov. 1773).

⁴"I think I shall be very diligent next week about our travels, which I have too long neglected" (From SJ, c. 15 Mar., received 23 Mar. (Reg. Let., not reported); published in Life ii. 276-77).

⁵No reply is reported.

⁶JB learned of Goldsmith's death on 9 Apr., possibly through a brief reference to it in Cal. Merc. of that date (To Bennet Langton, 10 Apr.).

⁷While at Dunvegan on 19 Sept. 1773, "at tea SJ talked of his intending to go to Italy in 1775" (Life v. 229). JB may have mistaken the date; the Thrales planned an Italian trip with SJ for 1776, but abandoned it after the death of their son in March of that year (Life iii. 457).

⁸JB's next visits to Streatham were during the following spring (Journ. 21, 28 Mar., 1, 8 Apr. 1775).

From Baron van Aerssen van Sommelsdyck,¹

Wednesday 7 June 1774

MS. Yale (C 2510). Received 16 June "General Van Sommelsdyck" (Reg. Let.), but the postmark suggests that this is an inaccurate entry.

ADDRESS: Monsieur. Monsieur Boswell d'auchinlech, Avcat etc. etc., A Edinburgh, par Londres.

POSTMARK: [London or Edinburgh] IU 28.

De la haye,² le 7 juin, 1774

MONSIEUR ET TRES CHER COUSIN: Apres avoir laissé encore passer un an sans m'ecrire j'ai recu enfin par la derniere poste votre lettre sans datte, ainsi je ne sai quand vous l'avés ecrite, par laquelle vous me marqués que madame votre epouse est heureusement accouchée d'une seconde fille,³ je vous en felicite et quoique ce ne soit encore qu'une fille, je trouve que vous faites fort bien d'en etre content, de vous resigner a la providence, et d'etre persuadé que puisque le bon dieu fait la grace a Madame de la laisser contineur a acoucher, elle pourra fort bien l'année prochaine vous donner a la fin un fils, ce que je vous souhaite de tout mon coeur.

Je suis tres charmé que vous soyés si satisfait de votre fille ainée veronique; et ainsi je ne doute pas que

ce ne soit un prodige, je languis de la voir, et vous ferés fort bien de la prendre avec vous quand vous viendrés nous voir.⁴ Mais pour ce que vous me demandés si je vous conseille de l'envoyer ici pour la mettre en pension, je dois vous dire en conscience que je ne vous le conseille pas, car quoi que nous ayons ici beaucoup de pensions, l'education qu'on y donne est si contraire a votre facon de penser et au gout de votre pays que je suis seur qu'elle ne vous plairoit pas.⁵

Je vous suis obligé des details que vous me donnés de vos voyages, et vois par la que le mariage ne vous a point fait perdre encore le gout de voyager.

Vous vous trompes quand vous croyés que la haye est le centre de la politique, detrompés vous, mon cher, on n'y parle de rien que d'amusemens et de bagatelles, aussi ne croit on pas que la mort du roy de france apporte aucun changement dans les affaires de l'europe du moins pas de longtemps.⁶ Il n'y a rien de nouveau ici, tous vos parens hollandois se portent tres bien et vous font bien des complimens.⁷ Hier matin, le prince, la princesse, leurs enfans, et toute leur cour sont partis pour aller passer l'été a zoeusdyck et a loo,⁸ et monseigneur le duc pour son gouvernement de boisleduc.⁹ Quand a moy, je compte

partir apres demain pour aller passer quatre mois, c'est a dire jusqu'au mois d'octobre a ma terre de spyets¹⁰ avec ma femme et mon fils qui grandit beaucoup et a apresent un gouverneur.¹¹

Je me suis fait informer hier de votre ami Monsieur abraham gronovius, et j'ai receu pour reponse qu'il vit encore a leyde, mais qu'il est si vieux qu'il ne sort plus et ne voit plus personne.¹²

Je suis tres charmé que Monsieur votre pere, Monsieur votre oncle¹³ et tous vos parens en ecosse se portent si bien. Je vous prie de leurs faire mes assurances de respect, Ma femme en fait de meme, et vous fait bien des amitiés, j'ai l'honneur de me recommander dans la continuation de vos bonnes graces et de me dire avec la consideration la plus distinguée, Monsieur et tres cher Cousin, votre tres humble et tres obeissant serviteur,

F. C. VAN AERSSEN VAN SOMMELSDYCK

¹Francis Cornelius, Baron van Aerssen van Sommelsdyck (1725-93), Lord Auchinleck's second cousin. Their common ancestor was Veronica van Aerssen van Sommelsdyck (b. 1633) who married Alexander Bruce, second Earl of Kincardine. JB had visited the van Sommelsdycks at Christmas and Easter, 1763-64 (Journ. 24-25 Dec. 1763; 20 Apr. 1764; Life v. 463-64).

²Nieuwe Princessgracht (D. J. van Epen, "Het Geslacht van Aerssen", Adelsarchief, Jaarboek voor den Nederlanden Adel, 1902, iii. 176-77).

³Euphemia was born 20 May. JB wrote to Sommelsdyck on 27 May (Reg. Let.).

⁴Veronica, named for her maternal grandmother and thus indirectly for the Dutch great-grandmother of both her parents, was fifteen months old. In August JB reported that she could walk by herself and say "Papa" (Journ. 18 Aug.).

⁵The education of the upper class in Holland was at this time greatly influenced by the French. Dutch families employed French tutors and governesses and sent their sons to boarding schools in France; daughters were educated at home or attended boarding schools in Holland. Belle de Zuylen, the best educated woman JB knew, and the daughter of a Dutch family, had been sent to boarding school in Geneva for a year when she was about ten and had then returned home to be educated privately by a French governess. JB pursued the idea of a Dutch boarding school in later correspondence with Sommelsdyck, but Veronica eventually attended a boarding school in London (From Sommelsdyck, 3 Mar. 1778; P. J. Blok, History of the People of the Netherlands, 1898, rpt. 1970, v. 94; Philippe Godet, Madame de Charrière et ses Amis, 1906, p. 9; Journ. 13-16 May 1788; To Margaret Boswell, 9 Nov. 1788, 11 Feb., 27 Mar. 1789).

⁶Louis XV had died of smallpox on 10 May.

⁷The Dutch relatives whom JB had met in 1763-64 included the Sommelsdycks and the Maasdams; Baroness Maasdam was Sommelsdyck's sister (Journ. 29 Dec. 1763; 10 May, 4 June 1764).

⁸ William V, Prince of Orange (1745-1806), Princess Frederica Sophia Wilhelmina (1751-1820), and their children: Frederica Louise Wilhelmina (b. Nov. 1770), Frederick, later William I of the Netherlands (b. Aug. 1772), and George (b. Feb. 1774). JB had met the Prince on 6 Jan. 1764 (Journ.). Zoeusdyck, or Soestdijk, was built in 1674 as a hunting lodge for William III. It is today the principal residence of the Dutch royal family. Loo, or Het Loo, is a village in Appeldoorn, near Arnheim. Here William III built a palace which has been used as a summer residence by members of the House of Orange ever since (C. M. Allstrom, Dictionary of Royal Lineage, 1904; De Kleine Winkler Prins Encyclopaedia, ed. G. B. J. Hiltermann and P. van de Woestijne, 1949, p. 873). The departure of the royal family on 6 June was noted in the London Gazette, 7-11 June, p.[1].

⁹ Louis Ernest, Duke of Brunswick (1718-88), formerly regent for William V, still in fact controlled the government, which was centered in 'S Hertogenbosch or (gallicized) Bois-le-duc (Blok, v. 150).

¹⁰ The Sommelsdyck country estate, Spyets, was in Noodervliet (van Epen, loc. cit.).

¹¹ Sommelsdyck was married to Everdina Petronella (1730-92), Countess of Hogendorp; their son, Francois Jean (1764-84), had been born in the August following JB's stay in Holland. The gouverneur is unidentified, but he was undoubtedly French (van Epen. loc. cit.).

¹² Gronovius (1695-1775), classical scholar and librarian at the University of Leyden, was a friend of Lord Auchinleck's from the latter's student days in Leyden (From Lord Auchinleck, c. 3 Sept. 1763). JB had last visited him in June 1764 (Journ. 6 June 1764).

¹³ John Boswell (1707-80), Lord Auchinleck's only surviving brother, had studied medicine in Holland and received his M.D. in Leyden in 1763. He lived in Edinburgh (Life v. 574).

From James Edward Oglethorpe,

Wednesday 15 June 1774

MS. Yale (C 2116). In the hand of an amanuensis. Received
21 June (Reg. Let.).¹

ADDRESS: To J. Boswell Esqr., Advocate, in Edingburgh.

POSTMARKS: POSTPAID, [illegible].

Lower Grovn. Street, June 15th, 1774

DEAR SIR: The Enclosed was Writt immediately on My dear
Friend Goldsmiths Death.² I delayed sending it, hoping for
an Oppertunity, and have since been out of Town. I must beg
your Excuse for not Sooner sending an Answer to the favour of
Yours. Mrs. Oglethorpe Joins in Compliments, and I hope you
will believe me to be, Dear Sir, Your most Obedient, Humble
Servant,

JAMES OGLETHORPE

DEAR SIR: Our Goldsmith is no More! I was with him Easter Sunday, He was then lightheaded with a Fever and Died next Day. When Johnson Dined here with us,³ Mrs. Oglethorpe and the Ladies join'd Goldsmith in Perswading Johnson to Publish his delightful⁴ Ramble to Ultima-Thule. (Goldsmith was then in high Health.) But I believe that Johnson will scarce⁵ be able to make good the hopes he gave. Gratitude hath engag'd him out of⁶ in Politicks: and he must now Swim in a Weedy-Sea.⁷ It must be to You, we must turn our Eyes. The Publick must depend on the same Pen that made the Froem-Glassieurs⁸ of Corsica shine beyond Diamonds to the Wondering World. That Pen must gild the Scenes, and make Men find that the long disputed Seat of Paradise, was in the High-Lands of Scotland.

I am much obliged to you, for your kind Answer to the Learned Speeds Queries: and have sent the Lord Hale's Answer to him.⁹ Your not coming this Spring is a great Dissapointment to all here. We wish'd you had been one of the Councils on the Appeal in the Literary Controversy,¹⁰ since it would have given us the Pleasure of seeing you.

I Dined with Garrick and his Club, about, 14 Days before the Catastrophe: when Goldsmith Shin'd, and by the Command of the Monarch of the Stage, pronounc'd excellent Laughing Epitaphs in ryhme on all of the Club.¹¹ The Members little

thought then, He should so soon want a Serious One.¹²

The Men at Westminster intend to Botch up an Act on Literary-Property, and Damn Learning as they have done every Thing they meddle with.¹³

As for the American Affairs, It comes from Higher Causes, then this Nation sees: The Bourbonites have long Pursued uniform Measures to acquire an Universal Monarchy.

In Consequence of that Great-Design, They Engaged the Three Great Powers; (Themselves One: with Russia, and the House of Austria,) To Enter into a Combination to Devide Europe. Russia to have the North; Austria Germany, and all Eastward beyond the Rhyne: and France, all South and West of the Rhyne. The Kings of Prussia and Britan said No.¹⁴ And the Almighty Baffled their Combined Powers: But England making a ridiculous Peace; Just at the Time when a Ballance of Power might have Settled all the Lesser Sovereigns in safety:¹⁵ The King of Prussia forseeing there was no Security for himself Singly, and Against such a Junction, and no Dependence on Britain, Resolved to be One of the Triumvirate; And getts France shut Out, and Steps into Her Place. So Russia, Austria, and Prussia began to Share Poland.¹⁶ France setts on foot, All Intreages to Oppose Privately: but dares not appear Publickly, She misses in every Thing, so strikes in: And it is more than Suspected: hath Agreed to allow what the Triumvirate Desires; On Condition they will

Allow the Bourbonites to have the South-West of Europe.¹⁷
 To Prevent Britain from being able to Step in, and Spoil All,
 She setts the Avarice of Our Ministers at Work, to Ruin the
 East-India Company, and take away our Wealth and Power in
 the East.¹⁸ Now they have took the Occasion to Animate us
 against one another. The English in Britain, against the
 Scots in Britain; and against the English-Born in America. To
 blind the People here, They unjustly Call them Americans.¹⁹
 The Expence of this Jealousy will Weaken us much: but the
 loss of Trade by it More. The Troops and Fleets sent Over,
 and the Seperating and making Useless to us near Three-Mil-
 lions of Subjects in America,²⁰ compleats the Blow, which
 They hope will be a Means to Facilitate their Execution of
 the Division of Europe. Which perhaps they think will be as
 easily Obtain'd as Prussia etc. has done that of Poland.

The Dutch must Fall, and We be Prevented from Deffending
 our Selves here, or Retireing to America.²¹

¹"In the evening I received a long letter from General Oglethorpe. It stirred my mind, revived my idea of my own consequence in London, and made me impatient to be there, and not lost in this provincial corner where I find nothing to engage me warmly" (Journ. 20 June).

²It was probably written at least five days afterwards; Goldsmith died on 4 Apr., but the enclosed letter answers JB's letter of 2 Apr., mailed 5 Apr. (Reg. Let.), and thus not received by Oglethorpe until at least 9 Apr.

³The date is unknown, although since 1772 Oglethorpe had traditionally given a dinner in early April for SJ, Goldsmith, and JB. A. A. Ettinger states that this "annual April conclave" was omitted in 1774 because of JB's absence; here is evidence that it took place (James Edward Ogle

⁴MS. "Delighful"

⁵MS. "scare"

⁶A blank in the MS.

⁷A reference to the supposed political obligations SJ incurred when he accepted a pension from the King in 1762.

⁸Possibly formes glaceuses: flawed forms, a jeweler's term.

⁹See ante To Oglethorpe, 2 Apr., nn. 4, 5.

¹⁰See ante From the Lord Justice Clerk, 5 Jan., n. 4.

¹¹MS. after "Club" there is a caret, and down the side of the page, heavily deleted, is a caret followed by "which Garrick return'd on him".

¹²David Garrick (1717-79), actor and manager, was the central figure of a group which met informally at St. James Coffee-House. According to contemporary reports, at a meeting of this group in mid-January Garrick composed an epitaph upon Goldsmith and challenged him to write one in return. Goldsmith did not reply at once, but appeared some weeks later with epitaphs for Garrick and other members of the group. These were published posthumously as the poem Retaliation. John Forster dates this later meeting on 25 Mar., and adds that on this evening Goldsmith felt the first symptoms of his fatal illness (The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith, 1848, p. 683). Oglethorpe's account is interesting particularly because he states that Garrick was present upon this occasion; other reports suggest that he was not. There may have been a number of these epitaph evenings, all subsequently confused by the participants, as Roger Lonsdale suggests in his detailed discussion of Retaliation (The Poems of Thomas Gray, William Collins, Oliver Goldsmith, 1969, pp. 741-45).

¹³After the decision on literary property on 22 Feb., several groups of London booksellers petitioned the House of Commons, and on 25 Mar., after extensive debate, the House passed a bill partially restoring copyrights to the London publishers. The House of Lords rejected the bill on 2 June (Frank Mackinnon, "Notes on the History of English Copyright", The Oxford Companion to English Literature ed. Paul Harvey, 2nd ed., 1937, p. 882; Lond. Chron., 8-10 Mar., p. 240; 17-19 Mar., p. 270; 24-26 Mar., p. 292; 21-23 Apr., p. 392; 26-28 May, p. 512; 2-4 June, p. 534).

¹⁴The Seven Years' War (1756-63) precipitated a realignment of the European powers: France, Russia, and Austria were allied in a series of defensive treaties, and George II, concerned for the safety of Hanover, signed the Treaty of Westminster (1756) with Frederick the Great.

¹⁵The Peace of Paris (1763), although generally popular in England, was viewed by some as a lost opportunity to weaken French colonial power. William Pitt (1708-78), whose opinions Oglethorpe admired and shared, said of the treaty, "We retain nothing, although we have conquered everything" (L. W. Cowie, Hanoverian England 1714-1837, 1969, p. 313).

¹⁶The first partition of Poland (1772) was largely engineered by Frederick the Great.

¹⁷Phinizy Spalding describes Oglethorpe as having "a latter-day obsession with the idea of French plots" ("Profile of an Old Independent: Oglethorpe as Seen in the Papers of James Boswell", The Yale University Library Gazette, Jan. 1979, liii. 145). Nevertheless, it is true that France had made two secret pactes de famille (1733, 1761) with the Spanish and Italian Bourbons as defensive measures against England. Charles III of Spain was the uncle of Louis XVI of France.

¹⁸In 1773, Parliament passed Lord North's Regulating Act, which limited the political power of the East India Company and increased the power of the British Crown in India (Cowie, p. 178).

¹⁹Oglethorpe's notion that the French encouraged the use of "American" as a noun is not supported by modern scholarship, although Oglethorpe must have had first-hand knowledge of the emergence of the term. There is little known of the use of americain; the word in English was first used commonly as a noun during the War of Jenkins Ear (1739-48) in which Oglethorpe led British and colonial troops against the Spanish. The British soldiers felt themselves superior to the colonials, and they used "Americans" as a term of scorn (Albert Harkness Jr., "Americanism and Jenkins' Ear", The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, June 1950, xxxvii. 75, 88-89). In a survey of the term's frequency in the American press, R. L. Merritt points out that English writers in colonial newspapers "began to identify the colonial population as 'Americans' persistently after 1763 -- a decade before Americans themselves did so" (Symbols of American Community 1735-1775, 1966, p. 58). SJ uses the term often in Taxation No Tyranny (1775).

²⁰A modern estimate places the population of the thirteen colonies in 1776 at 2,500,000 (S. E. Morison, History of the American People, 1965, p. 228).

²¹The Dutch did not fall to France until 1810, and by then England had annexed most of the Dutch colonies. The Congress of Vienna re-established Holland as part of the independent Kingdom of the Netherlands.

From Sir Allan Maclean,

Friday 17 June 1774

MS. Yale (C 1857).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr. Younger of Auchinleck, Edinr.

POSTMARK: GLASGOW.

Glasgow,¹ 17 June 1774

DEAR SIR: As I have the greatest dependence on your freindship Occasions my writeing you these few lines, begging you would be good enough as take the trouble of enquireing at Messrs Grant and Donaldson my Agents What progress they have made in my affairs last Vacation,² as I hope they are by this time prepared to take the field, when that happens I flater myself You'll appear as one of my best freinds.³

As I was⁴ informed of your being lately in London Shall be happy to hear your last Accounts of Worthie Doctor Johnson,⁵ if you honour me with a few lines please address to the care of Mr. Hugh MacLean Writer here⁶ and am with Most respectfull Compliments to Mrs. Boswell, My Dear Sir, Your most obliged and Obedient, humble servant,

ALLAN MACLEAN

¹Maclean's usual residence was on Inchkenneth; see ante From Sir Allan Maclean, 9 Jan., nn. 1,2.

²Colquhoun Grant of Burnside (d. 1792), W.S., and Robert Donaldson (d. 1796), W.S., were brothers-in-law (Writers, pp. 86, 57). JB mentions dining with Grant on 18 Feb. 1775 (Journ.). The vacation of the Court of Session had lasted this year from 11 Mar. to 14 June.

³Maclean was engaged in a lawsuit with the Duke of Argyll over the ownership of the lands of Brolas, which included the island of Inchkenneth. A previous letter indicates that during his visit to Maclean, JB had offered legal assistance: "It is impossible I can Express my thank's and gratitu'd for the warm manner you offer'd your Freindshipe to me, by offering your Self as one of my Counsels in so easie and frank a manner.... I have of this date wrote to Mr. Colquhoun Grant desireing he should send you my process with anny other papers relative thereto for your perrusall and I flattere my Self with the hope how soon my Cause is Cald that you will apear for me amongst the first at the Barr ..." (From Sir Allan Maclean, 20 Nov. 1773). Both JB and John MacLaurin later acted as Maclean's lawyers before the Court of Session, and won a partial victory in 1777. In 1783, the House of Lords finally decided the case on appeal wholly in Maclean's favour (Life ii. 380 n. 4; iii. 95, 101-02, 122, 126-27; Journ. 18, 20, 26 Feb., 14, 26 June, 2 July 1777; Maclean, p. 227).

⁴MS. "Being" deleted; "As I was" written beside the deletion.

⁵JB had not been in London since the previous year.

⁶Possibly the Hugh Maclean whose father, John Maclean of Treshnish, was dispossessed of his estate in 1768 by the Duke of Argyll. He is described as having studied law (Maclean, p. 278).

From William Macqueen,¹

Monday 20 June 1774²

MS. Yale (C 1880).

NOTE in Lawrie's hand, written down the upper right side of the page: 6-13 5-9.³

Munday 17 o'Clock afternoon

Mr. MacQueen's respectfull compliments to Mr. Boswell and begs leave to suggest as Mr. Macdonald from Slate⁴ sets out tomorrow morning for Sky that the Books intended for Miss Macpherson⁵ be Sent by the Bearer in Order to be delivered to him or to Mr. MacQueen's room at Mrs. Lindsays in the College wynd⁶ some time this night.

¹Macqueen (1718-87) was minister of Snizort and Uig on Skye, and brother of Donald Macqueen (Fasti Scot. vii. 179). JB dined with William Macqueen on 17 June (Journ.).

²This letter is tentatively dated by a note written on the back referring to a conversation between JB and Dr. Webster: "Propos to have Hogshead for Ld. Ordry last glass wins." This remark, expanded, appears in Journ. 3 July. Macqueen dined with JB on 17 June; this letter appears to follow upon a recent conversation (Journ.).

³These numbers do not seem to be related to the letter. They may represent sums of money or, perhaps, dates.

⁴Possibly this is James Macdonald, described as "factor to Sir Alexander Macdonald of Slate", whom JB and SJ met at Ostaig on Skye (Life v. 275).

⁵Isabel Macpherson was the sister of Martin Macpherson whom JB and SJ visited at Ostaig; she also accompanied them to Armadale. She "pleased Dr. Johnson much, by singing Erse songs and playing on the guitar. He afterwards sent her a present of his Rasselas" (Life v. 265). Whether the books mentioned here included this present is unknown but seems likely, although there is evidence that SJ sent her books on several occasions (Life v. 547).

⁶"Mrs. Lindsay, mantua maker, college wynd" (Williamson's Directory for the City of Edinburgh, 1774-1775, p. 55).

From William Porter,¹

Monday 20 June 1774

MS. Yale (C 2274). Received 29 July (Reg. Let.). Probably delivered by Alexander Webster.

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esquire. Edinburgh.

St. Petersburg, 20th June 1774

SIR, Mr. Webster² being now on the point of leaving us I take the opportunity of returning you my acknowledgments for the obliging Letter I received by him.³ I am sorry to have been prevented by the hurry of our Summer Business from paying him more particular civilities especially as he appears so very deserving of them, his stay however I believe on the whole has been rendered pretty agreeable to which I am happy in having in any ways contributed. He tells me he was to have brought Mrs. Boswell Some Tea, and seems apprehensive lest the omission should be attributed to a wrong Cause -- The truth is we have at present no Tea worth purchasing, the disturbances raised by Pugatchiff about Orenburg⁴ have prevented⁵ the arrival of Our Caravan from China and what was brought down the first years after the opening of our trade was very indifferent, so that I advised him either to buy some at the Sound,⁶ or not at all.⁷

I think I wrote you that the person who first undertook the translation of your Corsica into the Russian Language was dead.⁸ I afterwards wrote to one Desnitsky a professor at Moscow who had received his education at Glasgow and sent him an English copy which he promised to translate, but I have heard nothing of it since, and am rather affraid that Paoli by this time is too much forgotten in Russia to have his Concerns an object of attention. I shall notwithstanding write and remind Desnitsky of his promise.⁹

I was sorry your absence from Edinburgh when I was there last autumn prevented me from having the honor of paying you my respects in person and of offering you my services in procuring what ever this Country could afford towards the gratification of your Curiosity or for the convenience and use of your family.¹⁰ Be pleased to accept of them therefore in this manner and be assured that I am with particular esteem, Sir, Your most obedient, and most humble servant,

WILLIAM PORTER

¹JB described Porter as a "merchant at St. Petersburg" (Journ. 30 Mar. 1775). He may have been a son of John Porter (?1711-56), an alderman of London, whose older brother, Sir James Porter (1710-86) was ambassador to Turkey (1747-62) and an acquaintance of SJ's. The Porters and John Porter's wife's family, the Amyands, had mercantile interests in the Levant. The English community in St. Petersburg at this time numbered about 1000; nearly all were involved in trade. In 1797, the firm of Porter, Browne, Wilson, and Co. is listed among many St. Petersburg English trading companies (Namier and Brooke iii. 308-09; James Porter, Turkey, Its History and Progress, (1771) 1854, i. 1-18; William Tooke, View of the Russian Empire during the Reign of Catherine the Second, 1800, ii. 535; Life iii. 402). The only other known letter from Porter to JB (1 Aug. 1770) indicates that they had met in London, probably in 1769, and that in response to JB's expressed interest in Russian, Porter had sent him a Russian grammar and a Russian translation of Pope's Essay on Man.

²Alexander (Sandy) Webster (1754-82), JB's first cousin, the son of JB's mother's sister, Mary, and Alexander Webster. He was mate aboard an East Indiaman; JB reported his return "from a voyage to Russia" on 21 Aug. (Journ.).

³Not reported. It was sent 29 Apr. (Reg. Let.), apparently carried by Webster.

⁴Emilian Pugachev (?1741-75) was a Cossack who, in 1773, proclaimed himself Peter III. He captured most of the forts along the Volga and the Ural Rivers, although Orenberg (now Chkalov), the terminus of many caravan routes from the East, withstood his siege. Pugachev was defeated by General Mikhelson in August; he was later brought to Moscow in an iron cage and executed on 11 Jan. 1775 (Paul Miliukov, History of Russia, 1968, ii. 111-14).

⁵MS. "prented"

⁶The body of water at the southeast end of the Kattegat Strait, dividing Denmark from Sweden. Copenhagen is on the western shore.

⁷ The high tax on tea in Great Britain made smuggling a common and socially accepted practice. Smuggled tea was not only cheaper, but less apt to be adulterated. Most of the tea came by sea, all of it from China, for India did not export tea until the 19th century, and it was usually smuggled to England through Holland, often in enormous quantities. In 1757, SJ labeled this situation "one of the strongest evidences of the inefficiency of our government and the corruption of our people". But by the decade 1770-80, most of the tea consumed in Britain probably was imported illegally (The Literary Magazine, 1757, xiii. 161-67; Denys Forrest, Tea for the British, 1973, p. 69).

⁸ The person is unidentified. The attempt to translate Corsica may have been a project of the Translators' Commission established by Catherine the Great in 1768; by 1780 the Commission had published 154 foreign books in Russian translation. Of the translator, Porter had written, "death out of envy spite or some other Cause attacked the poor devil one evening as he sat at work and translated him" (From Porter, 1 Aug. 1770; Ian Grey, Catherine the Great, 1961, p. 192).

⁹ Simeon Efimovich Desnitsky (d. 1789) was the first professor of jurisprudence at the University of Moscow. He attended the University of Glasgow from 1761-67, and received an M.A. in 1765 and an LL.D. in 1767. He then returned to Moscow University and spent the rest of his life studying and teaching Roman and Russian law. In addition to writing many original scholarly works, Desnitsky also translated two works from English (not Corsica, however): William Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England, 1765-69, trans. 1780-82; and Thomas Bowden, The Farmer's Director, 1776, trans. 1780 (Russian Biographical Dictionary, 1905, v. 331-35).

The reason that Corsica was never translated may have been political. Desnitsky had played a part in the liberalism which had marked the beginning of Catherine's reign, but this liberal trend disappeared before the threat posed by Pugachev. Catherine became far more conservative and many liberals were banished or gaoled. Desnitsky may have admired Paoli and JB's book, but by the time of this letter, it must have been clear that a book praising a popular leader who was trying to free his land from foreign rule would not meet with official favour. Catherine, after

all, was a German, and spoke poor Russian. (Prof. Alexander Gregg kindly furnished this suggestion). For the attack in 1766 of Desnitsky and Alexander Fergusson of Craigdarroch (later Burns's friend) on John Anderson, professor of Natural Philosophy, see Univ. Glasgow, pp. 63, 69.

¹⁰JB was, of course, in the Hebrides.

From Allan Macdonald,

Sunday, 27 June 1774

MS. Yale (C 1837).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esqr. younger of Auchnileck, Edinr.

POSTMARK: SCONSER.

Kingsburgh, June 27th, 1774

DEAR SIR: I am sorry necessity obliges me to be so very troublesome yet I am hopeful you'll forgive me when I tell you it is on account of poor James my Brother. His agent Mr. Rodrick McLeod Junior,¹ seems to have a good opinion of his cause. The good Charitable Knight² absolutely refused to submit the matter, so that poor James must endeavour to go through with the matter in which he always looks for your friendly advice. This is surely bold, and over forward in both him and me, but necessity hath neither Law nor Shame³ which partly is the present Case and with our Blessing and good wishes for the prosperity of your family I ever am, Dear Sir, your very obedient, humble Servant,

ALLAN McDONALD

Mrs. McDonald begs her good wishes may be acceptable.

¹This is probably Roderick Macleod (d. 1784), W.S., son of William Macleod of Luskinder. "Junior" serves to distinguish him from Macdonald's father-in-law, Roderick Macleod of Balmeanach (Writers, p. 136; A. R. Macdonald, The Truth about Flora Macdonald, 1938, p. 100).

²Sir Alexander Macdonald of Sleat. See ante From Allan Macdonald, 2 Mar.

³"Necessity hath no law" is an English proverb (M. P. Tilley, A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England, 1950, s.v. "Need"). "Necessity knows no shame" is from Plautus, 1 Asinaria, III, iii. 671.

From Hector Maclean,¹

Monday 4 July 1774

MS. Yale (C 1858). Received 5 Aug. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: Mr. James Boswell of Achenleck, Advocat.

Eray, July 4, 1774

SIR: Among the various misfortunes of my life (which have not been few considering my narrow circle) its non of the least that I was abroad when you and Dr. Johnson were at my house at Eray in Mull, by which I lost the oppurtunity of conversing with two gentlemen whose characters I so much esteem.

I was told that you was desirous of Seeing some of the Highland poetry; I send you one inclosed esteem'd good of its kind.²

I have no turn for poetry, nor indeed, language to translate it elegantly, but I have given substance of it as I could. If Mr. MacPherson the translator of Ossians Poems had it he would soon doe it properly.³ If Dr. Johnson intends to publish anything concerning I Columkill, its proper he should know the ancient name of the place: that Island seems to have been a place of devotion befor Christianity was establish'd in those parts, the ancient name of it was Inish Drunich, the

habitation of the Druids, there is a buriall place on the Island even now known by the name Cleagh ni Drunish, the burial place of the Druids where the remains of bones are found.⁴

The Island was given to Collumkill by a King of the Picts, the proof for this is the venerable Bede, who, having named the Island in a former paragraph, says, venit autem in Brittaniam Columban: -- Regnante Pictis Bridio filio Meilochon. Rege potentissimo, nono anno regni ejus, gentemque illam verbo et exemplo ad fidem Christi convertit; unde et praefatam Insulam ab eis in possessionem monasterii faciendi accepit;⁵ Another proof is the narrative of the Charter given by the Abbes of Hii to the Laird of MacLean who bought the Island at the reformation,⁶ which says, hoc tibi damus ut nobis datum fuerat a Rege Bridio.⁷

This I send by the favour of Mr. MacLean of Torloisk⁸ who promises to deliver it to you, and if it give you a little amusement in one idle hour it will be a pleasure to, Sir, Your very humble servant,

H. McLEAN

Sir James Dalrymple's history Collects page 4,
ed: Edr. 1705.⁹

¹Dr. Hector Maclean (d.c. 1785) lived at Erray, near Tobermory on Mull. He was away from home when JB and SJ stayed at his house, 14-16 Oct. 1773, but he encountered the travelers on the road the day they left (Life v. 314-19).

²During their visit to Erray, JB and SJ had heard two Gaelic poems, read aloud and translated by Maclean's daughter, Mary (d. 1826). There is no record of either visitor expressing a desire to see more Gaelic poetry. Both the poems Mary read and the poems Maclean enclosed with this letter were by the Scottish poet John Maclean or Iain MacAilein (c. 1655-c. 1745). Hector Maclean had collected a number of Gaelic poems by various poets; his MS. of 128 pages is now in the Nova Scotian Public Archives, Halifax, N.S. Many of these poems were published in A.M. Sinclair, Na Baird Leatheadach: The Maclean Bards, 1898. See pp. 139-41, 149-51 for the poems, with modernized spelling, which Maclean enclosed, and pp. 5-6 for a history of the Maclean MS. Both poems, "Fogradh Thuatha De Danann" and "Cath Alphuir", are part of a prose and poetry sequence dealing humorously with early Scottish folklore and myth. In the second poem, various kinds of liquor are personified, a theme which later Scottish poets repeated (D. S. Thomson, An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry, 1974, pp. 145-48).

³According to Prof. D.S. Thomson (letter, 23 Mar. 1981), Maclean's paraphrase is accurate, despite this disclaimer. The poems and the paraphrase are not included here, but do form part of this MS. (C 1858).

⁴Iona has had many names; of the two here cited, "I Columkill" is derived from "I-Chaluim-Chille", The Island of Columba of the Church; "Inish Drunich", the home of the Druids. "Inish" is another form of Inch, as in "Inchkenneth". "Cleagh ni Drunish" has been modernized to "Cladh nan Druidnean" (Archibald Macmillan, Iona, Its History and Antiquities, 1898, p. 28).

⁵"Now Columba came to Britain when the most puissant King Bruide, Maelchon's son, reigned over the Redshanks in the 9th year of his reign, and did by word and example convert that nation to the faith of Christ: in consideration whereof too the aforesaid isle was given to him in possession to make a monastery" (Bede, Opera Historica, book III, ch. 4). As Maclean's marginal note indicates, he has taken this quotation not directly from Bede, but from James Dalrymple, Collections Concerning the Scottish History, Preceeding the Death of King David the First, in the Year 1153, 1705, p. 40, where Bede's account is printed next to Dalrymple's very free translation of it, given above.

⁶In 1574, Mary Nikillian (Mary Maclean), Prioress of the convent on Iona, or Hii, granted the lands belonging to the convent to Hector Maclean of Dowarde or Duard. These lands included the islands of Mull, Inchkenneth, Tiree, Canna, Coll, Skye, and Uist (Maclean, p. 327).

⁷"This we give to you that was given to us by the King Brude". Brude was king of the Picts, baptised by St. Columba (Maclean, p. 317).

⁸Probably Lachlan Maclean (d. 1799) of Torloisk (Maclean, pp. 113-14).

⁹This note is written in the margin, next to the Latin quotations.

From Margaret Stuart¹ to Margaret Boswell,

Tuesday 5 July 1774

MS. Yale (C 2604).

ADDRESS: Mrs. Boswell, James Court, Edinburgh.

POSTMARKS: [London] T C, 5 IV, FREE, 5 IV.

FRANK: Free, James Stuart.²

London,³ July 5th, 1774

MY DEAREST FREIND: Mr. Stuart return'd last night from a little excursion in to Kent etc. and found Mr. Boswells Letter⁴ waiting his arrival. He says he is sure Mr. Boswell will excuse him for not writing with his own Hand an answer to his Letter because he knows what a dreadful task it is to him Epistlising -- I will endeavour as near as I can recollect to set down his own words when he perused your Husbands Letter. I wish by G-- Mrs. Stuart it were in my power to do what Jimmy Boswell desires in this Letter but you know Mrs. Stuart that that D -- scoundrel Lord North because I wou'd not be his Packhorse has invariably for three Years refused the trifling places in my own Boroughs to me⁵ excepting that one that Semple⁶ got and the very last Letter I wrote to him about poor Brother⁷ he never answerd it. I wish you wou'd write to Mr. B and tell him I really have the inclination but not the power. God who

sees all hearts knows how happy it wou'd make me that any thing I was conected with were able to serve you. I can say no more and I am perswaided it is unnecessary.

I Bless God for your recover'd Health and strength.⁸
 I set out next week for Tunbridge to try the waters there.⁹
 I have taken an amazing quantity of Bark¹⁰ already and perhaps I shall finish with Sea bathing. I am most terribly weak and have a Million of complaints besides.

I do assure you I am not half so anxious about my Husband and Children as you are it is not my temper to be so about any thing for which I thank God.¹¹ -- I long to see your Children. I am sure I shall Love Euphemia terribly. Adieu. I am, my Dearest Mrs. Boswell, your most sincerely Affectionate, and faithfull freind While

MARGT. STUART

I shall be at Tunbridge about six weeks write to me at Aston¹² and they will send your Letters to me. Offer my best Compliments to Mr. B.

¹Margaret Stuart (d. 1808), the daughter of Sir David Cuninghame of Milncraig, was a connexion through marriage of Mrs. Boswell's, and her "old and intimate friend" (Journ. 29 Mar. 1772).

²James Archibald Stuart (1747-1818), later Stuart-Wortley (1795), and Stuart-Wortley-Mackenzie (1803), was currently M.P. for Ayr Burghs (1768-74) and later M.P. for Buteshire (1774-80). He was the husband of the writer and the younger brother of Lord Mountstuart (1744-1814), whom JB accompanied on a tour of the Continent in 1765 (Namier and Brooke iii. 501).

³Hertford Street (post Margaret Stuart to Margaret Boswell, 30 Oct. 1775).

⁴Not reported. Sent 14 June (Reg. Let.).

⁵Stuart generally supported Lord North in Parliament, but there was bad feeling between the two families. In 1773, Lord Mountstuart complained that he had "repeatedly experienced from [Lord North] the strongest marks of personal disregard". And in 1776, Stuart claimed that a number of places which North had promised to Stuart's candidates had been given to others (Namier and Brooke iii. 502; Journ. 17 Mar. 1776).

⁶Unidentified. The Semples were an old Ayrshire family (W. A. Semple, Genealogical History of the Family Semple, 1888).

⁷Unidentified, but probably Stuart's younger brother Frederick (1751-1802), the black sheep of the family. A place had been found for him in India with Warren Hastings, but he refused to stay there and returned to England in 1774 or 1775. He succeeded his brother as M.P. for Ayr Burghs (1776-80) and later as M.P. for Buteshire (1796-1802), but his political career was undistinguished. In 1782 he moved to Paris to escape his creditors, and lived there for several years in poverty (Namier and Brooke iii. 500).

⁸Following the birth of Euphemia.

⁹"Tunbridge is, in my opinion, for a little time in the summer, with a family, and for people who do not find a great deal of occupation at their country house, one of the prettiest places in the world" (George Selwyn to Lord Carlisle, 26 July 1774. Quoted in Lewis Melville, Society at Royal Tunbridge Wells, 1912, p. 226).

¹⁰Cinchona bark or quinine, prescribed for "intermittent fever" or malaria.

¹¹The Stuart children were Mary (1769-1855), Charlotte (1771-86), and John (1773-97). Four more children were born subsequently, of whom one died in infancy (Scots Peer. ii. 303).

¹²The Stuarts had been renting the Manor of Aston-Bury in Hertfordshire since at least 1770 (From Margaret Stuart, 26 Oct. 1770). In 1778, the owner of the house, John P. Boteler, sold it to Thomas Rumbold as part of the property of Watton Woodhall; the Stuarts then rented another North Hertfordshire manor, Aspenden Hall, for one or two years (From Margaret Stuart, 25 Jan. 1778; Victoria History of the County of Hertford, 1914, iii. 54-56).

From Francis Gentleman,¹

Wednesday 20 July 1774

MS. Yale (C 1369). Received 25 July (Reg. Let.)

See also Journ. 25 July.

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esq. Advocate, Edinburgh.

POSTMARK: [London] 20 IY.

SIR: A knowledge of, and a thorough confidence in your character and feelings, encourage me, tho' with much reluctance, to the following trespass upon your time and patience; in the last eighteen months I have had a sad series of calamities in my family: the expensive sickness and irreparable loss of a valuable Wife; the sickness and Death of two children since her departure;² a perplexity of mind, aggravated by several disappointments, my own indisposition for several months, and the almost total stop to literary matters³ have rendered me near two Hundred Pounds worse than I was within the time mentioned; these points considered, with the Death of two capital friends -- Lord Chesterfield one,⁴ two more in a very declining state and one gone to the South of France⁵ -- induces me, amidst great straits to request, with all deference, the assistance of five guineas for two or three months, when I will most thankfully repay, and gratefully acknowledge so essential, and well timed an act of Bounty. I know not any Justifica-

tion or Apology for such an intrusion, but your good nature and the pressure of my own awkward circumstances; a gleam of prospect, if seizable opens before me; and mens sana, in corpore sano is considerably establish'd, to what it was sometime since; my infirm state rendered me incapable of joining Mr. Foote this summer;⁶ and having feard that his finances were not in the most flourishing Condition, I could not urge myself as an invalid or a Borrower upon him. Thus sir I throw myself before you, and if the request is not inadmissible I have little doubt of your extension of favour, to the unfortunate, but not ungratefull respecer of your amiable qualities and Capital Talents,

FR. GENTLEMAN

If this address is worthy of a Line please address to me Castle Yard, Holborn Barrs.⁷

Dr. Goldsmith I should have mentioned as a Capital stroke.

¹Gentleman (1728-84) was an Irish actor and playwright. JB had met him while both were in Glasgow during the winter of 1759-60, and Gentleman had dedicated to JB his adaptation of Oroonoko (Earlier Years, pp. 44-45; 467). Gentleman's best known work was The Dramatic Censor, published anonymously in 1770. He published other minor works, sometimes under the pseudonym of "Sir Nicholas Nipclose" (J. F. Arnott and J. W. Robinson, English Theatrical Literature 1559-1900, 1970, p. 94).

²Mrs. Gentleman is not further identified. Gentleman had married about 1765 when he was living at Malton, near York; his wife died in 1773, leaving the two children whose deaths are recorded here (David Erskine, D. E. Baker, Isaac Reed, Stephen Jones, Biographia Dramatica, 1812, i. 272-73).

³Apparently Gentleman had not been working as an actor since Samuel Foote had discharged him from the Haymarket Theatre after the 1772-73 season. Bell's acting edition of Shakespeare, edited by Gentleman, had appeared earlier this year; this work was later characterized as "the worst edition that ever appeared of any English author". Gentleman had also recently published an edition of The Merry Wives of Windsor (Biographia Dramatica, p. 273; Cal. Merc. 12 Feb. 1774, p. [4]).

⁴Philip Dormer, 4th Earl of Chesterfield, had died on 24 May 1773. The other friend was Goldsmith, as the postscript indicates; he had lent Gentleman fifteen pounds the previous year (Journ. 7 Apr. 1773).

⁵These are not identified, but one may be David Garrick (1717-79), the actor, to whom Gentleman frequently applied for money. In May, Garrick had suffered a severe attack of gout and had also complained of "calls upon me which almost drained me" (Letters of David Garrick, ed. D. M. Little and G. M. Kahrl, 1963, iii. 933. See also Notes, 8 May 1772, where JB recorded a loan from Garrick to Gentleman of fifteen guineas).

⁶Samuel Foote's new play, The Cozeners, had opened at the Haymarket Theatre, London, on 15 July; Foote later took it on tour through the north of England (M. M. Belden, The Dramatic Work of Samuel Foote, 1929, rpt. 1969, p. 195).

⁷Castle Yard was also called Castle Street, and is now Furnival Street. Gentleman was apparently lodging at the Holburn end of the street, near the "Bars", two granite pillars, one on either side of Holburn, marking the boundary of the liberties of London.

To Francis Gentleman,

Saturday 30 July 1774

MS. Yale (L 579). A copy in Boswell's hand. Sent 31 July (Reg. Let.).

HEADING: Answer.

Edinburgh, 30 July, 1774

DEAR SIR: It gives me sincere concern to be informed of your distressed situation; and believe me I regret that debts contracted in my days of folly still hang heavy upon me and make me unable to give you such assistance as I could wish to do.¹ I send you a Bill upon Messieurs Dilly² for three guineas, and am with real sympathy, your very humble servant,

J.B.

¹Mrs. Boswell had urged JB to respond favourably: "My wife very genteelly was for my complying" (Journ. 25 July). But JB noted that "my debts far exceeded my funds" (Journ. 30 July). In the following year he was in debt nearly £ 1500, chiefly because of his purchase of the Dalblair property in 1767; this debt, although partially settled by his father in 1776, remained a drain on his resources for the rest of his life (Journ. 18 Oct. 1776; Extremes, p. 72, n. 1).

²Charles Dilly (1739-1807) and his brother Edward, booksellers, and JB's literary agents in London.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTERS
CONCERNING JOHN REID

Nearly all of the remaining letters for 1774 in this collection concern the trial and execution of John Reid, sheepstealer. (Three letters on other subjects, from Joseph White, Patrick Preston, and Alexander Stevenson, are included chronologically.) Some background to the Reid case and a short account of it are given here to avoid repetitive or confusing footnotes to the correspondence.

Reid's trial took place at a moment in British history when thieves were punished with extreme severity. During the eighteenth century, the number of statutes in England prescribing the death penalty for crimes against property increased nearly fourfold.¹ Scots law was less statutory, but in practice even stricter. By mid-century in both countries, any theft could be punished by death, although a lenient judge might substitute a sentence of transportation to the colonies for the death penalty. Reform still lay far in the future. The first voices of protest, however, were raised in Boswell's time. William

Eden (1744-1814), who by a remarkable coincidence appears in these letters, had published Principles of Penal Law in 1771, the first major attack on the English penal system. Later, as Lord Auckland, Eden would continue to call for reform; his efforts combined with those of Sir Samuel Romilly (1757-1818) contributed to the gradual modification of the English criminal code through the nineteenth century. Scots law assimilated the English reforms slowly: after 1838 capital punishment in England was reserved for murder and treason, but robbery remained a capital offence in Scotland until 1887.

Although the number of capital crimes multiplied through the eighteenth century, the number of actual executions does not seem to have increased, largely because of the frequent exercise of the royal pardon. In England, about half of those sentenced to death had their sentences commuted by the King, usually to transportation, sometimes to imprisonment.² In Scotland, the percentage of pardons was somewhat lower. Royal pardons were obtained through the social hierarchy: landowners who knew the prisoner wrote to their acquaintances among the nobility who, in turn, passed on the recommendation for clemency to the King. The petitioners generally based their appeals

not upon legal points, but upon the deserving character of the prisoner and his family, and they appealed to the merciful propensities of the nobleman they addressed. Thus, as Douglas Hay has pointed out, the power structure of the English social system rested on a dual notion of justice and mercy, allowing "the class that passed one of the bloodiest penal codes in Europe to congratulate itself on its humanity".³

John Reid (1725-74) was a butcher from Hillend, Muiravonside, Stirlingshire. He had a history of thievery. In 1752, by his own account, he had stolen some sheep while he was drunk, and had only escaped prosecution by joining the Army. The following year, he was arrested for stealing two cows. He was tried in Glasgow and acquitted, apparently more through lack of evidence against him than by proof of his innocence.⁴

In the summer of 1766, about the same time that Boswell began to practice law, Reid was arrested again, this time on a charge of stealing one hundred and twenty sheep, driving them to Glasgow, and there offering them for sale. Reid's trial came up in September before the Circuit Court in Glasgow, and the Court, consisting of Lords Auchinleck and Pitfour, appointed Boswell and Bannatyne MacLeod

(1744-1833; later Lord Bannatyne) counsel for the defence. Reid thus became Boswell's first criminal client.

Boswell's and MacLeod's first move was to argue that the jury in Glasgow was hostile and that there had been insufficient time to collect all the evidence. On these grounds they succeeded in obtaining a change of venue to Edinburgh. Boswell then persuaded his colleague, Andrew Crosbie, who was becoming known as a champion of the poor, to join the advocates for the defence. Boswell also seems to have supported Reid at this time in a way that transcended the normal obligations of a court-appointed defender: he gave Reid money for food, and also presented him with a religious book of some kind, inscribed "To John Reid, an unhappy prisoner, from James Boswell, one of his counsel; who, if he cannot save him from punishment in this world, hopes to assist in obtaining mercy in the world which is to come ..." ⁵

Reid, who had now been in a Glasgow prison for nearly six months, began to lose heart, and confessed his low spirits in a letter to Boswell:

Glasgow, 13th Novemr. 1766

SIR: Having now been long confined in a Dungeon of this prison where I possibly may remain Starving all Winter, A thing hard for humane nature to bear -- And tho' I am Conscious of my Innocence rather than be thus punished for so long a Space but at Same time very unwilling to part with my wife and three Infant children I am inclined from mere necessity to Apply for Banishment. And As you was So very kind to be Counsel for me at Glasgow not to mention other favours I have again taken the Liberty to intreat you will be so good as undertake an additional piece of trouble for me, that is, To Apply to My Lord Advocate for his Consent to my being banished who I am told is a very humane Gentleman. So that I flatter my self He will by your influence give his Consent if he is petitioned for that effect. And in so doing you will add another very high favour to former ones bestowed by you on me. And I am, with greatest esteem, Sir, Your most humble Servant,

JOHN REID⁶

But Boswell and his colleagues, confident of success, chose not to apply for Reid's transportation, and the trial was held in Edinburgh on 16 Dec.

The Lord Advocate⁷ had added a second charge of sheepstealing, this one dating back to 1763. (It was to this theft that Reid admitted his guilt privately to Boswell eight years later.⁸) And the prosecution also tried to prove that Reid was "by habit and repute" a thief.

A conviction of "habit and repute", a concept peculiar to Scots law, was not in itself punishable, but served as an aggravation of theft. Thus if a man was known to steal habitually, to be a "common thief", this rendered his punishment for a proven theft more severe. Curiously, a previous conviction for theft could not by itself be held against such a man. "Habit and repute" remained an aggravation of theft in Scots law for another century, but became less and less common because of the obvious problems of definition and proof.⁹

During the trial, many witnesses for the prosecution testified to Reid's bad character, and to his having been in possession of the stolen sheep. Boswell, who appears to have done most of the arguing for the defence, did not attempt to challenge the facts of the case, but attacked the evidence as circumstantial, and held that the accused could not be condemned solely on the grounds of bad character. The jury returned a verdict of "not proven", which in Scots law means that there is insufficient evidence to find either for or

against the defendant. (Not proven", however, carries the weight of a full acquittal in that the defendant may not be tried again for the same crime). The judges declared themselves outraged.

This case received a good deal of attention in the press because of Boswell's eloquent defence and because of the judges' vociferous displeasure at the verdict.

Some months later, the Douglas cause came before the Court of Session. The Hamilton family was challenging Archibald Douglas's right to the succession of the Douglas estate. Boswell had supported Douglas with noisy enthusiasm; he had published a number of impudent jingles and the highly partisan Dorando, an attack on the Hamilton claims, thinly disguised as a "Spanish tale". Although these works were anonymous, Boswell's authorship was generally known. The impropriety of a member of the Faculty of Advocates disseminating propaganda about a case not yet tried was obvious. When the Court decided for the Hamiltons, the Lord Justice Clerk, delivering his opinion from the bench, indulged in a roundabout and, under the circumstances, a rather mild rebuke of the young advocate:

"We have indeed seen cases where there was a moral impossibility of the prisoner's innocence, and yet, we have seen juries acquit such a one. Such a case was that of Reid, who was lately tried before the criminal Court, for the crime of sheepstealing. This Reid was a poor man of a very suspicious character. He was found with the exact number of sheep in his possession upon the road leading from the very farm from off which they were stole, and he pretended not to bring any proof whatever, that he had attained the property of them in any lawful way. A council at that bar, who likes to distinguish himself upon such occasions, patronized the prisoner's defence, and notwithstanding the clearest and most positive evidence of all the facts which I have mentioned, 'The jury acquitted the prisoner.' Upon so strange a verdict your Lordships, members of that high Court (I mean all of you who were then present) declared your opinions seriatim. That this verdict was given in the face of most compleat evidence".¹⁰

There is no record of Boswell's immediate reaction to these remarks; probably he regarded the publicity as not wholly unwelcome. Perhaps he also felt that the slur gave him added justification for smashing the Lord Justice Clerk's windows when, two years later, the House of Lords reversed the Douglas decision.¹¹ Subsequent events, however, led him to see the Lord Justice Clerk's statement as an unfair reflection upon Reid, and a misuse of judicial authority.

In early October 1773, nineteen sheep were stolen from Alexander Gray, a farmer living about twenty miles from Reid. A few days later, the sheep-herder who worked for Gray discovered three of Gray's sheep grazing near Reid's house and two more of the sheep slaughtered and hanging in Reid's shed. He identified the sheep before a local Justice of the Peace, and took them all back to Gray. Then it appears that no action was taken for some time, although local gossip named Reid the thief. Reid went into hiding, eventually travelling to the North of England. He returned clandestinely after several weeks but news of his return reached the authorities and he was arrested in late December or early January, charged with stealing the nineteen sheep or receiving them knowing them to have been stolen ("reset of theft"). By 11 Jan., he was in the Tolbooth in Edinburgh: "Last night was brought to town under strong guard, and committed to prison, on a new accusation of sheepstealing, the noted John Reid, whose trial before the High Court of Justiciary in the year 1767¹² made so much noise, and was afterwards made the subject of distinguished attention in the great Douglas cause".¹³

The evidence against Reid seemed telling; furthermore he had a bad reputation, which the Lord Justice Clerk had publicized. Nevertheless, Reid insisted he was innocent and told a plausible story. He claimed that his neighbor, William Gardner of Parkhead, had asked him to sell some sheep on consignment. Because he had butchered and sold livestock for Gardner before, he explained, he never suspected that these sheep might have been stolen. The sheep arrived, a few days later than promised, delivered by a neighborhood boy with a note from Gardner apologizing for the delay. Reid butchered some of the sheep and sold them at the Falkirk market. Then came the man from Alexander Gray who identified the remaining sheep.

Reid was terrified, and hid in his house for several weeks. Eventually, so he said, Gardner came to see him, confessed his guilt, and implored Reid to protect him. Still frightened, Reid left for England, returning only after he heard that Gray did not plan to bring charges. But Reid was arrested and gaoled soon after his return. Gardner was arrested at the same time, but was apparently charged with a theft unrelated to the sheepstealing; he was tried and convicted at Stirling four months later.

Reid was not brought to trial until the summer.

Boswell first mentions the case in his Journal of 15 July: "I went in the afternoon to the prison and conferred with my old client John Reid". Later Boswell asked his friend, Michael Nasmith, writer, to be "agent" for the case; Crosbie refused to appear publicly as advocate but agreed to give advice privately.¹⁴

The trial opened on 1 Aug. before the High Court of Justiciary, consisting of fifteen jurymen, all of them Edinburgh shopkeepers, and six judges: The Lord Justice Clerk and Lords Auchinleck, Coalston, Kames, Kennet, and Pitfour. (The last two judges arrived late, during the examination of witnesses for the prosecution.) The charge against Reid had three parts. First, he was charged with stealing sheep; this was a capital charge. Second, he was charged with reset of theft, not in itself a capital charge. Finally, he was charged with being "by habit and repute" a thief; this charge could render reset of theft capital.

Boswell's efforts were aimed at two points: to prove that Reid had received the sheep not knowing they were stolen, and to insist that Reid's former trial in 1766 and the Lord Justice Clerk's subsequent references to it could not be used to prove the charge of habit and repute. (For some reason, Reid's 1753 trial seems not to have been generally known.)

In the first effort, Boswell was unsuccessful. Gardner, convicted of another theft, was awaiting transportation, but he had been held in the Stirling gaol since his trial in April in case he was needed as a witness in Reid's trial. When interrogated by Stirling authorities, however, he denied that he had given Reid the sheep. His denial was not reported in the trial; instead, Boswell claimed Gardner was intestible because he was a convicted criminal. He called one of Reid's neighbors, Andrew Auld, as a witness, who was supposed to testify to an advance agreement between Gardner and Reid about the delivery of the sheep, but in the courtroom Auld was confused and unconvincing.¹⁵

The prosecution called some damaging witnesses who testified not only that Reid had acquired the sheep in a stealthy and mysterious manner, but also that he had a bad reputation in the neighborhood. One witness, under cross-examination by Boswell, supplied the unexpected information that Reid and Gardner had quarreled some months before the crime and had stopped dealing with each other: not evidence helpful to the defence. No witness for the prosecution, however, was able actually to prove either that Reid had stolen the sheep or that he knew them to be stolen. Nor could Boswell, who had interviewed some twenty-five persons before the trial began, bring any witness who could testify that Reid had not stolen the sheep.

In his attempts to blunt the effect of Reid's previous trial, Boswell was hardly more fortunate. He pointed out that Reid had been acquitted of being by habit and repute a thief, and therefore could not be tried again on the same charge. But he could only make the judges agree to limit the charge of habit and repute to the recent past. Boswell also argued that although the jury in 1766 had ruled "not proven", five of the judges at that trial had openly expressed their disagreement with the verdict, thus planting a general impression of Reid's guilt in the public mind. He proposed to call two members of the 1766 jury to testify to that verdict, but the Lord Advocate granted the fact of prejudice as Boswell had stated it. Yet later, in his charge to the jury, the Lord Advocate managed to use this point as a way of reminding the jury of the judges' dissenting opinions.

The jury withdrew at five o'clock, and by eight Boswell knew that they had found against his client. (The note from Nasmith written this evening is the first of the John Reid letters in this collection.) The verdict was officially announced in court the following afternoon. Boswell asked the judges to delay sentencing a few days to allow him time to argue against a capital sentence. Only Lord Kames was sympathetic to this request; all the judges agreed that the

crime was a capital one, and that to delay sentencing would be pointless. (Lord Justice Clerk: "It would be improper and even indecent for the Court to delay ...") The six judges sentenced Reid to be hanged on 7 Sept.

There was no appeal from the High Court of Justiciary. Reid could now only be saved by a Royal pardon. Attempting to obtain one, Boswell turned to a series of increasingly heroic measures, largely recounted in the following letters.

First, he tried to procure a deposition from Gardner, but Gardner continued to insist that he had had no part in the theft (To R. Finlayson, 6 Aug.; From J. Finlayson, 8 Aug.). He then asked Lord Erroll to intervene on Reid's behalf because Reid's father-in-law had been Erroll's tenant (To Lord Erroll, 10 Aug.). This was a logical and conventional request; a petition from Erroll to the King would have carried the added influence of Erroll's position as landlord to Reid's family. But Erroll refused to intercede. From now on, Boswell had to base his efforts on his own social connexions and on the legal ambiguities of the case. As the letters show, neither proved adequately persuasive.

On 20 Aug., Boswell drew up a petition from Reid to the King, requesting a sentence of transportation. He sent one copy to the King by way of Lord Suffolk, the other through Lord Pembroke, and he urged Lord Suffolk to request a transcript of the case. Thus when Boswell heard on 2 Sept. that the King had granted Reid a two-week respite and that a transcript of the trial had been sent to London, he assumed that this was a result of his own efforts. He did not learn until months later that Lord Rochford, acting for Lord Suffolk on behalf of the Crown, had written to the Lord Justice Clerk on 26 Aug., sending him a copy of Boswell's petition and asking his opinion "whether and how far, the said John Reid may appear to you to be an Object of His Majesty's Royal Mercy". With this letter was the respite, which Rochford directed the Lord Justice Clerk to apply only if Reid was deserving of mercy; otherwise the respite was to be returned unused, and the Law permitted to "take its Course".¹⁶

The Crown, in requesting the Lord Justice Clerk's opinion may have wished to determine his intention in imposing the death penalty. For frequently a judge sentenced a prisoner to death purely as a matter of

form, anticipating a royal pardon. In some cases, the judge himself applied for the pardon on the prisoner's behalf. Even when others applied for the prisoner, the Crown usually asked the judge whether he considered the prisoner deserving of mercy.¹⁷

In this instance, the Lord Justice Clerk delivered the respite, quite properly recognising that he should not pre-empt the royal prerogative, but he also sent Rochford his own opinion and with it a transcript of the trial. Boswell, however, ignorant of the Lord Justice Clerk's fairmindedness in allowing the respite, continued to attack his "narrowness".

Boswell then tried again to influence the King through various social connexions, writing to Queensberry (3 Sept.), Cornwallis (5 Sept.), and, again, to Pembroke (5 Sept.). Meanwhile, Reid continued to implicate Gardner in the theft, and Boswell and Nasmith attempted once more to obtain corroboration from Gardner, but in vain (Nasmith to Wilson, 6 Sept., and the three letters following).

In fact, all intervention was now in vain, because only six days after Boswell had learned of the respite,

the King decided against clemency. On 8 Sept. the King reviewed the case and, after reading the Lord Justice Clerk's report, decided that Reid's sentence must stand (From Warrender to Tait, 17 Sept.).

Subsequent letters from Pembroke indicate that the vehemence of the Lord Justice Clerk's opinion against Reid left the King no choice (15 Sept., 2 Oct.). But Boswell did not learn this until later, and he thus persisted in his attempts to obtain a pardon.

On 10 Sept., Boswell assembled a memorial of the case and took a notarized declaration from Reid's wife, Janet, stating that her husband had been at home every night during the week of the crime. Boswell sent these documents to Lord Rochford with a covering letter. The notarized declaration had little legal value. As the spouse of the accused, Janet Reid had been intestible at the trial. Furthermore, voluntary affidavits were never admissible in a Scots court, and rarely in England. Boswell may have reasoned that Janet Reid's statement was not subject to courtroom rules; at any rate, it was the only testimony he had which corroborated any of Reid's story.

At the same time as he was writing the petitions and letters which appear in this collection, Boswell was also providing some other artifacts. He commissioned an artist to paint a portrait of Reid in the Tol-booth. With Nasmith, he wrote The Mournful Case of Poor Misfortunate and Unhappy John Reid which was printed as a broadside on 10 Sept. And he also wrote some of the accounts of the case which appeared in the press, notably a letter to the London Chronicle signed "A Royalist" and accusing the Lord Justice Clerk of professional impropriety.¹⁸

On 17 Sept., Boswell heard that Lord Suffolk had written to the Lord Justice Clerk to say that the King had found no grounds for clemency and that the law must take its course. (It is unclear why the contents of this letter of 9 Sept., which must have reached Edinburgh about 13 Sept., took so long to become generally known. But Reid could not be executed before the respite expired on 21 Sept.; thus the Lord Justice Clerk may have suppressed the letter for a few days in an attempt to limit expressions of public support for Reid.)

Boswell now laid plans for a most desperate measure, one which he had been considering since August: the resuscitation of Reid after the hanging. The recovery of persons apparently dead was attracting considerable public interest at the time,¹⁹ and Boswell spent much time investigating the practicalities of such a scheme. But everyone he consulted argued against the plan, and he reluctantly abandoned it on the eve of the execution.

Reid was hanged in the Grassmarket on the afternoon of 21 Sept. His last words were "Take warning. Mine is an unjust sentence". But some of the spectators, among them Boswell, thought that they heard not "unjust" but "just".

The final letters in this collection, those from Ritchie, Daniel Macqueen and George Macqueen, suggest that Boswell hoped to write some sort of narrative of Reid's trial and execution. But on 2 Oct., William Miller (1755-1846), son of the Lord Justice Clerk, challenged Boswell to a duel unless he publicly disavowed his libellous statements about the Lord Justice Clerk which had appeared in the letter from "A Royalist"

in the London Chronicle. This episode, with Boswell's eventual apology, is described in the Journal and does not appear at all in this correspondence. But it may explain why Boswell did not use the material in these letters to write an account of the trial.

¹Douglas Hay, Albion's Fatal Tree, 1975, p. 18.

²Leon Radzinowicz, A History of English Criminal Law, 1948, i. 147.

³Op. cit., pp. 48-49.

⁴The Last Speech; Memorandum by John Johnston for John Reid, Glasgow, 1766, Lg. 4.2.

⁵Only a draft of this inscription survives (MS. Yale M 125).

⁶MS. Yale (C 2350).

⁷James Montgomery (1721-1803), later Lord Chief Baron of the Scottish Exchequer.

⁸Journ. 30 Aug. 1774.

⁹John Erskine, Principles of the Law of Scotland, 20th ed., John Rankine, 1903, p. 620.

¹⁰A. F. Stuart, The Douglas Cause, 1909, p. 115. Steuart dates this speech incorrectly; it was delivered in 1767.

¹¹Earlier Years, pp. 398-99.

¹²In error for 1766.

¹³Cal. Merc., 12 Jan. 1774, p. [2].

¹⁴Journ. 31 July.

¹⁵Lg. 22.5 Most of the information about the trial comes from this source and from JB's notes which are very close to the official transcript of the trial in the S.R.O. (see Defence pp. xxiv, 249 n. 8).

¹⁶Journ., 18 Oct.

¹⁷Studies in Law, p. 423.

¹⁸London Chron. 17-20 Sept., p. 276, reprinted in Defence, pp. 315-16

¹⁹Numerous instances of persons revived after being stifled, drowned, or hanged are recounted in Scots Mag., Sept. 1774, pp. 449-51. And a few weeks later, the Lords Commissioners of Police in Edinburgh considered a plan for "affording immediate relief to such persons as may be recoverable, though seemingly dead, from drowning and other sudden casualties" (Cal. Merc., 23 Nov. 1774, p.[3]). The number of persons who survived hanging is probably greater than any records indicate, since such cases were usually kept secret. Sometimes the hangman was bribed to tie a trick knot or arrange a "short fall"; although after a collapsible platform, or "drop" replaced the cart or ladder in 1783, these stratagems no longer worked. (Henry Kensington, "Revival after Execution", Notes and Queries, 26 July 1856, p. 73). In 1777, Dr. William Dodd, the forger for whom SJ petitioned the King, was executed at Tyburn. His friends rushed his body to a waiting surgeon, but the curious crowd hampered the attempt, and the resuscitation failed. Apparently JB did not know about this episode for he does not mention it in his accounts of the Dodd execution; the circumstances of the attempt are strikingly like the arrangements for Reid which JB had projected (Gent. Mag., 1790, ii. 1077; Radzinowicz i. 194-95, 201-03, 466-67).

From Michael Nasmith,¹

Monday 1 August 1774

MS. Yale (C 2070).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esquire, Advocate.

[Edinburgh], 1st Aug. 7 o'clock²

DEAR SIR: This is truly miserable. The most injudicious verdict that can be. But what is still more miserable it is just. A Verdict in Gen'l "finding the theft proved" against him.³ The Gentleman⁴ who informs me is a stranger to judicial stile, thinks these are the capital words. Capital enough. I wish it had been otherwise for the sake of that respect which belongs to a Jury and of the dignity that the panel's charge merits. Could we get an Innocent panele but what can be done for guilt. I am in low Spirits notwithstanding the good cheer within me.⁵ Advise My Dear Sir, Yours most Sincerely,

M. NASMITH

¹Michael Nasmith (c. 1738-77), W.S., JB's agent in the Reid case, had entered Glasgow University in 1755, was admitted to the Society of Writers to the Signet in 1767, and was currently a clerk of that Society (Univ. Glasgow, p. 52; Writers, p. 155).

²Nasmith lived at the Luckenbooths, but this note was probably written from Walker's Tavern, Writer's Court, where the jury was dining at Court expense. They had started deliberations at five o'clock and had reached a decision promptly (Journ. 1 Aug.; Edin. Direct., p. 99).

³The actual phrasing of the verdict was "They [the jurors] all in one voice, find John Reid the pannel, guilty of the theft libelled" (S.R.O.). The verdict was written and signed at once, but was not delivered until the next day (Edin. Adv., 29 July-2 Aug., p. 77).

⁴Unidentified.

⁵"Michael Nasmith came home with me between five and six, when we dined, drank some porter and port and a bottle of claret" (Journ. 1 Aug.).

From Joseph White,¹

Friday 5 August 1774

MS. Yale (C 3086). Received 12 Aug. "Joseph White Esq."
(Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esquire, Edimburgh.

POSTMARK: [Edinburgh] AV 8.

London, 5th of Augt 1774

SIR: At my arrival to this Capital from France and Holland on the 2d inst I have been kindly encountered by your obliging favor of the 25th Ult.² I am surely very much indebted to your worthy Brother for having procured me the honor of your acquaintance which I would wish it were in my power to cement more particularly by offering personally my respects to you in that part of the Country but I fear that my stay in this Isle will be altogether too short to permit me that satisfaction being compelled by my business to have left³ before the end of the present month.

I will endeavor to deliver immediately the sundry Letters of recommendation with which you have favored me for some of your friends here, and for which I return you many thanks.⁴ If during my short stay here, or ever after in that part of the Country where I live, I can be so happy as to be of any service to you, it will certainly

afford me a very particular satisfaction to give you
frequent and undoubted testimonies of my being most
sincerely, Dear Sir, Your very obliged, humble servant,

JOSEPH WHITE

¹Not precisely identified. This letter indicates that White was a friend of JB's brother Thomas David (1748-1826), a merchant in Valencia. White may have been a member of the affluent White family of County Waterford, Ireland, who had long been resident merchants in Seville. He was possibly an uncle of the most eminent member of this family, Joseph Blanco White (1775-1841), a noted theologian, who mentions in his memoirs an older brother of his father's who died young (The Life of the Rev. Joseph Blanco White, ed. J. H. Thom, 1845, i. 3-5; iii. 314-15).

²"Joseph White Esq" (Reg. Let. 26 July). The awkward grammar of this sentence further suggests the expatriate Blanco White family; Joseph Blanco White complained that he never became fully idiomatic in English (op. cit., i. 174-75).

³MS. "let"

⁴These letters may have been to Lord Mountstuart and Colonel James Stuart, since the Reg. Let. lists their names under White's for 26 July.

To Robert Finlayson,

Saturday 6 August 1774

MS. Yale (L 540). A copy in Lawrie's hand. Sent 6 Aug.

"Mr. Finlayson Junr. Stirling" (Reg. Let.).

HEADING by JB: To Mr. Robert Finlayson, Writer in Stirling.¹

Edinburgh, 6 Aug. 1774

SIR: Mr. McLaurin² having assured me of your abilities and obliging disposition I am going to beg the favour that you would charitably take a little trouble on account of an unfortunate Client of mine, John Reid who now lies under sentence of death here for Sheepstealing.

The evidence against him was entirely circumstantial and the chief article was his having the stolen sheep in his possession without being able to prove how he came by them. He has uniformly averred that he got them from William Gardner in Parkhead who delivered them to him on Thursday the 7th of October last. Gardner was convicted of house-breaking at last circuit at Stirling by a verdict of a Jury;³ so that he was rendered infamous and intestible.⁴ My Lord Advocate was willing to pass from all objections to him, but I was unwilling to trust my Clients life to such a witness and thought it more prudent to plead to the Jury the probability of Reids account of the matter that Gardner was the thief, and as it was proved that Reid had formerly

received cattel from Gardner which were never challanged, he had no reason to suspect that the sheep in question were stolen.

As the unfortunate man persists in his story which may be true, though I confess I have very little faith in his veracity, it would be very obliging if you would talk with Gardner who is still in Stirling Jail, under sentence of transportation, and try to learn whether he really did deliver the sheep to Reid, although he should deny it from an apprehension of the consequences, you will Judge from his manner whether he is telling the truth or not. I indeed should suppose that he would run no risk in owning it if it was the case, because there would be no evidence against him and because at any rate I am persuaded my Lord Advocate would not bring him to another trial, supposing that could be competently done in his circumstances.

If Gardner really delivered the sheep to Reid, there will be a very good foundation for applying for the Royal Mercy; and I doubt not, Sir, of your readiness to make an inquiry -- which may perhaps be the means of saving the life of a fellow subject. I have only to add that no time is to be lost, and am, Sir, Your most obedient, humble servant.

¹As the reply to this letter indicates, Robert Finlayson had died the previous spring (From John Finlayson, 8 Aug.). Little is known of him. He was apparently a rather unsuccessful writer, for he died in debt (S.R.O., Testament of Robert Finlayson, registered at Stirling, 27 Apr. 1775).

²John Maclaurin (1734-96), was a friend of JB's and a fellow advocate. In 1788 he became a judge of the Court of Session as Lord Dreghorn. His connexion with Finlayson is unknown, but he may have recommended him a few days earlier, when he "walked in the Meadow" with JB (Journ. 4 Aug.).

³Gardner had appeared before Lord Pitfour at the Circuit Court in Stirling on 28 Apr. The jury had convicted him of stealing a piece of scarlet cloth from a shop in Falkirk and selling it, or of selling it knowing it was stolen ("reset of theft"), and had further found him of habit and repute a thief. He was banished to America for life, with five years' servitude there (Cal. Merc., 2 May, p.[3]).

⁴"A person is said to be infamous who has been convicted of crimes that infer infamy, or who has been declared infamous by a sentence of the Court of Session or of Justiciary. The testimony of such a person may be rejected" (Bell's Law Dict., i. 367).

From John Finlayson,¹

Monday 8 August 1774

MS. Yale (C 1252). Received 9 Aug. "Mr. Finlayson,
Stirling" (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To Mr. James Boswell, Advocate, Att Edinburgh.

POSTMARK: STIRLING.

Stirling, 8th August 1774

SIR: Yours directed to my sone who dyed about 3 moneths ago, was yesterday brought to me which I opened and read, and this day I spoke with the Jaylor of the prisson here, who is a very Sensible and obliding man² and Desired him to ask Gardner in ane overly and freindly manner if ever he had given or sold any sheep to Reid, and not let Gardner know that he was desired by any to ask the question at him. The Jaylor answered that he had been several times alongst with the Sheriff Subt.³ when he came to the prisson and Examined Gardner, and that Gardner alwise refused his giving or selling of sheep to Reid. However he would try to ask that question at him this day, and which he sayd he did, and that Gardner return him the ansr. he formerly had given. I also asked one of my Clerks⁴ who I sent alongst with the Sheriff Subt. to Falkirk and Muiravenside to write the

precognitions against Reid, and who also wrote these taken here,⁵ if ever he heard any of the persons examined, or Gardner, Say That he Gardner had given or sold Reid any sheep, and he Declares to me he never did: at least if ever there was any such thing emitted in the examinations he does not remember it. I give you the trouble to make my best Compliments to Mr. McLauren whom it shall give me pleasure to serve at all times, as it will to you tho I have not the honour of being acquainted with, I am, Sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

JO. FINLAYSON

¹Robert Finlayson's will and related documents indicate that his father, John Finlayson, a merchant was Sheriff-Clerk of Stirling and Commissary of Dunblane. (Scottish Record Society Publications, xxvi-xxvii; S.R.O., Testament of Robert Finlayson, registered at Stirling, 27 Apr. 1775).

²Unidentified.

³The Sheriff Substitute for Stirling and Clackmannan was Alexander Bryce, Writer, of Stirling (James Wallace, The Sheriffdom of Clackmannan, 1890, p. 63).

⁴Unidentified.

⁵Precognitions are, in Scottish Law, preliminary examinations of witnesses not under oath, taken to enable the prosecution to draw up a charge. They are not admissible as evidence (Bell's Law Dict., ii. 333). It is not clear whether JB already knew that Gardner had been interviewed and that he had denied selling the sheep to Reid, or whether he learned of this now for the first time.

From John Finlayson,

Tuesday 9 August 1774

MS. Yale (C 1253). Received 12 Aug. "Mr. Finlayson,
Stirling" (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esquire, Advocate, Att Edinburgh.

POSTMARK: STIRLING.

Stirling, 9th August 1774

SIR: I think it my duty to acquaint you that Gardner was
this day transmitted to Glasgow in order to his being
transported abroad.¹ It shall give me great pleasure to
serve you at all times in every thing in my power, or any
of Lord Auchinleck's family of which I now understand you
are, and for whom I have and entertain the greatest respect
having had the honour of his acquaintance for a great many
years.² I will beg the favour of you to make my best and
humble Compliments to his Lordship wishing all happiness to
attend him and you, I am with much regaird, Sir, Your most
obedient and most humble servant,

JO. FINLAYSON

¹The date of Gardner's departure for America is unknown, although he spent only one night in Glasgow "in his passage to transportation" (post From Wilson to Nasmith, 6 Sept.). Presumably he was put aboard a convict ship at Greenock, the port for Glasgow. A William Gardner left Greenock for Philadelphia between 30 Sept. and 7 Oct., but he was aboard a passenger ship, so it seems unlikely that this was the same man (V.R. Cameron, Emigrants from Scotland to America 1774-75, 1930, p. 51. With the outbreak of the American war in 1776, transportation of convicts to America ceased. From 1776-79, prisoners sentenced to transportation were confined in disease-ridden hulks on the River Thames. From 1779-84, convicts were exported to Africa; after 1786, the penal settlement in Botany Bay, New South Wales absorbed most transported felons. The practice of transportation ended in 1857. Some historians have observed that the gradual reduction in death and transportation sentences corresponded closely with the increasing difficulty of placing criminals in the colonies (William Holdsworth, A History of England, 1938, xi. 560-574; Studies in Law, p. 425).

²Finlayson may have known Lord Auchinleck because, as one of the six Lords of Justiciary, Auchinleck visited Stirling nearly every year on the Western Circuit of the High Court.

To Lord Erroll,¹

Wednesday 10 August 1774

MS. Yale (L 505). A copy in Lawrie's hand. Sent 10 Aug.
(Reg. Let.).

HEADING: To the Earl of Errol.

Edinburgh, 10 Augt. 1774

MY LORD: This will come to your Lordship's hands along with an application from Clarke an old tenant of your Lordship's in favour of John Reid a client of mine who lies under sentence of death here for Sheepstealing. Reid it seems is Son in Law to Clarke.² I may perhaps have been prejudiced, but I really did not think the evidence against Reid sufficient to convict him, and I am afraid his suspicious character determined the Jury, which I take to be a dangerous principle. The stolen sheep were found in his possession; but he had uniformly averred that he had them from one Gardner who has been since sentenced to transportation. He indeed could not prove this; but this story is by no means improbable. I am to draw a petition for him to the King in hopes of obtaining a transportation pardon the evidence being defective, and the crime of stealing 19 sheep being at any rate too small for a capital punishment. If your Lordship will take the trouble to write

to Lord Suffolk,³ it may have great influence, and as the unhappy mans petition will be much better read if a letter from Lord Errol comes along with it I shall delay transmitting it for some time till I know your Lordship's determination.⁴

I beg leave to offer my most respectfull compliments to Lady Errol,⁵ and with a very grateful sense of your Lordship's civilities to me, I have the honour to be, My Lord, Your most obedient, humble servant.

¹James Boyd, later Hay, fifteenth Earl of Erroll (1726-78). SJ and JB had visited him on 24 Aug. 1773 at Slains Castle. JB had not known him previously; the invitation had been a result of SJ's acquaintance with Erroll's brother, but Erroll was also a friend of Lord Auchinleck's (Life v. 97-107).

²Thus Clarke, who is not further identified, was father of Reid's wife, Janet. JB gave the original of this letter to Mrs. Reid, who sent it to Erroll enclosed with the "application" (not reported) from her father (Journ. 10 Aug.).

³Henry Howard, twelfth Earl of Suffolk and fifth Earl of Berkshire (1739-79), Secretary of State for the Northern Department.

⁴JB sent the petition to Lord Suffolk on 20 Aug., before he received Erroll's reply, as the following three letters indicate.

⁵Isabella Boyd (1742-1808) was Erroll's second wife. She was "pious and sensible", and had been particularly cordial to SJ and JB (Comp. Peer. v. 100; Life v. 98-99, 498).

To Lord Suffolk,

Saturday 20 August 1774

MS. Yale (I. 1206). A copy. Sent 20 Aug. (Reg. Let.).

HEADING: To the Earl of Suffolk, one of his Majesty's
Principal Secretaries of State, London.

Edinburgh, 20 August 1774

MY LORD: I take the liberty to transmit to your Lordship
a Petition to his Majesty from John Reid an unfortunate
man under sentence of death for theft.¹ I was counsel for
him in the High Court of Justiciary before which he was
tried and in my humble apprehension there was not evidence
sufficient to convict him.

This application has been delayed in hopes that
Gardner from whom he has uniformly averred that he received
the sheep with the theft of which he was charged would own
the truth and also in hopes that a Nobleman of great rank
would write to your Lordship in his behalf.²

As there is a strong prejudice against the unfortunate
man in this country -- if his Majesty shall not be graciously
pleased at once to grant him a transportation pardon it is
humbly intreated that a certified Copy of the Trial may be
ordered to be sent up that an opinion upon it may be found
in England.³ I have the honour to be, My Lord, your most
obedient, humble servant.

¹This was Reid's Petition asking for transportation, which JB had drawn up on the morning of 20 Aug. Nasmith had arranged to have two copies made of it, and Reid had signed both copies that evening (Journ. 20 Aug.). The original Petition forms part of JB's papers concerning the Reid trial (Lg. 23:1).

²Lord Erroll.

³As there was no appeal from the High Court of Justiciary, this seems an irregular request. JB appears to be suggesting that if the King did not pardon Reid, he might instead review the conduct of the trial and possibly find it improper. But the King had no such prerogative.

To Lord Pembroke,¹

Saturday 20 August 1774

MS. Yale (L 1029). A copy. Sent 20 Aug. (Reg. Let.).

HEADING: To the Earl of Pembroke, London.

Edinburgh, 20 August 1774

MY LORD: Presuming on your Lordship's goodness I trouble you with the enclosed Petition to his Majesty from John Reid an unfortunate man under sentence of death. I have also transmitted a copy to My Lord Suffolk Secretary of State for the Northern Department.

John Reid was my first Client in Criminal Business when he was tried in 1766. I have theerfore a particular concern in his fate and wish much that he should not be hanged.

May I beg that your Lordship may make me certain that the Petition reaches His Majesty. There is a prejudice against the man in this country. It would therefore be happy if a transportation pardon could be obtained for him at once; his crime at any rate not being atrocious.² I have the honour to be, with very great regard, My Lord, your most obliged and obedient, humble servant.

¹Henry Herbert, tenth Earl of Pembroke (1734-94), a Lord of the Bedchamber and Lt.-Gen. in the Army. JB had not known him well until Pembroke's recent visit to Edinburgh, when they had dined together several times, once at JB's house (Journ. 6-8, 11, 20 Aug.).

²An "attrocious crime", a phrase JB used frequently in this connexion, had no precise legal significance. "Crimes are divided in such as are atrocious, and such as are not. Atrocious crimes are those wherein the guilt is very great" (George Mackenzie, A Discourse upon the Laws and Customes of Scotland in Matters Criminal, 1677, p. 23). Sir William Blackstone, writing of English law, recommended that torture precede the public execution of those convicted of "very atrocious crimes" such as the murder of a child (Commentaries on the Laws of England, 1765-69, iv. 376-77).

From Lord Erroll,

Saturday 27 August 1774

MS. Yale (C 1196).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esquire, Advocate, Edinburgh.

POSTMARK: [illegible].

FRANK: Erroll.

Slains Castle,¹ August 27th 1774

SIR: I have now lying before me your's of the 10th. I should be very willing to Show any favor in my power to a Client of your's, but in the present Case, I am certain no Application from me would be of any Avail. I never had A good Opinion of Mr. Clark, Although he was my tenant, And from your own account of Reid, I cannot find Any Reason for an Indifferent Person to Apply in his favor, at the Same [time] I cannot help Applauding your Doing so, As you are of Opinion the Jury Condemned him on Scrimp Evidence, though I think A man being Habit and Repute of a Bad Character, must Always Weigh with any Jury. Lady Erroll Joins me in best Respects to you, and I am With very much Esteem, Sir, your most Obedient Servant,

ERROLL

¹North of Aberdeen. The castle was built in the seventeenth century; it is now in ruins (Life v. 498).

From Lord Pembroke,

Monday 29 August 1774

MS. Yale (C 2192). Received 2 Sept. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esqr. Edinburgh.

POSTMARK: 20 AV. FREE.

FRANK: P:Embroke.¹

[Wilton],² 29 Aug. 74

SIR: I have received your comands, and shall execute them as well, as I can, with the greatest pleasure -- as I can not be in town to give the Petition myself, and as I understand you have aplied to Lord Suffolk, I have wrote to the other secretary. Lord Rochford,³ and have urged the affair strongly to him. I beg to make any compliments acceptable to Mrs. Boswell, and am, Sir, with the greatest truth, and regard, your most obedient, humble servant,

PEMBROKE

¹An idiosyncratic frank. An "F" (for "free"?) appears to be entwined with the "P".

²Pembroke was presumably at his seat, Wilton House, in Wiltshire, near Salisbury. JB and Paoli visited him there the following spring (Journ. 19-22 Apr. 1775).

³William Henry Zuylestein, fourth Earl of Rochford (1717-81), Secretary of State for the Southern department.

From Michael Nasmith,

Friday 2 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2071).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esquire, Advocate.

Edinburgh , Almost 11 -- 2d Septr.

DEAR SIR, I dont know whether you are returned -- If -- Do give me a hint of your hopes¹ -- I am engaged or would have waited on you.

John's wife was with me this afternoon. I gave her a letter to the Messenger who apprehended² with three or four queries, but beg'd him to come to town immediately to give you every information.

She tells me that after John heard the report against him he had frequent conferences with Gardner who lived (but was under hiding for the house breaking) within 20 yards of John anent the sheep, That the very moment John was taken he told the Messenger that he had rec'd the Sheep from Gardner and ask'd him whether he could not also apprehend him. The Messenger, gaving his hip a clap, said "I can, I have a warrand in my pocket against him" and Gardner within ten minutes after John was also taken into custody and they were in company as prisoners for sometime. Gardner

was sent to Stirling. These are facts you were totally ignorant of. I have beg'd the Messenger's information what past betwixt John and Gardner while in company. From this something good or bad may be learn'd. The Messenger if he has any byess it will be in John's favour -- old acquaintances -- I expect the Messenger here on Sunday or a Letter on Monday.⁴ What hopes now have you. Ever yours most Sincerly,

M. NASMITH

¹JB and Charles Hay had driven to Penicuik so that JB might discuss Reid's plight with the Lord Advocate, who was visiting Sir James Clerk there. The Lord Advocate, as a representative of the Crown, had the power to restrict the punishment arbitrarily in any criminal case. This right was generally exercised before sentencing, however. Although the Lord Advocate said that he could not interfere in the Reid case, JB continued to entertain some hopes of his assistance. JB and Hay arrived back in Edinburgh about nine o'clock; JB then went to Dr. Alexander Monro's house, where he joined a convivial supper party and played cards (Journ. 2 Sept.; Studies in Law, p. 363).

²Not reported.

³John Brown, messenger-at-arms of Linlithgow, accompanied by a company of dragoons, had arrested Reid. Messengers, formerly called "officers-at-arms", were empowered by the Courts of Session and Justiciary to serve summonses and apprehend malefactors (The Mournful Case; The Last Speech; John Erskine, The Principles of the Law of Scotland, 6th ed., 1783, p. 44).

⁴This inquiry came to nothing. Brown's reply (not reported), written to Reid, which JB saw on 7 Sept., indicated that Reid had not "at the very moment" of his arrest identified Gardner as the true thief, but had mentioned rather casually on the way to the prison that Gardner should also be arrested. The discrepancy with Janet Reid's story convinced JB that Reid was lying; he went at once to the Tolbooth and confronted Reid with Brown's letter. But Reid maintained that he had been attempting to protect Gardner, who had already confessed the crime to him privately. This explanation seemed plausible to JB, and led to his composing that evening The Mournful Case of Poor Misfortunate and Unhappy John Reid (Journ. 7 Sept.).

To the Duke of Queensberry,¹

Saturday 3 September 1774

MS. Yale (L 1092). A copy or draft, with abbreviations which JB later went over and expanded. Sent 3 Sept.

(Reg. Let.).

HEADING: To the Duke of Queensberry, etc.

Edinburgh, 3 Sept. 1774

MY LORD: If your Grace is troubled with more frequent applications in behalf of the distressed than other Great men you must impute it to its proper cause your distinguished humanity.²

I am now to adress your Grace in favour of John Reid under sentence of death here for sheepstealing. Your Grace may remember mention being made of him in a very extraordinary manner by Lord Justice Clerk in his speech on the Douglas Cause where he was pleased to represent very inconclusive evidence adduced against Reid as very strong in order to enforce his argument from the circumstantial evidence against Douglas. But, Parvis componere magna³ poor Reid was acquitted by a conscientious jury and the honour of Douglas was vindicated by the Peers of Great Britain.

I am not to trespass on your Grace's time with a detail of my Client's last trial. It is sufficient to say that in

my opinion he was convicted from prejudice against his character and that I am verily persuaded he is not guilty of the crime for which he may be doomed to die. I would only beg leave to mention to your Grace that in consequence of a Petition to His Majesty from the unfortunate man which I drew, a respite for fourteen days came to him yesterday. I understand that Lord Justice Clerk is desired to report his opinion and your Grace may see⁴ there is little reason to expect it will be favourable. The poor wretch is at present in the most miserable state of suspense, and if after this respite he shall be ordered for execution his sufferings will be horrible. He was my first Client in Criminal Causes and I am peculiarly interested in his fate. There never has been an instance in Scotland so far as I can learn where a man convicted of simple theft was executed after obtaining a respite. Indeed the severity of such a shock makes me shudder even in imagination. It is too severe a punishment for an ordinary crime. I can hardly allow myself to think that in this case so dismal a scene will be authorised.

But as I cannot help fearing the worst from Lord Justice Clerk's report I earnestly implore Your Grace to interpose. All I beg for my Client is to have his sentence changed to trans[por]tation; and surely even supposing him to be guilty his crime is not so atrocious as that he

should be tortured by giving him hopes of life and then dragging him to a gibbet. I should be sorry that so cruel a procedure should happen in Scotland while the Duke of Queensberry is Lord Justice General.

The respite came from the office of Lord Rochford who I dare say will not be inclined to any extraordinary rigour without sufficient cause. May I add that your Grace's interposition in this melancholy business will be conferring a lasting obligation upon me, and at any rate I intreat to have a few lines from Your Grace for the quiet of my own mind. I have the honour to be your Graces devoted humble servant.

I am informed that there have been two instances of pardons after resp crulty to P. Ld J C's report.⁵

¹Charles Douglas, third Duke of Queensberry and second Duke of Dover, (1698-1778), had been Lord Justice General since 1763 and was also Keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland. JB had called on him several times in London during the winter of 1762-63 in vain hopes of securing a commission in the Guards. They had met most recently in London in March 1772 (Journ. 2, 6, 13 Dec. 1762; 20 Jan. 1763; 20, 29 Mar. 1772).

²The Duke was known for his benevolence and for his patronage of artists and writers, particularly John Gay (1685-1732). JB described the Duke after first meeting him as "a man of the greatest humanity" (Journ. 2 Dec. 1762; Life ii. 368 n. 1).

³"To compare great things with small". Adapted from Virgil, Georgics iv. 176.

⁴MS. "that" deleted after "see"

⁵In this abbreviated postscript or note, JB presumably meant that to accede to the report from the Lord Justice Clerk urging execution would be a particular cruelty to the prisoner, since two previous instances of pardons following respites had led the prisoner to expect clemency.

To Lord Cornwallis,¹

Monday 5 September 1774

MS. Yale (L 380). A draft. Sent 5 Sept. (Reg. Let.).

HEADING: To Earl Cornwallis.

Edinburgh, 5 Septr. 1774

MY LORD: Every relation of my Cousin and excellent friend Colonel Webster must be most gratefully sensible of your Lordship's goodness.² I reckon myself happy that it³ affords me an opening to address your Lordship in behalf of John Reid an unfortunate man now under sentence of death in this City for the alledged theft of⁴ a few sheep. The poor wretch was my first Client in Capital Trials which make an important branch of the practice of a Lawyer in this Country. He was acquitted by Verdict of⁵ a respectable Jury, in 1766. But I am sorry to say that from circumstances with which it is unnecessary to trouble your Lordship a prejudice against him not easy to be explained has⁶ prevailed in minds which it were to be wished were above it.

Upon this occasion he was capitally arraigned for an alledged theft of a few sheep which he had honestly purchased from a neighbour without suspicion but which it seems had been stolen.⁷ From the first moment he declared

from whom he got them⁸ but merly because⁹ some of them were found in his possession he was condemned for this notable reason that a man who¹⁰ once tried though acquitted must a second time be guilty as he could not prove how he came by the sheep when the fact was that the person from whom he bought them was taken up after Reid was thrown in prison and was tried and convicted as a thief and sentenced to transportation.

Convinced¹¹ in my own mind of his innocence I offered a Petition to his Majesty in his name and have had the good fortune to obtain a Respite for a fortnight. But as the opinion of the Judges has been desired I am fearful for the consequences,¹² by reason of the prejudice which they entertain against his character. This My Lord I mention to your Lordship in private though¹³ my Father is one of their number. I need not after this My Lord say any thing of the sincerity with which I solicit for my Client's life.

Words¹⁴ cannot paint the distress into which he is now thrown and indeed if he is still to be executed the Respite will¹⁵ have been the severest cruelty. I am under the greatest obligation to Lord Pembroke for making application to Lord Rochford in behalf of the poor man.¹⁶

May I implore your Lordship's interest with his Majesty to have at least his sentence changed to transportation. A more than ordinary exertion will be necessary to counteract any unfavourable Report which may come from our Judges. But surely at any rate the crime laid to his charge is of that nature that a mitigation of the punishment after respite cannot be improper.

Your Lordship's humane interposition in this matter will be¹⁷ remembered With the warmest gratitude by, My Lord, your Lordships most obedient and most humble servant.

¹Charles Cornwallis (1738-1805), second Earl and first Marquess Cornwallis (1792), formerly aide-de-camp to the King, a Lord of the Bedchamber (1765), and Chief Justice in Eyre south of the Trent (1766). Although today chiefly remembered for his surrender at Yorktown in 1781, he subsequently had a distinguished career as Governor-general of India and as a Viceroy of Ireland.

²Col. James Webster (1740-81) was the son of JB's maternal aunt and Dr. Alexander Webster (1707-84). He served under Cornwallis in the Army, and died of wounds incurred at the Battle of Guilford Court House, Virginia. On 4 Sept., he and JB spent the evening together, and he encouraged JB to petition Cornwallis who, he said, knew Scotland as a "narrow" country and "despises it, hates it". JB wrote this letter on the evening of 5 Sept. with Webster's help: "The Colonel threw in flashes" (Journ. 4, 5 Sept. For letters from Cornwallis describing Webster's gallant death, see Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis, ed. Charles Ross, 1859, i. 92, 509).

³MS. "he" written as an alternative above "it"

⁴MS. "fifteen nin" deleted after "of"

⁵MS. "his country" deleted after "of"

⁶MS. "been from time to tim" deleted after "has"

⁷MS. "He allways declared how" deleted after "stolen."

⁸Two days later, JB learned that this was not precisely what happened. See ante From Nasmith, 2 Sept. n. 4.

⁹MS. "a part" deleted after "because"

- ¹⁰MS. "has" deleted after "who"
- ¹¹MS. "Upon a Petition" deleted before "Convinced"
- ¹²MS. "on acc" deleted after "consequences"
- ¹³MS. "I pl" deleted after "though"
- ¹⁴MS. "NL." written above "Words" indicates a new paragraph.
- ¹⁵MS. originally "the Respite will be" but "have" has been inserted above the line after "will" and "be" has been altered to "been"
- ¹⁶See ante From Pembroke, 29 Aug.
- ¹⁷MS. "conferring a very great obligation on me. I have the honour to be" deleted after "will be"

From James Webster to Lord Cornwallis,

Monday 5 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 3081). A draft.

HEADING: Copy/ Letter Colonel Webster to Earl
Cornwallis.

Edinburgh, 5 September 1774

MY LORD: At the earnest solicitation of my friend
Mr. Boswell I find myself obliged to request your
Lordship's good offices in behalf of John Reid who
was tried here lately on suspicion of sheepstealing
found guilty and condemned to die.

Mr. Boswell (counsel for the Prisoner) petitioned
the throne and has had the good fortune to obtain a
respite for a fortnight. But the Case has been sub-
mitted to the Judges who it is feared are determined
to show no mercy.² I hope in this case not to see
execution after respite. Admitting the Prisoner
guilty, if the sentence is put in execution the punish-
ment will exceed the offence.³ The prejudice My Lord
of the Judges in this narrow country upon some
occasions is I am afraid too well known in England for
our honour.⁴ Lord Pembroke has been pleased to

interest himself warmly on the side of mercy. The Duke of Queensberry has been wrote to. Permit me to say My Lord that I have not volunteered giving you this trouble. Mr. Boswell asks pardon for the freedom he has used and says nothing but his being deeply impressed with a sense⁵ of the poor wretch's innocence could have made him think of taking the liberty he had done. I have the honour to be etc.

J. WEBSTER

¹This letter was composed by Webster in the afternoon of 4 Sept., and continued or rewritten the following day. JB made this copy during the evening of 5 Sept. (Journ. 4, 5 Sept.).

²MS. "The Prejudice My Lord of the Judges in this narrow country is I am afraid too well known in England for our Country" deleted after "mercy"

³Webster means that a death sentence after a respite constitutes an even greater punishment than death, and thus exceeds the punishment allotted to the crime by law. This of course, was JB's idea, which he had already expressed in his own letter to Cornwallis and in To Queensberry, 3 Sept. A few years earlier, William Eden had discussed some cases in which torture or verbal abuse preceded execution of a prisoner: "We may pronounce it then contrary both to sentiment and morality, to aggravate capital executions by any circumstances of terror or pain beyond the suffering inseparable from a violent death" (Principles of Penal Law, 1771, p. 22).

⁴"I suggested to him [Webster] to mention the prejudice of the judges in this narrow country on some occasions, which he did excellently well" (Journ. 5 Sept.).

⁵MS. "convinced" deleted after "being"; "deeply impressed with a sense" written above.

To Lord Pembroke,

Monday 5 September 1774

MS. Yale (L 1030). A draft. Sent 5 Sept. (Reg. Let.).

HEADING: To the Earl of Pembroke:

Edinburgh, 5 Septr. 1774¹

MY LORD: Your Lordship's most obliging letter² has confirmed me in the opinion which I formed of your humanity. A Respite for fourteen days has come for John Reid. But I understand that some of the Judges are desired to make a Report concerning him, and as I already hinted to your Lordship that there are prejudices against him in this narrow country which it would take some time to explain, I dread that the Report may be unfavourable. If that shall be the case, and he shall be yet ordered for execution his Situation will be deplorable, and the application made in his behalf, will only serve to augment his misery. I must therefore again intrude upon your Lordship, and beg in the most earnest manner, that you may make a point of having his sentence changed to transportation. As I have mentioned my obligations to your Lordship for interposing in this affair, I should be sorry to have it thought³ in this country that Lord Pembroke strongly urged a⁴ Petition

for mercy in the case of a simple theft Supposing the char[g]e true and failed in obtaining it. The cruelty of an execution after respite is equal to many deaths and therefore there is rarely an instance of it. This poor wretch⁵ even if guilty⁶ does not merit such severity. I am so much distressed with⁷ this wretched case that your Lordship will relieve⁸ me as well as my Client by getting the sentence retracted and believe me My Lord I shall be most sincerely grateful for the obligation.⁹ Colonel Webster has written to Lord Cornwallis in favour of the unhappy man, who¹⁰ I do really believe innocent of the theft for which he is condemned and I would fain hope that I shall be made easy, by having his life saved.¹¹ It would be improper for me to suggest¹² to your Lordship in what manner to secure a pardon. But I flatter myself that¹³ in the circumstances in which the affair now is, your Lordship will take effectual measures to obtain it. I shall be in great anxiety till I receive a few lines from your Lordship.¹⁴ My Wife joins me in most respectful compliments and I have the honour to be with unfeigned warmth, your Lordship's much obliged, humble servant.

¹Written in the evening. JB dispatched the final copy by express, with the two letters to Cornwallis, in order to catch up with the Monday night London mail (Journ. 5 Sept.).

²Ante From Lord Pembroke, 29 Aug.

³MS. originally "that it should be thought"; "to have" written above "that" deleted, "should be" deleted after "it"

⁴MS. "claim" or "clem" deleted after "a"

⁵MS. "supposing him" deleted after "wretch"

⁶MS. "of theft" deleted after "guilty"

⁷MS. "distressed with" written above "interested in" deleted.

⁸MS. Originally "Lordships relieving" changed to "Lordship will relieve"

⁹MS. "shall be most gratefully remembered" deleted; "I shall be most sincerely grateful for" inserted later.

¹⁰MS. Originally "whom"; "m" deleted.

¹¹MS. "After steady application" deleted after "saved."

¹²MS. "suggest" written above "point out" deleted.

¹³MS. "I flatter myself that" written above "surely" deleted.

¹⁴MS. "in ans" deleted after "Lordship."

To Andrew Crosbie,¹

Tuesday 6 September 1774

MS. Yale (L 398). A copy. Sent 6 Sept. (Reg. Let.).

Edinburgh, 6 Septr. 1774

MY DEAR CROSBIE: Poor John Reid has yet a chance of escape from the talons of the Justice Clerk. My Petition for him has obtained a respite for fourteen days after tomorrow. English Interest is the best in a case of this kind. I have applied to My Lord Pembroke, and he writes to me, "I have written to Lord Rochford, and urged the affair strongly".² I would fain hope then that a transportation Pardon will come.

But, as I understand that the opinion of the Justice Clerk has been desired, and as you and I know well what a bloody opinion it will be, it is of importance to counteract it. I declare to you as a brother, as an Antistes Justiciae,³ as a Gentleman, that I think there was not evidence to convict John Reid upon his last Trial. I will go farther, I think he was not guilty. He fell a sacrifice to the prejudice of a narrow country where a Jury concluded that a man who had been formerly tried, though acquitted, was a man of such a character as that a very slight proof should convict him.

I am to transmit to Lord Rochford a memorial upon the evidence in the last Trial.⁴ The Justice Clerk will no doubt insist upon the Trial in 1766. I beg My Dear Sir that you may send me your signed opinion of the verdict on that occasion.⁵ I know what it is, and I am sure it will have weight above.

This is a hard push between the Justiciary Bench and the Bar. I hope you will exert yourself. Pray let me have your answer without delay. I am with a most steady regard, My Dear Crosbie, affectionately yours.

¹Andrew Crosbie (1736-85) was a life-long friend of JB's and a gifted advocate, although he probably damaged his career by showing an early predilection for the poor and the powerless. Once contemporary remarked that "in some cases he ... procured the acquittal of certain culprits of whose guilt he was himself thoroughly convinced!" (John Ramsay of Ochertyre, Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century, 1888, i. 452). John Reid may have been one of these culprits; after helping to save him in the trial of 1766, Crosbie told Reid that he would not appear for him again (Journ. 31 July).

²Ante From Pembroke, 29 Aug.

³That is, as a brother advocate, and as a "master of the Law".

⁴Post To Rochford, 10 Sept.

⁵There is no evidence that Crosbie did so.

From Michael Nasmith,

Tuesday 6 September 1774 (1)

MS. Yale (C 2072).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esquire, Advocate.

Edn. 6th Sepr. 1774

DEAR SIR: Do you think it would be proper to transmit to Mr. Wilson writer in Glasgow¹ that part of John's last speech respecting Gardner.² I think it would be at any rate a matter of satisfaction to us to have Gardner, before he goes, examined upon every particular. If you think it proper you may send me the speech to have the excerpt made or you may cause my Clerk³ do it as perhaps you may not like to let the speech, as it stands, go out of your own possession -- I am Most Sincerly, Dear Sir, Yours,

M. NASMITH

¹John Wilson Jr. (c. 1753-1806) was a writer and, like Nasmith, a native of Glasgow. His father (d. 1790), also a writer, was a Town-clerk of Glasgow; his son succeeded him in that office, 1790-1800, and performed his duties "with great ability and integrity" (Scots Mag. Feb. 1790, p. 103; Feb. 1806, p. 238; Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow, ed. Robert Renwich, 1813, viii. 346-48; ix. 203).

²It is unclear to which "Last Speech" Nasmith refers. JB and Nasmith wrote The Mournful Case on the following evening, 7 Sept. Reid's statement which Richard Lock wrote down and published as a broadside sometime after 21 Sept., The Last Speech, had been first discussed on 30 Aug., but had not yet been written, for on 7 Sept. JB reported that he admonished Reid: "You have paper, pen, and ink there. Let me have a real account of everything". And on 14 Sept., JB noted that Reid "had hardly written anything" (Journ.). Both The Mournful Case and The Last Speech implicate Gardner in the crime with considerable detail.

³Unidentified. He apparently delivered this letter.

From Michael Nasmith,

Tuesday 6 September 1774 (2)

MS. Yale (C 2074).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esquire, Advocate.

Edr. 6 Septr. 1774

DEAR SIR: Wilson is a fellow of spirit and I wish him to know how matters stand. And sincerely I think I have told him nothing but reall truth. But you'll let me know whether any thing is improper.¹ There are such a world of questions to be ask'd at Gardner.² If there be any truth in John's speech I am sure we'll have some of it from Gardner If he is not possest of superlative cunning. I am, Dear Sir, Your,

M. NASMITH

The more I think of this matter the less I am disposed to think that the verdict is just be Reid innocent or guilty.

¹Nasmith enclosed with this letter a copy of his letter to Wilson (post From Nasmith to Wilson 6 Sept.).

²MS. slightly damaged here; no words appear to have been lost.

From Michael Nasmith to John Wilson

Tuesday 6 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2073). A copy, enclosed in ante From Nasmith, 6 Sept. (2).

ENDORSEMENT by Nasmith on back of last page: "Copy Letter to Mr. John Wilson Junr. writer in Glasgow anent John Reid, 6th Sepr. 1774.

Edin. 6 Septem. 1774

DEAR JOHNNY: You must know something more about poor John Reids situation.¹

In 1766 when tried here for sheepstealing when the Verdict of the Jury was read finding him Innocent, some of the Judges took the liberty to give a different opinion and the Lord Jus. Clerk in his speech in the Douglass cause took some striking libertys with poor Johns Character. Upon these grounds notwithstanding the Verdict, all mankind were authorised by the Court to hold him guilty.

In last Indictment habite and reput was libelled.² Mr. Boswel opposed this with great spirit. In the proof the Advocate³ by a minute admitted what had been said by the Judges at last trial and the speeches in the

Douglass cause were produced. The proof amounted to this that 18⁴ were stolen and that 5 of these were found in Johns possession. John could not prove he purchased them, nor could he prove that he had not himself brought them home. Nor could he prove he was at home the night before they arrived. Of about 25 witnesses who were summoned for him, not one of them could say a word,⁵ and one of the Crown witnesses swore that he imagined (being Reids next neighbour) that the sheep was brought home by John early before day light in the morning⁶ altho John Avers and his wife too that he was in his bed all that night and that Russel a lad employed by Gardner brought them.⁷ The habite and repete bore every thing before it. Five of the nineteen were found in his possession. Ergo the libel was found proved. Such a conclusion perchance may be right, but I defy mortal creature to say it is. Boswel was great. There never was a charge made with greater dignity and Judgement. Had Corsica been at stake he could not have stood forth with greater firmness and at the same time with all that respect which was necessary, to show that the former trial could not influence in the present question. He implored the Jury to disintangle themselves from all prejudices -- the Lord

Jus. Clerk complained loudly to the Jury he and the Court had been arraign'd.⁸ The verdict was returned finding the indictment proved.

A respite I told you last night has been obtained for fourteen days, but we now understand his Majesty wishes to have the Justiciary courts report whether the poor man ought to die or live. You see where we are. We fear the Lord Justice Clerk. The Battle is between Boswel and the Court. He is opposing all his Interest. He is all Humanity. Reid is his oldest Client in the Justiciary court. He wishes not to see him die where the proof is not conclusive, nor any man where the proof is no more than that 5 stolen sheep are found in his possession. A simple act of theft, and that only supported by presumption. Is it not hard?

Before the respite came John's last speech was fram'd.⁹ It has been put into Mr. Boswell's¹⁰ possession. Inclosed is a copy of that part of it respecting Gardner.¹¹ It may be true. If it is, what a direful thing Country of Knowledge, and all the rest of it, for the poor man to be hung up?

If Gardner be gone to Greenock and not off,¹² you'll follow him and make every enquiry. Your Letter perhaps

may be a sufficient answer to the Lord Jus. Clerks report to his Majesty. Enquire as to the Poinding. If there was any such person as Russel. As to the Letter. Feign that we have the Letter.¹³ You need no instructions.¹⁴ When Boswel or I can serve you command. I am etc.

M. NASMITH

¹Nasmith had written to Wilson the previous day; his letter is not reported (post Wilson to Nasmith, 6 Sept.).

²The indictment read: "You are a person of bad fame, habit and repute a sheep-stealer" (Lg. 22.5).

³That is, the Lord Advocate, James Montgomery.

⁴The "8" of "18" in the MS. appears to have been superimposed on another number, possibly "1". The indictment actually read "nineteen sheep, or some other number of sheep ..." (Lg. 22.5).

⁵Andrew Auld was the only one of these witnesses who actually testified, and his evidence was inconclusive (Lg. 22.5)

⁶William Black of Hillend was the Crown witness who gave this testimony; upon cross examination he admitted that he had not actually seen Reid bring the sheep home. It was also Black who stated that Gardner and Reid had had a disagreement some months before and had not had dealings since (Lg. 22.5).

⁷"Early in the morning before I had got out of bed, a young man named Thomas Russel chapped at my door and told me that Gardner had sent me nineteen sheep and at same time delivered me a line from him, in which he informed me that he could not come on the Tuesday he had promised, as he had been employed in poinding a man that was owing him some money ... Thomas Russel, who brought the sheep to me, has left the country" (The Last Speech). There is supporting evidence for part of this story: a Thomas Russel, age 17, "servant", was listed among the passengers aboard the Restoration, which sailed from Bristol to Maryland during the first week of August (Passengers To America, ed. Michael Tepper, 1978, p. 315).

⁸There is no record of this remark in JB's material concerning the trial, but the notes break off before the end of JB's charge to the jury (Lg. 22.5).

⁹This suggests that The Last Speech was written between 30 Aug., when JB reported Reid unwilling to dictate such a document, and 2 Sept., when the respite arrived (Journ. 30 Aug.; see ante From Nasmith, 6 Sept. (1), n. 2).

¹⁰MS. "hands" deleted after "Boswell's"

¹¹The enclosure is not reported; for its contents see ante From Nasmith, 6 Sept. (1), n. 2.

¹²Nasmith knew that Gardner had gone to Glasgow on 9 Aug. on the way to transportation (ante From Finlayson, 9 Aug. and n. 1).

¹³The "line" that Reid claimed Gardner sent him with the sheep.

¹⁴MS. "when I" deleted after "instructions"

From John Wilson to Michael Nasmith

Tuesday 6 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 3125). Endorsed: "Glasgow 6 Sepr 1774

Mr. John Wilson Junr. writer Glasgow anent Wm.

Gardner".

ADDRESS: To Mr. Michael Nasmith, Writer to the
Signet, Edinburgh.

POSTMARK: GLASGOW.

Glasgow, 6 September 1774

DEAR SIR: This day I received yours of yesterday¹
about the case of John Reid who hath received his
Majesty's Respite of his Capital punishment for
fourteen days. I see Mr. Boswell and you are still
employed in the cause of humanity, nay, could our
Politicians see it, of good policy also, -- rescuing
the lives of the lieges from destruction appointed
too frequently by the barbarous laws of a Civilized
nation. Can any sober thinking person believe it
that in a Country which boasts so much of it's
knowledge and refinement there should exist a law
assigning death as the punishment of the crime of
stealing eighteen sheep. Ninty and nine sheep which

once were less valued than one lost and recovered²
are less valuable than the life of any of his
Majestys subjects. What a pity it is that the
sentiments of that excellent Philosopher and
politician the Marquis Beccarria have not hitherto
been capable of opening the eyes of our Legislators
who can suffer the laws on so slight occasions to
murder the citizens with a formal pageantry³ -- I
am truly sorry that I can add no information from
Gardner, from whom you say Reid maintains he bought
the Sheep, he having above three weeks ago stayed a
night only here in his passage to transportation.
I am, Dear Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOHN WILSON JUNR.

¹Not reported.

²Luke 15: 4-6.

³Cesare Bonesana, Marquess of Beccaria (1738-94), originator of modern criminology, published in 1764 Dei delitti e delle pene, translated into English in 1767 as Essay on Crimes and Punishments. In the essay, Beccaria deplored punishments which were vindictive or cruel: "It is sufficient that the evil which a punishment occasions should exceed the good expected from the crime" (4th ed., 1785, pp. 99-100).

From John Wilson to Michael Nasmith,

Wednesday 7 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 3126). Endorsed: Glasgow 7 Septr. 1774. Mr. John Wilson in Answer to M. N.'s of the 6th anent John Reid. Nasmith sent this letter on to JB (post From Nasmith, 8 Sept.).

ADDRESS: To Mr. Michael Nasmith, Writer to the Signet, Edinburgh.

POSTMARK: GLASGOW

Glasgow, 7 Septemr. 1774

DEAR SIR: I received your of yesterday with regard to poor Reid. But Gardner is beyond our reach. I sympathize with Mr. Boswell and you in this poor victim's case. -- Rot that habite and repote, for it moved our Sheriff to condemn capitally one Richmond my first born Client in the criminal way, because it was joined with his having Stolen in Company with another poor Webster a Cow and a Stirk for the winter feeding of their numerous families;¹ tho' the man was so fortunate as by intercession of the Jury to obtain a pardon on transportation, and I hear he is now living and

compearing in the South as "ane Discreet man" as ever appeared in any infetment.² Those same twins habite and repute, as they now stand in our law are villainous brats. They are of too vague and dangerous a nature to be the foundation of a criminal charge. To try a man on the opinion of others and not on his proper facts is adverse to political liberty, and it is odd that it should be allowed to take place in the law of any country that has for its object political liberty. I felt its pernicious effect in Richmonds case. One witness swore he had detected him in an act of theft, and from that he was repute a thief, and thus was conjured up habite and repute; and the prosecutor and Judge habited and reputed, and reputed and habited it to the enorm lesson of my poor Client. I own to you the reasoning you mention of inferring eighteen from five sheep is worthy of the most "visible darkness"³ that ever benighted the Schoolmen. Lord Justice Clerk you tell me ever mindful of the "highplace"⁴ he fills" is bent on Reids destruction. You have read of "Spiritual wickedness in high places."⁵ Did you ever see so much silly severity in high places. Last time he was here he spoke --

he talked -- he harangued in high places, and furnished one an excellent dish for my risible appetite.⁶ It is odd I think that his Majesty before he exerts his prerogative wants the opinion of his Criminal Officers. A plain thinking man should imagine that the natural use of this prerogative is to soften the severity necessarily arising sometimes from an application of general rules, or arising from the ignorance or wickedness of the Judge -- and that no further was necessary for its exertion than a simple state of the case. If any man can hesitate a moment in declaring that the theft of five sheep is not worthy of death his faculties and heart must be strangely perverted -- fearfully and wonderfully made⁷ indeed. I am sorry that I have not been able to give you facts in place of these vagaries on subjects too sublime for the quill of an obscure Country writer such as, Dear Sir, Your most obedient Servant,

JOHN WILSON JUNR.

¹The case of Richmond and Webster is unidentified. The Sheriff was probably William Cross or Crosse of Parkhouse (1711-75), Sheriff-Depute of Lanarkshire, 1748-75. Glasgow, unlike most towns of its size, did not maintain a separate Sheriff Court, but fell under the jurisdiction of the county Sheriff. The term "Sheriff" actually meant "Sheriff-Depute"; the titular and often hereditary office of Sheriff and the old jurisdictions had been abolished in 1748. A Sheriff-Depute, by law an advocate of at least three years' standing, was thereafter appointed by the King for each county. He had wide judicial and administrative powers; his criminal jurisdiction nearly coincided with that of the Court of Justiciary with the exception of treason and some murder cases (C. D. Donald, "The Sheriff Court of Lanarkshire at Glasgow," Transactions of the Glasgow Archaeological Society, 1883, xiv. 273-311; John Erskine, An Institute of the Law of Scotland, 1773, pp. 52-59).

²It was quite common for a person under sentence of transportation to manage to remain in Britain (Leon Radzinowicz, A History of English Criminal Law 1948, i. 126).

³"darkness visible," Paradise Lost, i. 63.

⁴MS. "highplaced"

⁵Ephesians 6: 12

⁶The Lord Justice Clerk had presided at the Circuit Court at Glasgow the previous October (Cal. Merc. 16 Oct. 1773, p. [2]).

⁷Psalm 139: 14

From Michael Nasmith,

Thursday 8 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2075).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esquire, Advocate.

Edn. 8th Sepr. 1774

DEAR SIR: Today I have the inclosed from Mr. Wilson in answer to mine of the 6th.¹ He has much thunder in his composition. He is a very young fellow. I am not sure if he is more than 21. His Letter contains much flogiston,² some excellent Strokes.

Last night the composition was recopied³ and a note added "print this for me immediatly to be sent about". An address was put upon the back and the letter was given to a porter.⁴ About 10 another porter was dispatch'd to have the matter distributed. Nothing has appeared.⁵ Perhaps "print this for me" has carried the thing into a wrong channell, to the center of the City, we'll afterwards learn.⁶ I am, Dear Sir, Yours,

M. NASMITH

¹Ante Wilson to Nasmith, 7 Sept.; Nasmith to Wilson, 6 Sept.

²Phlogiston, the principle of fire, was erroneously believed to exist in all flammable material, and this theory of combustion had been a cornerstone of chemical experiments for a century. But on 1 Aug., a few weeks before this letter was written, Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) isolated what he called "dephlogisticated air" and observed that a candle burned brightly in it. Antoine Lavoisier (1743-94) repeated the experiment and named the new gas oxygen. Although Priestley never abandoned the phlogiston theory, his experiment led Lavoisier to disprove the existence of phlogiston and identify the true nature of combustion.

³The composition was "The Mournful Case of Poor Misfortunate and Unhappy John Reid", which JB had written the previous evening with some suggestions from Nasmith (Journ. 7 Sept.).

⁴The draft copy (Lg. 24.1) does not show the added note, but has the address, deleted: "Henry Galbraith, Printer, Bull's Court".

⁵Galbraith did not print the broadside, for reasons unknown. JB had it printed by John Robertson on 10 Sept. (Journ. 14 Sept.).

⁶This reference is unclear. Presumably Nasmith means that the printer may have thought Reid wanted the broadside himself, and thus may have sent it to the Tolbooth in the "center of the City".

From "Tyburn",¹

Friday 9 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 3014).

ADDRESS: To Jas. Boswell Esqr., Advocate, Edinbr.

POSTMARK: [Edinburgh] SE 9.

SIR: I understand your design. Jn Reed will Steal
for you and the Irish man² Shall then have plenty from
your table. You know that good Mutton is pleasant to
the faculty of Advocates yea Although you know it to be
Stolen and If the Irish man had done to you As he has
done to Others you and Andrew would be C etc.³ indeed.
The Law is truly this, the Irishman and Crosbie, Boswell
and Jn Reed is⁴ All Alike guilty.

TYBURN

¹A pseudonym, taken from the name of the place of public execution in London. The original of this letter is unknown, but it seems possible that it was written by some inmate of the Tolbooth who had observed with indignation and perhaps jealousy JB's attempts to help Reid and others. JB had most recently visited the prison on 7 Sept. and possibly also on 9 Sept. (Journ.). Writing an anonymous letter which threatened murder or arson was a capital crime in England; even writers of anonymous letters of a far milder sort were severely punished. In Scotland, no statute covered this offence, but anonymous letter writers, if caught and convicted, were generally sentenced to the pillory or to transportation (E.P. Thompson, "The Crime of Anonymity", Albion's Fatal Tree, ed. Douglas Hay, 1975, pp. 272-97; Bell's Law Dict., ii. 518, s.v. "Threatening Letters").

²Presumably a reference to Henry MacGraugh, an unruly Irishman currently imprisoned in the Tolbooth. On several occasions, MacGraugh had ordered food and drink in a public house and then announced that he had no money with which to pay. For this unusual crime, which he was credited with inventing, and which was labeled "sconcing", the town magistrates had sentenced McGraugh (23 Aug.) to be publicly whipped on 7 Sept. and then imprisoned for three months. But Andrew Crosbie and JB obtained a suspension of the sentence of whipping, and on 4 Feb., 1775, McGraugh was released from prison without further punishment (Journ. 25, 26 Aug.; Cal. Merc., 24 Aug., p. [2], 7 Sept., p. [3]; Scots Mag., 1775, Appendix, pp. 732-33). During September, many letters for and against McGraugh appeared in the press, some written by JB but unsigned and unidentified (Journ., 9 Sept.; Cal. Merc., 10 Sept., p. [3], 12 Sept., p. [3], 14 Sept., p. [3]). The final communication (author unidentified) appeared in Cal. Merc., 17 Sept., p. [2]:

"Alas, Macgraugh! how hard Thy fate
T'endure the bastinado
For bilking some Plebeian souls
Of Mutton or Potatoe!

Tho' gen'rous Boswell interpose
To save thee from destruction;
Tho' he affords you every aid
And yields you all instruction;

What will avail his friendly help
Or eke thy Greek quotation,
Whilst Judges judge by Common sense
In this part of the nation?"

³"C" presumably stands for a cant word that the writer considers too indecent to give in full.

⁴The singular verb with plural subject is especially common in Northern English.

To Lord Rochford,

Saturday 10 September 1774

MS. Yale (L 1103). Sent in four parts as explained in Journ. 10 Sept.: "I wrote two letters to Lord Rochford: one as to the Secretary of State and another as to the private nobleman; and I put them, with a memorial and the declaration, into the post-office with my own hand."

The first letter to Rochford is a copy in the hand of an unknown amanuensis, including the signature; on the same sheet is a shorthand draft in JB's hand of the second letter to Rochford. A fair copy of this second letter appears in the hand of the amanuensis. The copy of Janet Reid's declaration also appears in this hand.

HEADING: Co[py]: Letter to Lord Rochford One of his Majestys Prinl. Secretarys of State covering Meml. for him and his wife's Declaration dated Edinr. 10 Sept. 1774.

MY LORD: A Respite having arrived from your Lordships Office for John Reid under Sentence of Death here I think it my duty in justice to the unhappy man for whom I was Counsel, and whose trial was attended with very peculiar Circumstances to transmitt to your Lordship a

Memorial upon the Evidence, and a solemn Declaration taken since the Trial; as I am indeed anxious that the Royal Clemency may not be intercepted when it is my serious opinion that it is proper to grant it. I have the Honour to be, My Lord, Your Lordships most obedient, humble Servant,

Signed

JAMES BOSWELL

[Second Letter to Lord Rochford]

Perhaps Your Lordship may have heard of my name on occasion of my humble Efforts in behalf of the brave and unfortunate Corsicans. I shall only say that altho I have not the Honour to be personally known to Lord Rochford I have often felt the warmest regard for him knowing his spirited and generous Conduct at the Court of France at a time when the interposition of Great Britain in the manner devised by your Lordship would have saved that gallant little nation from severe oppression.¹

I now presume to address your Lordship in favour of John Reid an unhappy Client of mine now under sentence of death for an alledged theft of a few Sheep. I drew up a Petition for him to his Majesty and a Respite for 14 days has been sent from your Lordships Office. I have therefore this night transmitted a Meml. and Solemn Declaration which I flatter myself will have some effect. I write this to Your Lordship not as Secretary of State but as a private Nobleman and I intreat that you may consider the severity of inflicting a capital Punishment after a poor Wretch has had hopes of life. -- So harsh

a resolution has scarcely² ever taken place in this Country, and in a case of simple theft would be thought much too rigorous.

I rest my argument for my Clients innocence chiefly on the Meml. and Declaration. But I will tell Your Lordship I talked with the unhappy man at a time when he had no expectation of a Respite; and with Death before his Eyes he averred to me the Truth of his defence in such a manner that I could not disbelieve him.³ This is a Circumstance which has great weight with my own minds and which I wished Your Lordship should know.

The prejudice occasioned by the poor man being formerly tried tho acquitted has been fatal to him in a narrow Country but will be disregarded by liberal minds who think justly of a trial by Jury. I leave my Client with your Lordship in hopes that I shall obtain a favourable Answer. I have the Honour to be with great respect,⁴ My Lord, Your Lordships most obedient, humble Servant,

Signed

JAMES BOSWELL

[Memorial for John Reid.]

MS. A draft. Yale (Lg. 23:3).

[Because the Memorial forms part of the Legal Papers, not the Correspondence, it does not appear in this collection. It is a four-page document which JB drew up on 10 Sept. or possibly a day or two earlier. He seems to have had the intention of writing a memorial for several days, perhaps since hearing that the King had requested an opinion from the Lord Justice Clerk (Journ. 10 Sept.). In the Memorial, JB reiterated that the evidence against Reid was insufficient and wholly circumstantial; no fact that the prosecution presented at the trial in order to prove Reid's guilt was inconsistent with his innocence. He pointed out that Reid made no effort to conceal the sheep or to change their identifying marks as a guilty man might have done. No-one witnessed the arrival of the sheep; the neighbour's story of Reid's night-time activities was as unsubstantiated as Reid's story about Gardner. Nor was Reid's sudden departure from home after the theft necessarily an indication of guilt, for had not Reid previously served a long time in

prison awaiting trial for a theft of which he was eventually acquitted? And did not Reid unhappily have reason to think that in this narrow country very slim evidence might be enough to condemn a man of his poor reputation? JB ended by conceding that it was not usual in Scots law to accept testimony from the spouse of the accused, but in this case there was no other witness to the fact that Reid had been at home every night of the week during which the theft was committed.]

[Janet Reid's Declaration]⁵

At Edinr. 10 Sept. in the year of our Lord 1774 and of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George by the Grace of God of Great Britain France⁶ and Ireland King the 14th Year. In Presence of us Matthew Dickie⁷ and Michael Nasmith one of the Clerks to his Majesty's Signet and both of us Notars Public admitted by Royal Authority and also by Authority of the Lords of Council and Session conform to Act of Parliament⁸ being duly sworn into the said Office.⁹

Appeared Janet the Wife of John Reid now lying under sentence of death in the prison of Edinr. and Solemnly declared and affirmed that her said husband slept at home in his own house upon the nights of the 6th and 7th of Octr. last, the last of which is the night on which it is alledged that he committed the theft for which he is condemned and that he slept both those nights in the bed with the Declarant which he also did during every other night of that week, and during the three last nights of the week preceeding; That they went regularly to bed each of the nights at or before 11 of the Clock being their usual time of going to bed and they lay till Sun-rising,

Except upon¹⁰ Thursdays morning¹¹ when her husband was called up about an hour before Sun-rising to receive a Parcell of Sheep from William Gardner. And all that she has now solemnly declared and affirmed she is ready and willing to attest upon oath before any of his Majestys Judges. In testimony whereof she hereto adhibits her Subscription in our presence and in presence of Chas. Hay Esqr. Advocate and Matthew Montgomery Writer¹² in Edinr.

(signed)

JANET REID

Praemissa attestor Matthew Dickie No. Pub. Veritas
M. Nasmith N.P.

[Written in lower left margin by JB]: Cha. Hay
Witness, M. Montgomerie Witness.

¹In 1768, Rochford was ambassador to France. When he learned of the French plans to seize Corsica, he made a strong protest to the French government, citing the popularity of JB's Corsica as one of many reasons why the English wished the Corsicans to become an independent state, and threatening English military intervention if the French proceeded with their plans. The French correctly perceived that his threats were unsupported by the British government, and invaded Corsica unopposed by a major power (P. H. S. Stanhope, History of England, 1851, v. 301; Horace Walpole, Memoirs of the Reign of George the Third, 1845, ii. 127; Lecky, England, iii. 346).

²MS. originally "scarce ever"; "ly" added later.

³"He this day again averred the truth of his story that he got the sheep from Gardner" (Journ. 31 Aug.).

⁴MS. In the shorthand draft, "I have the Honour to be" is written above "I am with the greatest" deleted.

⁵This statement was recorded at Hutchinson's Tavern, in the afternoon of 10 Sept., before JB wrote the two covering letters to Rochford (Journ.).

⁶George III was styled King of France until 1801.

⁷Dickie (c. 1718-93) was a writer, notary public, and an old friend of JB's, who later described him as "a kind of diminutive Falstaff, a droll knave but without ill nature" (Scots Mag. Sept. 1793, p. 517; Journ. 5 Dec. 1780).

⁸MS. "Parliat."

⁹In England, a Notary is actually an ecclesiastical officer, although his duties are largely secular. In Scotland, the Court of Session, deriving its power from the Sovereign, appoints Notaries, who are then examined by members of the Society of Writers. A number of Scottish Acts of Parliament had established the duties of this ancient office; the most recent was the Act of Sederunt, 30 July 1691. A Scottish Notary has no authority to assess legal claims of any document; his function is merely probative. Thus it was quite improper that the first two notaries whom JB and Nasmith approached before they found Matthew Dickie refused to witness Janet Reid's statement (Bell's Law Dict., ii. 250-52; Journ. 10 Sept.).

¹⁰MS. "the" deleted after "upon"

¹¹7 Oct.

¹²Matthew Montgomerie (d. 1811), Writer (Scots. Mag. Aug. 1811, p. 717).

From Lord Pembroke,

Sunday 11 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2193). Received 17 Sept. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esq. Edingburgh.

POSTMARK: SALISBURY; [London] 13 SE.

FRANK: P:Embroke.

Wilton House, 11 Septr. 74

I dare say, my Dear Sir, that Lord Rochford has done the poor man's business, but, in case of any mistake, I will go up to town, and see the King myself on Thursday next -- the usual day of Court in the Summer, if nothing prevents His M's coming to town.¹

My best compliments wait on Mrs. Boswell. I am, Sir, with the greatest truth, and regard, your most obedient, humble servant,

PEMBROKE

¹The Court was held as usual on Thursday, 15 Sept., at St. James's Palace, which the King used only as a place of business. He came up to town from "The White House", his residence at Kew; his London residence was The Queen's House, later incorporated into Buckingham Palace (Lond. Chron., 15-17 Sept., p. 267; The Correspondence of King George the Third, ed. John Fortescue, 1928, iii. 131-32; John Brooke, King George III, 1972, p. 283).

From Robert Preston¹ to Bamber Gascoigne,²

Monday 12 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2288). In JB's hand.

HEADING: This Letter was dictated to me by Captain Robert Preston.³

ADDRESS: To Bamber Gascoigne Esq., Member of Parliament. Berking, Essex.⁴ If not at home to be forwarded to him directly wherever he is.

Edinburgh, 12 Sept. 1774

DEAR SIR: I arrived here upon saturday morning and a particular friend of mine has made application about John Reid a poor unhappy man who is here under sentence of death. In this confined country where party reigns more than justice this man has fallen a victim. All I can say is Sir, if you possibly can interfere with my Lord Rochford to get his pardon, you will not only have the thanks of the people in this country, but I shall look upon myself for ever indebted to you. Enclosed I sent you his Case.⁵ Believe me to be, Dear Sir, with great respect, your most obedient, and most humble servant.

ROBT. PRESTON

My Address is at Valleyfield by Edinburgh.⁶

¹Robert Preston (1740-1834), fifth son of JB's great-uncle, Sir George Preston of Valleyfield, was about to take command of the newly-commissioned East Indiaman, Hillsborough (Edin. Adv. 23 Aug. 1774, p. 125). In 1776 or 1777, he retired from maritime service, having accumulated considerable wealth with which he was able to restore the waning fortunes of his family. He later became M.P. for Dover (1784-90) and Cirencester (1792-1806). A friend of William Pitt's, he was known for his financial acumen and his support of business interests (Namier and Brooke iii. 326).

²Gascoigne (1725-91) represented various boroughs in Parliament, 1761-86; he was currently Member for Weobly. The circumstances of his acquaintance with Preston are unknown, but he was a member of the Board of Trade, and may have had mercantile interests in India (Namier and Brooke ii. 486-91).

³The previous evening, JB and Mrs. Boswell had visited the George Prestons on Castle Hill Street. "Captain Robert became warm for John Reid; said he would write a letter to Bamber Gascoyne, who had a great deal to say with Lord Rochford; and he would pay half of an express to carry it. I was to call on him next morning to get it. We had a great deal of jovial roaring, and drank till two in the morning". The next day JB returned to the Prestons and Robert dictated the letter to him (Journ. 11, 12 Sept.). But, as post To Robert Preston, 12 Sept. and n. 2 indicate, this letter was never sent.

⁴"Biffrons", Berking or Barking, was Gascoigne's estate, inherited from his maternal grandfather, John Bamber, M.D. (Namier and Brooke, loc. cit.).

⁵Not reported. Probably this was a copy of the Memorial.

⁶The country seat of the Prestons was an estate in Valleyfield, near Culross.

To Robert Preston,

Monday 12 September 1774

MS. Yale (L 1077). A copy.

HEADING: To Capt. Robert Preston.

Edinburgh, 12 Sept. 1774

DEAR SIR: Upon serious consideration it occurs to me that your letter to Bamber Gascoigne being written in my hand, might appear with impropriety especially as it contains very strong things; for as it would probably be shewn to Lord Rochford to whom I have written it would be known. I have therefore not sent it tonight.¹ This will reach you tomorrow morning and if you will take the trouble to write a few lines to Mr. Gascoigne with your own hand and can find an opportunity to send the letter to me before the post goes out tomorrow evening, it will be time enough.² I would fain hope that my client is safe by the interest already used. But to be sure in a matter of such deep concern, one cannot be too industrious. I am with sincere regard, Dear Sir, affectionately yours.

¹Preston and JB had decided that the letter need not go by express, but could go by the ordinary London mail which left Edinburgh at 8:30 every evening except Wednesday and Sunday (Journ. 12 Sept.; Edin. Alm., 1774, p. 162).

²JB wrote this letter on Monday afternoon. Preston, after dictating the letter to Gascoigne that morning, had departed for Valleyfield with his parents. He apparently never responded to this letter (Journ. 12 Sept.).

From the Duke of Queensberry,

Monday 12 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2336). Received 19 Sept. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr., Advocate, Edinburgh.

POSTMARK: AMESBURY, 712 SE.

Ambresbury,¹ Septr. 12th, 1774

SIR: Your letter of the 3d Inst. arrived here in the 10th. The contents of it made me wish I could have received it sooner, as I find my application in behalf of John Reid will not come time enough to produce any effect. You mention the Respite for fourteen days having arrived at Edinburgh on the 2d so that on the 16th at farthest, the time of respite will be over.²

A letter from me to my Lord Rochford cannot reach him till the 14th so that nothing can be done in consequence of it before the Respite be over. If I had been at London my application might have been time enough, by being on the spot and receiving your letter so much the sooner; but it is to be hoped that the same humane disposition from which the Respite proceeded, will not allow the severity of the sentence to be executed, and that how unfavorable soever the

Justice Clerk's report may be, it will only prevent
a free pardon, and transportation be the consequence.
I am sorry I cannot be of any assistance to it and
am with great regard, Sir, Your most obedient, humble
servant,

QUEENSBERRY ETC.

¹The Duke's seat in Wiltshire, also spelled "Amesbury".

²The respite expired on 21 Sept.; see post From Warrender to Tait, 17 Sept. n. 3.

From William Eden,¹

Tuesday 13 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 1170). Received 19 Sept. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqre. Edinburgh, N.B.

POSTMARK: [London] 15 SE, FREE.

FRANK: free. Wm Eden.

HEADING (at foot of page): Jas Boswell Esqre.

St. James's, Septr. 13th 1774

SIR: I am directed by Lord Suffolk, to acknowledge your letter to his Lordship inclosing a Petition to the King from the unfortunate Convict John Reid,³ and to assure you that every attention has been given to your wishes that the nature of the Case would admit. In the Result, it was with much Concern that his Lordship, after obtaining the fullest Information and laying it before the King, found it his Duty to leave the Law to take its Course. I am, Sir, your most obedient, Humble Servant,

WM. EDEN

¹William Eden (1744-1814), later first Baron Auckland, was Under-Secretary of State in Lord Suffolk's office. His Principles of Penal Law (1771) had not yet been generally recognised as a "pioneer treatise" on the reform of the penal code. Eden was about to become M.P. for Woodstock (1774-84); subsequently he represented Heytesbury (1784-93). During the American War, he handled most of the secret intelligence for Lord North, and he later held various diplomatic positions in America, France, and Spain (William Holdsworth, A History of English Law, 1938, xii. 365; Namier and Brooke ii. 375-379).

²Ante To Lord Suffolk, 20 Aug.

From Lord Pembroke,

Thursday 15 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2194). Received 17 Sept. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esq. Edinburgh.

POSTMARK: [London] 16 SE, FREE.

FRANK: P:Embroke.

St. James, Thursd. 15 Sept. 74

I came up this morning on purpose to speak to H.M.J.,¹
My Dear Sir, as you wished, and I am very sorry not to
have been more successfull. Lord Cornwallis also has
applied in favour of Reid, but the Judge's report, which
I saw, is so very strong against him, that the man's guilt
is looked upon here in the most atrocious light possible.
Lord Rochford would have urged for mercy, had he been able
to do it, but he, and the King too, indeed, think the
Judge must resign, if, after his report, any mitigation
of the sentence should take place.² I am very much con-
cerned at my ill success, and shall be more so, if it
debars me from receiving your orders on any future
occasion, where you can make me usefull. I am, Sir,
with the greatest truth and regard, your most obedient,
humble servant,

PEMBROKE

¹His Majesty: an unusual form of the abbreviation.

²Pembroke does not say, but must have known, that the King had decided against Reid the previous week, after reading the Lord Justice Clerk's report. Thus Cornwallis's letter arrived too late to be considered, and Pembroke's request for clemency, if indeed he made one, was also hopelessly late.

From Lord Rochford,

Thursday 15 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2399). Received 19 Sept. (Reg. Let.). In the hand of an amanuensis (except signature).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esq. Edinburgh.

POSTMARK: [London] 15 SE, FREE.

FRANK: free S. Porten.¹

HEADING (at bottom of page): James Boswell Esqr.

St. James's, 15th September 1774

SIR: Your Two Letters of the 10th instant, with the Inclosures were received yesterday, and at the same time I had a Letter from Lord Cornwallis, inclosing one to His Lordship from You on the Case of John Reid² and I am very sorry to be under the necessity of acquainting You, that after the fullest Informations taken on the Proceedings that Tryal, which have been laid before The King, together with the Report of Lord Justice Clerk, It has been determined that the Law should take it's Course. I am, Sir, Your most obedient, humble Servant,

ROCHFORD

¹Sir Stanier Porten (d. 1789) was Under Secretary to Lord Rochford, and Keeper of the State Papers. His youngest sister, Juliette, was the mother of Edward Gibbon.

²Ante To Cornwallis, 5 Sept.; the letter from Cornwallis to Rochford is not reported.

From Hugh Warrender¹ to James Tait,²

Saturday 17 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 3062). A copy in JB's hand.

HEADING: To Mr. James Tait one of the Town Clerks of
Edinbr.

Edinbr. 17 Septemr. 1774

SIR: The Earl of Suffolk Secretary of State by his
letter to the Lords of Justiciary dated from St. James's
the 9 Inst. and of which I have been just now acquainted
writes that the Extract of the Trial of John Reid had
been laid before the King and as there did not appear
to be any favourable circumstance in that unhappy man's
Case, that no further Respite would be Granted, and that
the Law must take its Course after the Expiration of the
Respite formerly sent and Notified to the Magistrates
of Edinburgh.³

This I thought it my duty to Notifie as soon as
possible that the unhappy man may not be allowed to
continue longer under any false hopes that he may have
been led to entertain. I am in the absence of Jno.
Davidson, Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

(signed) HUGH WARRENDER

City Clerk of Edinburgh⁴

¹Hugh Warrender (d. 1820), W.S., was clerk to John Davidson (d. 1797), W.S., Crown Agent in Edinburgh. Warrender succeeded Davidson as Deputy Keeper of the Signet in 1797; he also held the post of Crown Agent, 1800-20 (Writers, pp. 53, 210; Scots Mag. Dec. 1797, p. 931).

²Unidentified, beyond the information given in this letter. As Town Clerk, Tait would have the responsibility of notifying the City Magistrates of the execution order; the Magistrates were in charge of carrying the order out.

³The respite was a two-week stay from the original date of execution, 7 Sept.; it thus expired on 21 Sept. But this letter indicates that the King had reviewed the case and confirmed Reid's sentence on 8 Sept., a Thursday, and the weekly day of Court during the summer.

⁴Not an official title.

From Patrick Preston,¹

Sunday 18 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2286). Received 19 Sept. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr., James's Court,
Edinr.

Valleyfield, Sunday 18th Septr.

MY DEAR JAMES: I was exceedingly happy to hear from my Mother, that You intended doing us the Honor of a Visitt Here, this Week; but as she does not speak with so much Certainty about Mrs. Boswell,² I must beg You'll, with my most Respectfull Compliments assure Her, that this whole Familly will be most sincerely mortified, if she dont come -- tell Her (and You say so with Truth) that the ferry³ is now so Commodious, as to make only an Agreeable Variety,⁴ and the Roads now so good, on both sides, that You can easily be Here in 4 Hours, or less. -- Do me the favr. of letting me know by Post, what day You intend coming that my Chaise may be at the ferry to meet You.⁵ Adieu, and be assured that I ever am with Real Regard, Yours sincerely,

P. PRESTON

¹Patrick Preston (c. 1731-76), oldest son of Sir George Preston of Valleyfield, had served in the British Army in Minorca and in Portugal, rising to the rank of major (Army List, 1769, p. 111). He was now living near his father, overseeing the family estate (Journ. 26 Sept.).

²Lady Preston (d. 1779), Ann Cochrane before her marriage, was JB's maternal grandmother's sister. She probably had invited the Boswells to Valleyfield the previous week, when she was in Edinburgh with her husband. Mrs. Boswell was hesitant about leaving her children (Journ. 11, 24 Sept.).

³The ferry crossed between South and North Queensferry, a distance of about two miles, now spanned by the Firth of Forth Bridge. The ferries were owned and operated by local tacksmen who had exclusive rights to the service. In 1800 the ferries comprised "four boats and four yawls"; the latter were small and carried passengers only (Robert Sibbald, The History of Fife and Kinross, 1803, p. 300).

⁴Perhaps an echo of Alexander Pope, Windsor Forest, 11. 15-16.

⁵No reply is reported, and apparently none was sent. The Boswells did undertake the journey, were unable to hire a chaise in North Queensferry, and were obliged to wait there until word could be sent to Preston, and his chaise dispatched for them (Journ. 24 Sept.).

From Michael Nasmith,

Tuesday 20 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2076). Received 20 Sept. "Before breakfast I received a very good letter from Mr. Nasmith dissuading me from the scheme of recovering John Reid, but he did not persuade me" (Journ. 20 Sept.).¹

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esquire, Advocate.

Edn. 20th Sepr. 1774

MY DEAR SIR: This is a matter of secrecy. We have properly speaking no person to advise with. The² proposed attempt appears to be attended with so much³ humanity that⁴ the moment any of our friends may have it in confidence⁵ they may find themselves in the same situation we ourselves are.⁶ I have been therefore deliberating with myself how far the world may think we have acted a worthy part in having attempted to preserve his life.

The jury have returned an unanimous verdict finding him Guilty. The Court of Justiciary have been unanimous in finding him worthy of death. Our Sovereign has⁷ given it as his opinion that the interests of society are at stake if he is suffered to escape. The Voice of the whole people approves. In short every thing

sacred in Society seems to forbid the attempt.

Humanity and a strong belief of John's innocence have already impelled you to do much for him, but let us cast our eyes forward and see what effects the attempt may have upon the poor wretches who may hereafter be condemned to lose their lives. Death is already sufficiently terrible. I fear much that the proposed attempt, be the event what it will may be attended with the worst consequences, consequences that neither of us would wish to be the authors of. In the awful approach of eternity the mind is disposed to grasp at every shadow. Few will hereafter come to suffer in this country to whose ears John's story may not have reach'd. If he is brought to life they will hold it up as full evidence that they too may -- and that there may be a Boswell at hand the moment they are cut down. If the experiment proves ineffectual they will solace themselves with such thoughts as these -- that he was old -- that he had been desperately wicked -- that tho the experiment did not succeed upon him, the world is every day getting more knowledge it may upon them -- That heaven may have foreseen that they could not be otherways reclaimed than by suspending them in a rope and allowing them thereafter

to return to life. To slip out of this world on such a situation, without repentance, confession, and resignation is a dismal thought.

To me the affair at present appears in these points of view and is not unworthy of the most cool deliberation. What do you think of talking to Mrs. Boswell who, if I am a right judge possesses both Judgement and humanity in abundance.⁸ I am, Dear Sir, Yours Sincerly,

M. NASMITH

¹JB remained unpersuaded until that evening, when Alexander Wood, the surgeon he had asked to attempt Reid's resuscitation, pointed out that Reid himself might resent being brought back to life: "He will have got over the pain of death ... He may tell you that you kept him from heaven" (Journ.).

²MS. "recover" deleted after "The"

³MS. "so much" written above "a great share of" deleted.

⁴MS. "that" written above "and" deleted.

⁵MS. "their minds" deleted after "confidence"

⁶That is, torn between feelings of humanity and the dictates of society.

⁷MS. "also" deleted after "has"

⁸Whether JB had already told his wife of this plan or whether he told her as a result of Nasmith's advice is not clear; a few hours after receiving this letter he is avoiding her: "We [JB and Charles Hay] did not choose to see my wife while we were about such a project, which I had communicated to her and which shocked her" (Journ. 20 Sept.).

To Lord Pembroke,

Thursday 22 September 1774

MS. Yale (L 1031). A copy or a draft.

Edinburgh, 22 September 1774

MY LORD: I have had the honour to receive both your Lordships letters¹ in answer to the last which zeal for an unfortunate prisoner made me presume to write. It is a satisfaction to me to think that I have not troubled your Lordship upon an occasion unworthy of your interposition. The poor man was executed yesterday, and with his last breath declared his innocence of the crime for which he was condemned. I hope that when I have the happiness of seeing your Lordship, I shall be able fully to explain to you the whole of this unfortunate affair.²

Your Lordship's goodness to me has been much beyond my utmost hopes. I have not words to express what I feel. Permit me only to say that I shall ever retain a most grateful sense of the obligations which I owe to your Lordship and shall esteem it one of the happiest circumstances in my life, to be honoured with a continuance of the friendship and correspondence of Lord

Pembroke. I have the honour to be with most sincere respect, My Lord, your Lordship's much obliged and devoted, humble servant.

¹Ante 29 Aug., 11 Sept.

²JB next met Pembroke in London 26 Mar. 1775; no discussion of Reid is reported at that meeting or subsequent ones (Journ. 26 Mar., 19-22 Apr. 1775).

From Alexander Ritchie,¹

Saturday 24 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2382). In an unknown hand.

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr. Advocate, Edinburgh.

Edinr. 24 Septr. 1774

SIR: I intended to have called on you yesterday to have given you the particulars as to John Reid's Burial but I was dissapointed for the Carter that Carried his corpse to the place of Interment did not return home till late in the evening² and when I knew he was come I sent for him and he told me that the Body was Buried in a place belonging to his Forefathers but that the poor Widow was in great distress because one of the Heritors had declared that although all the Parish should consent to his lyen there yet he would not allow it.³ She therefore begs your assistance in this Critical matter. I apprehend that an order from one of the Lords forbidding the Heritors and Session to meddle any further with the corps of John Reid but to allow them to Lye in the Burying place belonging

to his Ancestors. This I apprehend would end the matter but I do not pretend to direct you. I have the honour to be, Sir, your Most Obedient Servant,

ALEXR. RITCHIE

P.S. I intend to wait on you about ten o'clock and give you an instance of Female Courage and unshaken love.⁴

¹Ritchie was, according to JB, "a kind of lay teacher who humanely attends all the people under sentence of death". He spent some time with Reid at the Tolbooth, and JB had encountered him there; they had also met previously in connexion with another capital case. In 1771, Ritchie had published an anonymous pamphlet entitled A Short Account of the Behaviour of W. Pickworth, from His Condemnation to his Death; in a letter from a Person who Attended him often during that time. To which is annexed, His Last Speech. He also wrote at least part of a "Dying Speech" of Reid's which he showed to JB, and which Richard Lock may have used in The Last Speech (Journ. 29, 31 Aug., 9 Sept.; B. M. Cat. s.v. Pickworth, William).

²JB had hired the carter, who is unidentified. He had set out from Edinburgh on the evening of 22 Sept. to carry Reid's body to the Muiravonside churchyard, a distance of about 45 miles (post From Ritchie to Janet Reid, 27 Sept.; Journ. 22 Sept.).

³All owners of land or of buildings within the parish were "heritors". They were each entitled to a vote in church affairs, and were also responsible for maintaining church properties, including the churchyard. Burial in the churchyard was reserved for heritors, their families, their tenants, and any others who lived on their land. Thus Reid, as a tenant, was entitled to burial in the churchyard; furthermore, no law, civil or ecclesiastical, barred executed criminals from churchyard burial (although murderers were traditionally buried to the north of the churchyard, in unconsecrated ground). This letter suggests that the heritor (who is unidentified) was angered by the presence of a criminal's corpse in the churchyard. Ritchie also suggests that the heritor was invoking his traditional right to

overrule the majority with a single vote of conscience. Ritchie, however, was misinformed; JB later learned that Janet Reid had mistaken the Reid family plot, which Reid had described as "the second best in the kird-yard", and had buried her husband in the place reserved for this heritor (Journ. 30 Aug.; post From Thomas Greenhill to Ritchie, 1 Oct.; Parochial Law, pp. 174, 182-83, 190-91, 510-11).

⁴Ritchie called on JB and told him of Janet Reid's tribulations of the previous day in Muiravon-side. She did not have the key to the churchyard and so was obliged to lift Reid's body over the churchyard wall. After some difficulties in finding a spade, the carter dug the grave (Journ. 24 Sept.). For the more complete story, see post From Greenhill to Ritchie, 1 Oct.

From Alexander Ritchie to Thomas Greenhill,¹

Saturday 24 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2383). Apparently JB retrieved this letter from Greenhill, either because he was collecting documents about the Reid case, or because Ritchie's threat of prosecution, made in JB's name, subsequently proved unreasonable.

ADDRESS: To Mr. Greenhill, Session Clerk in the Parish at Moravonside.

POSTMARK: [illegible].

Edinr., 24 Septr. 1774

SIR: I am desired to inform you that Mr. James Boswell being acquainted that an opposition being made by some persons against admitting the Corps of John Reid into his Burrying place, and his Wife and some others being obliged to force their way in with great difficulty got him interred but are in great apprehension of the Body being lifted out of the Burrying place of his Ancestors, by some head strong persons, contrary to any law that yet exists, for as he has fullfilld the Law² there is no reason why he may not be laid in the burrying place of his Ancestors. You'll be so good as notify

to the Session and Heritors that if any violent measures be taken whoever takes such will be prosecuted in due course of Law and be obliged to reburry the said Corps in said Place at their own expence,³ you may show this to all concernd both Session and others and I remain, Yours etc.,

ALEXR. RITCHIE

¹Clerk of the Session of the Muiravonside Church, Greenhill was also identified by JB as "the schoolmaster of the parish" (Journ. 24 Sept.). "The person who holds the appointment of session clerk frequently unites in his person other offices. Thus he was often, and still seomtimes is, also the schoolmaster, the precentor, the registrar, or the heritors' or Parish Council's clerk" (Parochial Law, p. 616)

²Ritchie means that Reid has suffered the punishment of the law for his crime.

³"It would have been a curious question on the right of sepulture. John had, no doubt, a piece of burying=ground, but the voice of the country is that a malefactor cannot be laid in an usual burying-place, though in a churchyard. Yet there is no law as to that" (Journ. 24 Sept.). A family could acquire the right of sepulture simply by burying members of the family in one place over a period of years, regardless of how the ground had been allocated. John Reid's brief occupancy of the heritor's plot probably would not confer the right of sepulture, but the law was vague on this point (Parochial Law, pp. 220-21).

To Daniel Macqueen,¹

Saturday 24 September 1774

MS. Yale (L 914). A draft.

REVEREND SIR: As the unfortunate Case of John Reid is² an interesting subject in many views, is³ particularly so to me⁴ I beg that⁵ while the circumstances are fresh in your remembrance, you⁶ will take the trouble to let me have a full narrative of what you can attest concerning him which I shall consider as a great obligation.⁷ I have made the like request to⁸ Dr. Dick, and Baillie McQueen.⁹ Though we all agree in general, each of us has¹⁰ something peculiar to mention. I am, Reverend Sir, your most obedient, humble servant.

¹The Rev. Daniel Macqueen (d. 1777), D.D. Edinburgh, 1759, had been minister in Stirling 1740-58, and was then appointed to the Old Kirk parish in Edinburgh (Fasti Scot. i. 72). He had visited Reid in prison and had attended his execution; he had told JB that he was "impressed with the poor man's innocence" (Journ. 20, 21 Sept.).

²MS. "is" written above "will be" deleted.

³MS. "is" written above "and in particular for my justifica" deleted after "views,"

⁴MS. "who convinced of his innocence" deleted after "me"

⁵MS. "you may" deleted after "that"

⁶MS. "may" deleted after "you"

⁷Post From Daniel Macqueen, 28 Sept.

⁸MS. "Baillie McQueen and" deleted after "to"

⁹MS. "Each of you us has something" deleted after "McQueen." The Rev. Robert Dick (1722-82) had been minister at Trinity Church, Edinburgh since 1758 (Fasti Scot. i. 134). He attended Reid at his execution and had interrogated him previously; he, like Daniel MacQueen, was doubtful of Reid's guilt. George MacQueen (d. 1795), recently elected one of the four baillies of Edinburgh, had served on the 1766 jury that acquitted Reid, and was convinced of his innocence in the later trial also (Journ. 23 Sept.; Scots Mag. June 1795, p. 411; Edin. Direct. 1775, Appendix p. 11). JB's letters to Dick and to George MacQueen are not reported; this letter may have served as a draft for all three.

¹⁰MS. "has" written above "can say" deleted after "us"

From Alexander Ritchie to Janet Reid,

Tuesday 27 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 2384). Written in an unknown hand.

HEADING in Nasmith's hand: Copy of a Letter to Janet Clark Widow to the deceast John Reid.

Edinr. 27th Sept. 1774

JANET: You know I told You before and after Your Husbands death, that You would meet with opposition in Burying Him in the Church Yard belonging to the Parish from some persons. Your answer to me was that the Session had given You liberty; But I understand now, that You cou'd not get so much as the Key of the Church Yard door, nor obtain a Spade or Shovel from any in that Neighbourhood till You was obliged to bring them from a considerable distance. I further understand, that none of Your friends gave You any assistance or countenance at that time. Thus You may see how vain it is to trust in man for they commonly misgive us in the time of our greatest distress. The use You should make of a disapointment from friends, is that You should trust in the Lord, for He will not disappoint the expectations of any who trust in Him. I would now advise You, that if any Persons have removed the Corps and burried them in another place, or intend to do it,

You must quietly submitt, as You are a poor widow, and unable to withstand them. And as Your husbands Soul is now in an unalterable State and what happens to his body cannot touch his noble part, this may compose Your mind. You have fulfilled the promise You made to Him in laying him in his Fathers burying ground,¹ and the whole Parish will know that You have not sold him to the Surgeons, as some were pleased to report. I intreat You therefore to compose Yourself and take care of Your fatherless Children,² and Instruct them in the knowledge of the Word of God, and set a good example before them that they may shun the paths that lead to destruction,³ for You have the part both of father and Mother to fullfill towards them, and that You cannot do, unless God enable You. Seek Him and He will not forsake You. I intreat You at the same time not to quarrell with any Person whom You think has wronged Your husband or Yourself, but rather forgive and pray for them, and commit Your whole cause to God, who Judgeth Righteously. As to Mr. James Boswell You know what great trouble he put Himself to, in endeavouring to save Your Husbands life, this was attended with great expence, and alltho' he did not succeed according to His wishes, that was not His fault;

And after Your Husbands death, He was at the expence of causing Him to be carried to the place of Interment; but I apprehend it would be very improper for You to desire Mr. Boswell to enter into a Law plea with the Heritors and Session of Moravenside, about where that piece of dead clay shou'd ly.⁴ I expect therefore You will give Him no more trouble. I remain Yours, a friend to the Afflicted,

ALEXR. RITCHIE

P.S. You may shew this Letter to any of Your friends You please.

¹Reid had told Ritchie and JB on 30 Aug. that his wife had said "she would see him to the last", and that "he would be carried to his own burial-place at Muiravonside" (Journ.).

²Reid told JB that he had fathered seven children; of these, three survived him. At the time of his death, "his daughter Janet was a girl about fifteen, his eldest son Benjamin about ten, his youngest son Daniel between two and three" (Journ. 20 Sept.). Another child between Janet and Benjamin in age is mentioned, although not named, in a memorandum from John Johnston about Reid's 1766 trial (Lg. 4:2), and in From John Reid, 13 Nov. 1766: "my wife and three infant children". There were at least two Reid children buried in the Muiravonside churchyard (post From Greenhill to Ritchie, 1 Oct.).

³An echo of Matthew 7:13.

⁴See ante From Ritchie to Greenhill, 24 Sept., n.3.

From Daniel Macqueen,

Wednesday 28 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 1875). Macqueen wrote this letter in JB's presence after a dinner at George Macqueen's house (Journ. 28 Sept.).¹

ENDORSEMENT: "Attestation concerning John Reid by the Reverend Dr. Daniel McQueen one of the Clergymen who attended him at his execution."

[Edinburgh]² Sept 28h, 1774

The trial I did not see -- On the Tuesday, the day before his execution, after a long conversation with the unhappy man John Reid, and having used the best means in my power to investigate the truth, I was, upon the whole, persuaded, that he was not disguising the truth, when he affirmed to me in the most solemn manner, that he was not guilty of the crime for which he was condemned to death. I spoke with him next day; and am ready to acknowledge, that³ what he said left upon my mind a full impression of his Sincerity, when he denied his being guilty of that crime, for which, according to the sentence of man, he was then to suffer.

D.M.

¹George Macqueen had invited JB, Alexander Dick and Daniel Macqueen to dinner. All four men were convinced of Reid's innocence. JB solicited this letter and the one following, possibly with the idea of using them in some sort of publication concerning the Reid trial. Dr. Dick did not write a letter, but said he would sign a statement if JB wrote one; no such document is reported (Journ. 28 Sept.).

²Macqueen lived at the Luckenbooths (Edin. Direct., p. 65).

³MS. "he left" deleted after "that"

From George MacQueen,

Wednesday 28 September 1774

MS. Yale (C 1879). JB dined at MacQueen's house on this date, and this letter may have been written in MacQueen's presence. See Journ. 28 Sept.

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr., Advocate, Edinburgh.

Edinburgh, 28th Sept. 1774

SIR: I was Favoured with your Letter of the 24th Current¹ and on receipt of it I called at your House to have had Conversation with You on the unhappy Case of John Reid. I was told you had gone to the Country and wou'd not be in Town for some days.² You desire me while the Circumstances are fresh in my remembrance to let you have a full narrative of what I can Attest. I feel my Mind so much agitated with the dreadful Scene of Wednesday last that I imagine no time will ever eradicate from my Memory the Affecting circumstances of that day. I had set down to have wrote You fully but find myself as yet incapable of that degree of composure of Mind with which I cou'd wish to write on a subject so interesting to what every honest Heart must account Dearer than Life - Reputation --

so interesting to the Cause of Truth and so interesting to the Juries of this and every Country. I shall take an opportunity of waiting on You soon or write You fully³ and in mean while I am, with great Respect, Sir, Your most humble servant.

GEORGE McQUEEN

¹Not reported, but see ante to Daniel Macqueen,
24 Sept. n. 9.

²JB had departed for Valleyfield about 10 a.m. on
24 Sept. and returned to Edinburgh on the afternoon of
27 Sept. (Journ.).

³No narrative from Macqueen is reported.

From Thomas Greenhill to Alexander Ritchie,

Saturday 1 October 1774

MS. Yale (C 1400).

ADDRESS: To Mr. Alexander Ritchie Writer¹ at Edinburgh
to be Communicated To Mr. James Boswell, Advocate at his
Lodgings in Edinburgh.

Muiravonsideschool, 1st October 1774

SIR: I was favoured with yours yesterday dated the 24th
of Septr. last Anent John Reids Corps.² The History of
that Matter is thus, that his Wife after his getting a
reprive for 14 Days Applied to the Session Anent having
him interred in the Church-yard Amongst his Relations³
but as the Affair was intirely New to the Session and
that there was no Occasion for her transporting his Corps
at Such a Distance, the Session told her Against that Day
fourteen Days they should inform her what was their
Resolution but She never came Nigh them, And they Agreed⁴
that upon her Applying to the Heretors they Saw nothing
to oppose it, in regard that the Man was to Satisfy what
the Law required. It is true that his Wife brought out
his Corps very early on friday Morning before the
Minister⁵ was up to get the Keys and or ever She called
for either Minister or Elder She had put him in over the

Gates. And thereafter She got Some Spades and digged a Grave for him in Another persons⁶ Burrying place at her own hand. And upon that Persons entering a Complaint Anent it to the Minister, The Minister did all he could by Advising the Man to let Reid ly Since he was now burried for it would Still be called Reids Grave besides I told the Man it was not prudent to move Reids Corps and, before he could get proper Evidence of the Mistake Reids Corps would be in Such a Condition that it was dangerous to Move him upon which the Man was Satisfied, but Reid's Relict finding that She had Mistaken the Burrying place of her Husband did upon Wedensday last lift his Corps and reburried him above two of his own Children and left the other Grave open and did not cover Reids Corps decently upon which the Minister and I caused our Beddol⁷ cover him properly and fill up the other Grave distinctly. And Although Some people whose heads have been as light as their feet have made a great deal of Noise Anent the Matter Yet No People of Sense or Character would or Will give Reids Corps Any disturbance and it has been greatly Owing to the forwardness of his Relict

that there has been So much Idle Tattle Anent the
Matter, And I can assure You that Neither Heretor
or Session will give any disturbance. I have
troubled you with this History at large as I find
Mr. James Boswell has been complained to that he
may know there will be no more trouble Anent that
Affair and Am, Sir, Your very humble Servant,

THOS. GREENHILL

¹Evidently the legal style of ante From Ritchie to Greenhill, 24 Sept. led Greenhill mistakenly to suppose Ritchie a writer.

²Letters normally took a day or two to travel between Edinburgh and Stirling; it is unclear why Ritchie's letter took a week.

³It seems strange that Janet Reid should have started to make burial arrangements after the arrival of the respite, but if she did so, it supports Mrs. Boswell's contention that Reid had all along expected to be pardoned, and only faced the possibility of death when a respite, not a pardon, arrived (Journ. 2 Sept.). Nevertheless, he had discussed his burial with JB three days prior to receiving the respite (Journ. 30 Aug.).

⁴MS. "Agreed"

⁵John Bertram of Millhall (d. 1802, "aged above 80") was minister at Muiravonside, 1768-1802 (Fasti Scot. i. 223).

⁶Unidentified; see ante From Ritchie to Janet Reid, 27 Sept., n.2.

⁷The beadle's name is unknown. The heritors appointed the beadle; he was in charge of maintaining church, that is heritors', property: the church, the churchyard, and the manse. Sometimes beadies also allocated churchyard plots, although this was technically the heritors' responsibility (Parochial Law, pp. 606-10).

From Lord Pembroke,

Sunday 2 October 1774

MS. Yale (C 2195). Received 7 Oct. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esq., Edingburgh.

POSTMARK: SALISBURY; [London], 3 [illegible].

FRANK: P:Embroke.

Wilton House, 2 Oct. 74

George Selwyn,¹ my Dear Sir, says he can prove, that John St. John never had but sixteen causes, and that every one of his sixteen Clients were hanged.² I fear you will think my interposition as banefull, as my friend's knowledge of the Law. The King was certainly disposed to transport, but the Judge's report was too strong -- indeed I never read any thing more so, or so positive. I am unhappy to be obliged to beg the favor of you to take the will for the deed in an affair, where you interested yourself so humanely, and thought me a proper instrument to procure mercy. I am, my Dear Sir, with the greatest truth and regard, your most Obedient, and most humble Servant,

PEMBROKE

¹George Augustus Selwyn (1719-91), M.P. for various boroughs, 1747-91, was known as a wit and a gambler; in his youth he had been an enthusiastic spectator of public executions (Namier and Brooke iii. 420-21).

²John St. John (1746-93) was a younger brother of the second Viscount Bolingbroke, a particular friend of Selwyn's. Selwyn and others in his circle frequently ridiculed St. John for his effeminate appearance and his lack of intellect. St. John was called to the bar in 1770, but he soon abandoned the law for Parliament, where he was M.P. for Newport, I.O.W. and for Eye, 1773-84 (Namier and Brooke iii. 400-01).

From Alexander Stevenson,¹

Wednesday 7 December 1774

MS. Yale (C 2551). Received 12 Dec. "Dr. Stevenson
Glasgow" (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esquire, Advocate, Edinburgh.

Glasgow, 7 Decr. 1774

DEAR SIR: This will be delivered into your hands by
your Client Mrs. Davison² who wishes to be recommended
to your friendly assistance. She has great merit in the
activity of Spirit she employs for the protection of her
children; and as her Circumstances are but narrow -- a
vexatious Law Suit, if protracted, will reduce her
greatly -- I make no doubt of your Attention to her as
Her Patron and hope you will add such private advice
as may be for her general Interest.

I say nothing to you just now about the 30 years
cause that I find myself engag'd in as one of Giels'
Creditors,³ but hope that Ilay Campbell⁴ and you will
soon bring it to a Conclusion --

I see your friend Dr. Johnson flaming high in his
Countrys cause while his pen like the Spear of Ithuriel
makes each mock Patriot start up in his proper form⁵ --

Pray does he intend to publish any thing in consequence of his visit to Scotland? But I cannot expect to hear from you in the throng of the Session as I see you have not only the usual run of business but suits about toasts⁶ and Doctors of Medicine,⁷ which will probably bring more profit to the Bar than Credit to the parties.

I wish I knew the fate of the gallant Paoli⁸ but I will not detain you longer than to beg my respectfull compliments to Mrs. Boswell and to assure you that I am with great regard, Dear Sir, Your most obedient Servant,

ALEXR. STEVENSON

¹Alexander Stevenson of Dalgain, Ayrshire (d. 1791), M.D. Glasgow 1749, was Professor of Medicine at the University of Glasgow (1766-89), and was currently President of the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons there (Univ. Glasgow, p. 81). JB and SJ had breakfasted with him on 29 Oct. 1773 (Life v. 369).

²Unidentified.

³John Geils was heavily in debt and in 1736 placed his estate in the hands of trustees who were to pay his creditors. Much of the land was sold, and disputes arose between the original creditors and the new owners of the land. In February 1773, the Lord Ordinary ruled that the past annual rents should be accumulated and interest paid by the new owners to the creditors. Many lawsuits followed. JB's precise connexion with the case is unknown; he refers in his notes to "Gilles Petition", and there is a later reference to "Ranking of Geils' Creditors" (Morison's Decisions, p. 14190; Consultation Book, 20 Jan., 13 June 1772, 9 July 1776; Notes, 9 Mar. 1773).

⁴Ilay Campbell (1734-1823) was one of the ablest and most scholarly lawyers of his time; JB described him as "the first writing lawyer at our bar" (Journ. 27 Aug.). Campbell was M.P. for Glasgow Burghs from 1784 until 1789, when he succeeded Thomas Miller as President of the Court of Session, and took the title of Lord Succoth. He was created a baronet in 1808 (Namier and Brooke ii. 184). His connexion with the Geils lawsuits is unknown.

⁵SJ's political pamphlet The Patriot, written on behalf of Henry Thrale and urging citizens to vote responsibly in the approaching election, had appeared in late November. The tract opens and concludes with quotations from Milton; Stevenson's allusion is to Paradise Lost iv. 810-14.

⁶Unidentified.

⁷The Memis case. See post From Pringle, 26 Jan. 1775.

⁸Pasquale Paoli (1725-1807), the Corsican nationalist leader whose cause JB had done so much to publicize, had been living in London since 1769; apparently Stevenson was unaware of this.

From Edward Dilly,

Monday 23 January 1775

MS. Yale (C 1074). Received 30 Jan. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esqr., Edingburgh.

FRANK: Free F. Bull.¹

POSTMARK: [London] 26 IA, FREE.

ENDORSEMENT: About Dr. Johnson's Western Islands.

London, Jany. 23rd 1775

DEAR SIR: I am happy to find the begining of the New Year, that you have resumed the Pen² -- I cannot account for the long Cessation of Correspondence, otherwise than your Making the Tour of the Western Isles, and my being absent from Town near four months last Summer, first in the East, and afterwards in the West of England, every moment of your Time during your perigrinations with The Colossus of Literature, was occupied -- the most remarkable occurances during that Tour is now offered to the Public View³ -- what the Scotch Nation will say of the Publication I cannot tell,⁴ to some, he has been polite, but to others very⁵ severe, his first observations are upon Inch Keith, which he says never afforded a permanent habitation for Man or Beast⁶ and that when he came to St. Andrews Mr. Boswell shewed him only one

Tree and recommended it to his notice -- A Tree in Scotland might be Shown as a Horse in Venice,⁷ and speaking of the Universities of Scotland he says "the Students for the most Part, go thither Boys, and depart before they are Men, they attain a mediocrity of knowledge, between learning and ignorance,"⁸ but when he comes to Ossian, he has no Mercy upon Macpherson, and poor Tom Becket⁹ -- of the former he says "he believes the Poems of Ossian never existed in any other form than what we have seen. The Editor, or Author never could shew the original, nor can it be shewn by other"¹⁰ -- and when he comes to poor Tom Becket he serves him, in a manner, as he did Tom Osborne, whom he knocked down with a folio,¹¹ by saying "I have yet Supposed no Imposture but in the Publisher,"¹² -- about 2 Days after the Publication poor Tom comes out with an Advertisement addressed to Dr. Johnson to exculpate himself from this heavy Charge,¹³ and¹⁴ some People say that they do not know how Mr. Macpherson can come off without having his Cane over the Author's Head, and to close the Story he says "the Scots have something to plead for their easy reception of an improbable fiction, they are seduced by their fondness for their supposed ancestors. A Scotchman must be a Sturdy Moralist,

who does not love Scotland better than Truth; he will always love it better than inquiry; and if falshood flatters his Vanity, will not be very diligent to detect it."¹⁵ So much for your fellow Traveller. The Book for the present moment will go off well the Name of the Author will sell it, but it is not calculated for a standing Sale and it is expected here to be pretty severely handled by the Reviewers¹⁶ -- Dr. Johnson has left a sufficient opening for the observations you may have made upon that Tour -- which I make no doubt will be very acceptable to the Public, as well as your Remarks on Holland and Germany.¹⁷ I hope you will bring both up in the Spring -- I shall be very happy to see you in Town in March, you know you are at Home when you are in the Poultry, a Room devoted to your Service, and an open Heart to bid you welcome.¹⁸

With respect to the Lottery Ticket if it had been registered you would have been Pestered with Letters from the Office, and perhaps an Express from the Post Office, in Case it had come up the Twenty Thousand but unfortunately as it has happened, though bought at Goodlucks, he proves an imposter, for he has sold a Ticket, and upon Examination it proves to be Ill-luck but the Imposter was

not discovered till the fourth Day of Drawing, what Steps I am to take to recover Damages I know not, as you are an advocate perhaps you may inform me, but as this Mr. Good-luck has so often imposed upon the Public, and is such an adept in throwing Dust in the Eyes of his Clients, I am of opinion it will be better to set down quietly with' the loss.¹⁹

As the Event has proved I am very happy in having no Concern in Carstares, Lord Kaimes Sketches and perhaps it may be so in the Western Tour, I am so sure of your friendly intentions, that I may always rely upon your recommendation in any New Work.²⁰

Your Piece for the L. M. will be inserted I believe this Month and Mr. Baldwin will be happy to hear from you every Month -- and likewise our friend Mr. W. will be happy to hear from The Rampager.²¹ With most respectful Compliments to self and Mrs. Boswell, I am, Dear Sir, ever Yours,

EDW. DILLY

P.S. Since I wrote the above I have just heard that Mr. Macpherson has wrote a pretty severe Letter to Dr.

Johnson, and the Dr. sent a very Laconic Answer in the following Words "I am not to be frightened from the detection of a cheat by the Menace of a Ruffian,"²²

²³H. S. Woodfall is very sorry Mr. Boswell Should have any occasion to complain of Want of Regularity in his being served with the P.A. which he will endeavour to have remedied -- H. S. W. is at present in very good Health, in Company with Msrs. Dilly, Baldwin, Becket, Henderson, H. W. Woodfall²⁴ -- who have just drunk his Health, and wish him their best Compliments.
King's College²⁵ Jan.24 1775

please not to mention from whom you received Dr. Johnson's answer.²⁶

¹Frederick Bull, alderman of London, formerly Lord Mayor. See ante From Bosville, 5 Mar. 1774, n. 13. The address and frank are written in Bull's hand.

²JB had written to Dilly on 14 Jan., apparently enclosing an article for Lond. Mag. ("Mr. Dilly -- L.M." Reg. Let., not reported). This article is unidentified; it was possibly a brief book review of The Decisions of the Court of Session from its Institution till the year 1764 ... arranged ... in the Form of a Dictionary (Lond. Mag. Jan. xlii. 90). JB was a part owner of Lond. Mag., 1769-85, and a frequent contributor.

³Dilly assumes that JB has not yet seen SJ's Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, published on 18 Jan., but JB had received an advance copy by post the same day and had stayed up most of the night reading it (Life ii. 290; iii. 94 and n. 4). For a detailed description of the publication of the first editions, see Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, ed. Mary Lascelles (Works SJ, Yale ed. ix), 1971, xxviii-xxxi.

⁴MS. "tell" written above "say" deleted.

⁵MS. "very" written above "equally" deleted.

⁶"Inch Keith is nothing more than a rock covered with a thin layer of earth . . . It seems never to have afforded to man or beast a permanent habitation" (Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 3).

⁷"A tree might be a show in Scotland as a horse in Venice. At St. Andrews Mr. Boswell found only one, and recommended it to my notice" (Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 10).

⁸Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 160.

⁹Thomas Becket (fl. 1760-76), bookseller, publisher of Ossian, and, like Dilly, a partner of Lond. Mag. (Dictionary of Printers, pp. 20-21).

¹⁰Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 118.

¹¹A much-circulated story held that SJ had argued with Thomas Osborne (d. 1767), a London bookseller, and had knocked him down, but SJ claimed that the tale was an exaggeration (Life i. 154 and n. 2).

¹²Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 119.

¹³The advertisement appeared in at least six London newspapers, 20-24 Jan., and announced that the original manuscripts of Ossian's poems had been in Becket's shop "for many months in the year 1762", and that they had at length been returned to Macpherson "in whose hands they still remain" (H. L. McGuffie, Samuel Johnson in the British Press 1749-1784, 1976, pp. 136-38; the advertisement is reprinted in Life ii. 510-11). Dilly enclosed with this letter three clippings from Pub. Adv.: Becket's advertisement (20 Jan.), a satiric announcement of a "Meeting of Scotch Tutors" held to protest SJ's remarks about Scottish universities (20 Jan.), and a report of that alleged meeting (24 Jan.).

¹⁴MS. "I do not know" deleted after "and"

¹⁵Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 119. SJ wrote "A Scotchman must be a very sturdy moralist..."

¹⁶Most London reviewers were favourable; most Scottish reviewers were not. By far the most space in the press was devoted to the Ossianic controversy. The first 4000 copies sold quickly, but the demand then slackened; a second edition did not appear until 1785 (J. L. Clifford and D. J. Greene, Samuel Johnson, A Survey and Bibliography of Critical Studies, 1970, pp. 249-51; W. P. Courtney and D. N. Smith, A Bibliography of Samuel Johnson, 1925, pp. 118-19; McGuffie, pp. 136-57).

¹⁷This suggests that JB was now considering publishing his Journal of the tour as a kind of supplement to SJ's Journey. See ante To Pringle, 2 Feb. 1774 and n. 15; Tour, ed. R. W. Chapman, 1924, pp. xv-xvi.

Charles Dilly eventually published the Tour in 1785. JB never published his "remarks" on Holland and Germany, although he had "a variety of materials" on the subject, largely drawn from his travels there in 1763-64 (Life iii. 300).

¹⁸"Mr. Dilly insisted on my lodging there [at his house in the Poultry]. He wanted to have me altogether, but at any rate insisted I should stay that night, and whenever I was late in the City end of the town, should always come to my room there and consider it as my home" (Journ. 19 Mar. 1772). JB frequently accepted the Dillys' hospitality; during his London visit of this year he spent a number of nights with them (Journ. 21-23 Mar., 4-5, 7, 17 Apr.).

¹⁹Dilly has also purchased lottery tickets for JB in the Lottery of 1772; these, too, had returned nothing (From Dilly, 5 Oct., 21 Dec. 1772). In 1774, drawing for the State Lottery began on 14 Nov. and ended on 3 Jan. 1775. The government distributed 20,011 prizes, ranging in value from £20 to the two largest of £20,000 each. Holders of South Sea annuities or consols were entitled to purchase six £12 10s. tickets for every £100 of holdings which they relinquished to the government. Thus lottery ticket agents bought up the annuities, transferred them to the government, and then sold tickets and fractions of tickets to the public. Illegal but common practices included wagering on the numbers to come up, selling ticket "insurance", and selling duplicate tickets. The last is apparently what happened to Dilly and JB. In 1778 some efforts began toward licensing ticket agents, but no controls ever proved effective and in 1826 the Annual State Lottery was discontinued (C. L'E. Ewen, Lotteries and Sweepstakes, 1932, pp. 201-02, 243; R. D. Richards, "The Lottery in the History of English Government Finance", Economic History III. ix. 1934, 57-76). "Richardson and Goodluck" ran advertisements for lottery tickets in the London papers of Oct. and Nov.: "The tickets, shares, and chances, are selling at their Offices in the Bank-buildings, Cornhill, and facing the Mews gate, Charing-cross, where every business of the Lottery is transacted with correctness and fidelity" (Lond. Chron. 3-5 Nov. 1774, xxxvi. 435). This firm was still in business in 1808 (Ewen, p. 271).

²⁰Thomas Cadell published all three works: State=papers and Letters addressed to William Carstares, Confidential Secretary to King William during the Whole of his Reign; afterwards Principal of the University of Edinburgh, 1774; Henry Home, Lord Kames, Sketches of the History of Man, 1774, and SJ's Journey. JB found Carstares's Letters "a dull, uninteresting collection" (Journ. 13 Nov. 1774; 11 Jan. 1776); apparently the book was not popular; and it was not republished. JB describes Lord Kames's Sketches as "very inferior compilations" (Journ. 18 Oct.); however, at least seven subsequent editions of this work appeared before 1819.

²¹Robert Baldwin (d. 1810) published Lond. Mag.; he was also among those who published SJ's edition of Shakespeare in 1765. Henry Sampson Woodfall (1739-1805), a printer in Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, 1758-1805, published Pub. Adv., in which about a dozen of JB's essays had appeared over the pseudonym "Rampager" (CBEL, 1971, ii. 1224-25). Since 1767, Pub. Adv. had also printed about a dozen short items by JB, most of them on Corsican affairs, as well as a number of unsigned notices about JB's travels, which F. A. Pottle also attributes to JB (Dictionary of Printers, pp. 14, 269-70; Lit. Car., pp. 255-58).

²²Macpherson had somehow seen SJ's remarks on Ossian before publication of Journey, for he wrote his letter to SJ, via Strahan, on 15 Jan. SJ's reply is dated 20 Jan.; JB's "true copy" of this letter appears in Life ii. 298. (For a detailed discussion of this dispute, see also Life ii. 511-14.) SJ's famous remark was quoted in St. James's Chron. (28-31 Jan.) as: "I shall never be frightened from detecting a Cheat, by the Menaces of a R--ff--n." The similarity between this and Dilly's version may be partially explained by the fact that St. James's Chron. was published by Robert Baldwin's brother, Charles (Thomas Rees, Reminiscences of Literary London from 1779-1853, 1896, pp. 36-37; post To Pembroke, 22 Mar. n. 9).

²³This paragraph is in H. S. Woodfall's hand.

²⁴Andrew Henderson (fl. 1734-75) was a bookseller and a writer of a variety of works, including two attacks on SJ: Letter to Dr. Samuel Johnson on his Journey to the Western Isles, and A Second Letter to Dr. Samuel Johnson, both 1775. Nothing is known of Henderson after this date. H. William Woodfall (1746-1803), H. S. Woodfall's younger brother, was a parliamentary reporter and drama critic. He edited The London Packet from 1772 to 1774, when he joined Morn. Chron.

²⁵Unidentified. The reading "College" is uncertain.

²⁶This request and the postscript are written by Dilly but in a cramped hand, and fitted around Woodfall's note, indicating that Dilly added his note after Woodfall's and suggesting that Dilly learned of SJ's exchange with Macpherson during his meeting with the other printers.

From Sir John Pringle,

Thursday 26 January 1775

MS. Yale (C 2309). Received 30 Jan. (Reg. Let.).

Lond. 26 Jan. 1775

DEAR SIR: Yesterday, for the first time in my life, I had the honour to be consulted in a point of law, in relation to the most extraordinary Cause I ever heard of,¹ not excepting that of the pye balled horses of Swift,² the proces concerning the puppies in Racine,³ nor those that have appeared at the bar of Mr. Foote, in the Haymarket.⁴ I am sorry that it should have happened in our country, as it will ever rivet the character it has already got among its neighbours, of our love of Law and litigation, and going together by the ears upon the slightest pretences. You'll not wonder then at my not being satisfied with the interlocutor of the ordinary Lord, who instead of giving a decision (indeed a proper one, if the suit deserved a serious consideration) should have dismissed it, upon the first hearing of the plaintiff, as too flimsy and frivolous and foolish, to enter a court of justice.

But, however, since this weighty matter must penetrate even into the inner house, and as you must make your appearance upon the occasion, I shall with pleasure furnish you with materials I can, as far as I am qualified as a physician, and as a Scotchman that has not been quite inattentive to the modes of expression of a people, among whom he has lived during the former war, and ever since; upon the whole above these 30 years.⁵

Medicinae Doctor, with submission to you, is as properly in English, as in Scotch, translated by Doctor of Medicine; nay more properly than by Doctor of Physic: for though both are used, the former has more of dignity, as being directly the interpretation of the latin expression. Whereas physic coming from the Greek⁶ and Latin word physica (in the latter, res or some such word being understood) did not originally mean medicine in particular, but natural Knowledge in general. In strictness therefore of language Doctor of Physic ought to import Doctor of Natural Knowledge, or of Natural Philosophy. And in fact the French always mean a Naturalist, when they call a man un phisicien, and never a physician, for which they have no other term than Medecin. Thus, they said Descartes et Cassendi sont les phisiciens modernes les

plus fameux; and every body knows that the former was gentleman, and no physician; and the latter, a canon of the Church and a professor of Mathematics,⁷ I remember Sully, in his memoirs, taking notice, as an oddity, of our King James telling him, he was to consult his phisicien about his health; for so (says the Historian) do the English denominate their medecin.⁸ The origin of this abuse of the word physicus, and confounding it with medicus, in this country, seems to have come in with the Saxons; for at this day in Germany, in many of their towns they have a learned person, pensioned, whom they call the physicus of that place, whose business it is, at least was, to give advice to the Magistracy, when consulted, concerning every matter⁹ of Natural Knowledge respecting the police¹⁰ of the community. But whether it was, that the health of the inhabitants was considered as the principle object, or because, excepting the Medici, there were none that were conversant in the res physica or Natural Knowledge, it happened that seldom any other were made physici of the towns, but the Medici. Thus the two words became confounded, first by the vulgar; and afterwards, as it generally falls out, the learned are compelled to use the same expressions. But, as I have observed above, this abuse has prevailed only¹¹ in the

Vernacular language of this country, there being as far as I know, no other people in Europe, who distinguish their medici by a word originally signifying Natural Knowledge.¹²

But notwithstanding the power of the multitude of introducing improprieties into the language of the country, they have not been able so fully to suppress the word medicine, nor so much as considerably to alter its signification. Though Physic for Medicina is the common expression, yet medicine is frequently used by the learned, and in spite of that celebrated Lexicographer, whom you quote, it is employed for the art in general as well as for drugs, and if I am not much mistaken oftner of the two.¹³ We certainly often say medicines when we mean drugs or remedies -- but so did the Romans: they said both ars medica when they spoke of medicine as a Science; and medicina when they talk of a remedy given to cure a disease. Thus for the distemper of Love, Ovid,

-- sero medicina paratur,

Cum mala per longas invaluere moras.¹⁴

There the word paratur implies a preparation of some medicine. But on the other hand, Varro says, ab arte medicinâ medicus, a sutrinâ sutor.¹⁵ But as this is a

passage (and the only one I have met with, among either ancients or moderns) where medicina is used as an adjective, I shall offer you a most unexceptionable authority from one of¹⁶ the standards of Roman purity, as well as of ancient medicine, for the word medicina signifying the healing art, or Science itself. It is in the very first sentences of Celsus: Ut alimenta sanis corporibus Agricultura, sic sanitatem agris Medicina promittit.¹⁷ Now if Agricultura is used by Celsus to express a certain art or Science, which we call Agriculture, so certainly Medicina must be understood to mean another art or Science, call we it medicine or physic. Again in the same author, at a leaf's distance we read. Iisdemque temporibus in tres partes medicina deducta est; ut una esset, quae victu; altera, quae medicamentis: tertia, quae manu mederetur.¹⁸ Who does not see here likewise, that the word Medicina comprehends every branch of the Salutory art?

Let us next see whether you have not run a risk of being misled by your learned friend, in imagining that Medicine, in English, signified only drugs or remedies. In the first quoted passage of Celsus, you are sensible that by medicina is implied the Scientia or ars sanandi, in general. How then is it translated into

English by Dr. Grieve, a true born Englishman, a reputed scholar and though a young man, has been distinguished by being appointed one of the physicians of St. Thomas's hospital? "As agriculture promises food to the healthy, so medecine promises health to the sick."¹⁹ In other places the same translator turns medecina by physic; and as it were alternately, by way of relieving the ear by the variety of Sound; an affected elegance I can not approve. Quincy, bred an apothecary, and no scholar, wrote a physical Dictionary;²⁰ Dr. James, regularly educated, published a medicinal Dictionary.²¹ Upon the whole, take my word for it, that medicine is a perfectly genuine and approved English word, and a most proper translation of the Latin²² medicina, in all its little variations of sense.

If it be still objected, that as medicine sometimes signifies drugs only, a man may be affronted by being denominated Doctor of Medicine, as it might be interpreted Doctor of Drugs; but our very delicate brother ought to consider, that he will not be better off, by being designed Doctor of Physic; since the last word (Physic) has still a²³ more indelicate equivoque: it is the common expression, as you know, all over England, as well as Scotland, to signify a purge; hence

Doctor of Physic may import a Doctor of Purges; and by another little twist one on such an occasion may get the name of a sh--ing or a sh--n Doctor.

You will be able to distinguish what in this letter is jest what in earnest: indeed I am serious through out, except in the very last lines. But remember that I am not to be quoted neither at the bar nor in private companies on this occasion. I shall except Mrs. Boswell, and will not hinder you from reading the whole letter to your father, but should rather wish you did it, even the very last line, post rem judicatam.²⁴

I return to you and Mrs. Boswell the best compliments of the season, and I shall not be long of writing to you on another subject.²⁵ Till then adieu.

¹JB had written Pringle on 20 Jan. (Reg. Let., not reported) to ask his advice about a case brought against JB's client, the Royal Infirmary of Aberdeen, by Dr. John Memis. Memis had complained that in a translation of the charter of the Infirmary from Latin, the phrase medicinae doctor was in one place rendered "physician", but when applied to him was translated "doctor of medicine". When the phrase was not altered, Memis brought suit for damages, charging that "doctor of medicine" was an inferior appellation which suggested that he was not a physician, and therefore hurt his practice.

The case was first heard on 2 Dec. 1774, before Lord Auchinleck as Lord Ordinary, who ordered memorials from the lawyers on both sides: JB for the defence and Sir John Dalrymple (1726-1810) and John Maclaurin for Memis. On 15 Dec., Lord Auchinleck read the "elaborate" memorials and dismissed the action as "groundless" (Cal. Merc. 3 Dec. 1774, p. [2]; Edin. Adv. 16-20 Dec. 1774, xxii. 398). Memis appealed, so the case then went to the Inner House or full court; the first hearing there was reported in Edin. Adv. 17-20 Jan. (xxiii. 44): "This day was presented to the Court of Session, a very ingenious reclaiming petition, drawn by Sir John Dalrymple, for Dr. John Memis, physician in Aberdeen, against the interlocutor of Lord Auchinleck ... Several of their Lordships spoke a little upon the cause, and answers were ordered to be put in. Mr. Boswell, counsel for the defenders, begged to have a longer time than usual allowed him for drawing the answers, as he wished to consult some people on the other end of the Island; but the motion was over-ruled". On 19 Jan., JB wrote to SJ requesting his opinion; for this correspondence, see Life ii. 291, 297, 372-73. After several more hearings, the Court decided against Memis. Despite having argued for the Infirmary, JB was sorry for Dr. Memis: "I thought him injured" (Journ. 30 Nov. 1776; Life iii. 101; Morison's Decisions, Appendix, i. 5-8).

²Pringle is referring to The Case of Stradling versus Stiles by Martinus Scriblerus, which was probably written by Alexander Pope and William Fortescue in 1716. (Joseph Spence, Anecdotes, Observations, and Characters of Books and Men, 1820, p. 145). It was first published in The Swift-Pope Miscellanies in Prose and Verse, 1727, ii. 292-96. The satiric lawsuit turns upon whether

"black and white horses" can mean black horses, white horses, and "pied" horses.

³Les Plaideurs, III. iii, in which a dog is tried for stealing a capon.

⁴Satire aimed at the lawcourts was a favourite device of Samuel Foote's; of his plays produced during the previous summer season at the Haymarket Theatre, The Bankrupt, The Cozeners, and The Devil Upon Two Sticks all contained parodies of legal situations (The London Stage, ed. G.W. Stone, Jr. 1962, IV, iii. 1820-27).

⁵Although not known as a linguist, Pringle may have coined the word "antiseptic" (Sydney Selwyn, "Sir John Pringle", Medical History, July 1966. x. no. 3. 170).

⁶MS. "from the the Greek"

⁷Rene Descartes (1596-1650) was the son of a town councilman of some local prestige; he took a degree in law at the University of Poitiers, 1616. Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655) was appointed provost of the cathedral at Digne in 1634, and became professor of mathematics at the College Royal in Paris in 1645.

⁸Memoires de Maximilien de Bethune duc de Sully, 1767, IV, xv, 330-31. Sully and James I are discussing Henry IV of France; King James expresses his regret that Henry has been forbidden to hunt by his physicians.

⁹MS. "relating to" deleted after "matter"

¹⁰MS. "and the kings" deleted after "police"

¹¹MS. "here" deleted after "only"

¹²Pringle's etymology is inaccurate. The English words "physician" and "medicine" were borrowed before 1500, when both French cognates referred to the healing arts. By the eighteenth century, physicien had only recently lost its medical connotation in French (Oscar Bloch, Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Francaise, 1932).

¹³"Medicine n.s. (medicina, Lat.) Physick: any remedy administered by a physician" (SJ's Dictionary).

¹⁴"Too late is the medicine prepared, when the disease has gained strength by long delay" (Remedia Amoris, trans. J. H. Mozley, Loeb ed., 91-92, "con-valuere" for "invaluere").

¹⁵Pringle has condensed a longer passage: "For artisans the chief cause of the names is the art, itself, that is, that from the ars medicina 'medical art' the medicus 'physician' should be named, and from the ars sutrina 'shoemaker's art' the sutor 'shoemaker', and not directly from meden 'to cure' and suere 'to sew'..." (De Lingua Latina, trans. R.G. Kent, Loeb ed., v. 93).

¹⁶MS. "one" deleted after "unexceptionable"; "authority" written above. "one of" inserted after "from". The line originally read "offer you a most unexceptionable one from the"

¹⁷"Just as agriculture promises nourishment to healthy bodies, so does the Art of Medicine promise health to the sick" (De Medicina, tran. W.G. Spencer, Loeb ed., i. 2-3).

¹⁸"During the same times [c.300B.C.] the Art of Medicine was divided into three parts: one being that which cures through diet, another through medicaments, and the third by hand" (Loeb ed., i. 6-7).

¹⁹James Grieve, or Greive (d. 1773), M.D. Edinburgh 1752, in 1756 translated A. Cornelius Celsus, Of Medicine, with notes. Grieve was appointed to St. Thomas's Hospital in 1764.

²⁰John Quincy (d. 1722), M.D. Edinburgh 1712, was first an apothecary's assistant, then practised medicine as an apothecary in London. His various writings suggest he knew little of clinical medicine. In 1717 he published Lexicon Physicomedicum, based on a medical lexicon of Bartholomew Castellus (1628).

²¹Robert James (1705-76) was educated at the Lichfield Grammar School and St. John's College, Oxford, and received his M.D. from Cambridge in 1728. He published A Medicinal Dictionary, 1743-45, for which SJ wrote the dedication. He was best known for his "James's Fever Powders".

²²MS. "word" deleted after "Latin"

²³MS. "less" deleted after "a"

²⁴"After the case is decided."

²⁵Post From Pringle, 8 Feb.

From Sir John Pringle,

Wednesday 8 February 1775 (1)

MS. Yale (C 2311). Received 14 Feb. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr. Advocate, Edinr.

FRANK: Free Jas Pringle.¹

POSTMARK: FREE, 9 FE.

Lond. 8 Feb.

The author presents his Compliments to Mr. Boswell, and desires his acceptance of the inclosed tessera amicitiae.²

In the other cover he purposes writing a few lines, but in case he should not he begs Mr. B. to present the author's best respects to his much esteemed friend Mrs. Boswell.

¹James Pringle (1726-1809), later Sir James Pringle of Stichell, Bart., was John Pringle's nephew and M.P. for Berwickshire (1761-1779) (Namier and Brooke iii. 332-33).

²The "token of friendship" enclosed was Pringle's recently published speech, delivered to the Royal Society when he awarded the Copley Medal to John Walsh for his work on the torpedo (the electric ray or cramp fish): A Discourse on the Torpedo, delivered at the Anniversary Meeting of the Royal Society, Nov. 30, 1774. By Sir John Pringle, Bart., President. Published by their order. It was reviewed in Lond. Chron. (7-9 Feb. 1775) xxxvii. 129. See also ante From Pringle, 29 Jan. 1774 nn. 2, 4.

From Sir John Pringle,

Wednesday 8 February 1775 (2)

MS. Yale (C 2310). Received 714 Feb. (Reg. Let.).¹

MY GOOD FRIEND, I was sorry to hear lately, by accident, that in your affair of the elections for the Shire of Air, you had shewn a spirit of opposition to the inclinations of your father, which were keenly engaged on that occasion.² I hope the report was not true, and that you could not so far have your reason eclipsed, as to make such a trip, as could not be defended either on ethical or political principles -- "Honour thy father etc." And "can a kingdom divided against itself stand?" How should you expect that a friend would serve you, and yours, (in case of his survivance) if you will not make the smallest effort yourself to do it, and that upon the most critical conjuncture.³ Your father I hear, had never anything more at heart; and the man he took by the hand was a person of the most unexceptionable character. Fortune, methinks, could not have presented a more favourable opportunity for you to have ingratiated your self with your parent, by entering into his views with all your ardour; and I am sure that there were none on the opposite side that would have condemned you -- But

all this only in case fame did you no injustice -- If
otherwise, I heartily ask you pardon.

¹This letter has been tentatively dated from the reference in From Pringle, 8 Feb. (1): "In the other cover he purposes writing a few lines", from the reference to JB's apology in From Pringle, 10 Mar., and from the Reg. Let., which gives only one entry for 14 Feb., but shows no other letters from Pringle during the appropriate time span. This letter appears to have been wrapped around something, possibly another copy of Pringle's Discourse.

²In the last Parliamentary elections in Ayrshire, 13 Oct. 1774, JB had supported the candidacy of David Kennedy, who was also backed by his brother, the Earl of Cassillis, and by the Earls of Loudon and Eglinton. After JB had declared himself, Robert Dundas (1713-87), Solicitor-General, urged Lord Auchinleck to deliver the Auchinleck interest to Sir Adam Fergusson, the opposing, and ultimately successful, candidate. This Lord Auchinleck did, even though he had always criticized such use of landholding power in an election. JB felt that his father had acted against his own principles and had publicly embarrassed his son as well. This episode caused continuing friction between JB and his father, as well as a seven-year rift between JB and Dundas (Journ. 6 Aug. 1774; 24 Apr. 1780; Pol. Car. pp. 59-87; Defence, p. 258 n. 8; Ominous Years, p. 9 n. 6).

³MS. "occasion" deleted, "conjuncture" written above.

From Godfrey Bosville,

Monday 13 February 1775

MS. Yale (C 189). Received 18 Feb. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr. at Edinburgh.

London, Feb. 13th 1775

DEAR SIR: Your fears that we have begun with the Americans too soon I think are not well founded,¹ for whether we reduce them to an equall footing with the rest of the Kings subjects, or whether they get clear of us, as they seem to aim at, I cannot tell, but certainly now is our time before they grow stronger to try with them. This must show us how impolitick it is to extend dominions too far, The Roman Empire when it grew too large fell to pieces, The Empire of the Caliphs was divided among their Generals the Sultans, The-Short-lived Empires of Alexander Gengiscan and Tamerlane were likewise divided among their Generals, and the only part which remaind to Tamerlanes Successors the Mogul Empire being still too big is in fact divided amongst the Governors.² Persia too by what we can hear is split into pieces among the powerful Cans, and its all that ever the Policy of the Grand Viziers and the Turkish Veneration for the Ottoman race can do, to hinder that

Empire too from being divided amongst the powerful
 Bassas witness the frequent Insurrections of the
 Bassas of Bagdat, Aleppo, Grand Cairo, and other places.³
 The landed interest in this Kingdom seem firmly united
 to support the authority of the King and Parliament, and
 whatever we may suffer in our trade they will suffer much
 more, for their Newfoundland fishing being stopd will
 hinder them from loading their Ships with fish for Italy
 and with Italian goods from thence to England.⁴ Whereas
 their trade to us is only for what they want, and they
 inconvenience themselves at the same time they hurt us,
 and that they will not do long, if our Government is
 steady as they seem likely to be. Some of them less
 Zealous than the rest will break through the non-importa-
 tion agreement: they did so before when they met with
 no resistance.⁵ I believe I shall never see that same
 old father of yours, because I very much desire it, and
 we are often dissappointed in what we set our minds on:⁶
 I believe not in the Celebrated Cato's Soliloquy, that
 we shall have immortality because we wish for it.⁷ I
 knew a Gentleman⁸ many years ago at Chester that never
 saw a Coach and six go through the town but he repind
 and cryd, Why shoud these fellows go in this State!
 Why should not I have been born to ride as they do'
 He was reckond a very sensible man and a Scholar. But

to me, though not to others, his Malignity of temper obscurd his parts. I have no reason to adopt⁹ my Opinion, for whatever I have wishd for I have commonly had. I wishd for this house I live in, and while I was ill Mrs. Bosville bought it, for it was then to be sold.¹⁰ I protest I never wishd for either of the two Estates that were left me: but I wishd for an affluence more than I had, but never for so much as I have got.¹¹ Mr. Claude Bosville calld on me in his way to France; whether he is still there, or returnd to Scotland, I never heard.¹² Mrs., Miss Bosville and Capt. Bosville¹³ joyn in our Compliments to you and your Lady. I wish you had been here to have dind with Dr. Solander and Omai,¹⁴ I think you would have been pleasd with them both. My youngest son is with Sir Tho. Wentworth till I get him into the Guards: Some of the Guards are to go as I am told to Boston: Very likely one or both of my sons may go there.¹⁵ The Out Settlers who servd so well in the last war, I hear will joyn the English Army.¹⁶ I never mention Politicks before Govr. Johnson Alderman Bull, Ld. Mayor Wilks¹⁷ and some other of my Patriotick acquaintance, no more that I talk religion to my Catholic friends; I

would not treat a Jew with Pork, nor a Ochahitee man
with a roasted Rat.¹⁸ I am, Dear Sir, <your> affectionate
Kinsman,

GODFREY BOSVILLE

¹JB's last known letter to Bosville was sent 8 Nov. 1774 (Reg. Let., not reported). See ante To Oglethorpe, 2 Apr. 1774, in which JB worries that "parliament is proceeding with too much violence and precipitation".

²The empire of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.) was divided after his death into Macedon, Egypt, and the Empire of the Seleucids. Temujin, Jenghis Khan (1162-1227) established the Mongol empire which dominated China until 1368; in the 16th century, Mongolia was divided among descendants of Jenghis. Timur or Tamerlane (?1336-1405) extended his Mogul empire through the Middle East to India; his empire was divided among his descendants after his death. The remnants of the Mogul Empire in India were captured by the Afghan general, Ahmad Shah, in the years 1752-62.

³Although currently Karim Khan, ruler of Persia 1750-79, was maintaining a much needed period of peace and prosperity, the years immediately preceding his rule had been marked by fierce disputes between many contenders for the throne, among them Mir Alum Khan, Jefar Khan, and Mardan Ali Khan (Percy Sykes, A History of Persia, 1969, pp. 275-81). The Pasha (Bosville's "Bassa") of Baghdad, Umr Pasha, had murdered his predecessor, Ali Pasha, in 1764, and was himself deposed a few months after this letter was written (S. H. Longrigg, Four Centuries of Modern Iraq, 1925, pp. 172-82). For a description of the continuous uprisings in Aleppo, and the rapid succession there of rulers or pashas throughout this period, see H. L. Bodman Jr., "Political Factions in Aleppo, 1760-1826" The James Sprunt Studies in History and Political Science, xlv. (1963), 103-11. In Cairo, Ali Bey expelled the Ottoman pasha from Egypt in 1769 and claimed independence from the Porte. He was soon betrayed, and died in 1773, but he had established the precedent of a Mameluk pasha in Egypt (P. K. Hitti, A History of the Arabs, 1970, tenth ed., pp. 720-21). With all these examples Bosville is simply pointing out that the Ottoman or Osmanli Turks, the Turkish ruling class, were unable to prevent regional native leaders from assuming local power within the Ottoman Empire.

⁴The New England Restraining Act had been introduced by Lord North on 10 Feb. and was signed into law on 30 Mar. This Act prohibited the New England colonies from trading with any nation except Great Britain and Ireland, and denied New England fishermen access to the fishing banks of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. According to facts submitted during the debate over this Bill in the House of Commons, English ships still dominated the Newfoundland fishing industry, but colonial interests were expanding fast (S. E. Morison, The Oxford History of the American People, 1965, p. 210; Ann. Reg. 1775, pp. 78-93). Few English or colonial fishing ships traded with Italy; most followed triangular trade routes from North Atlantic fisheries to England by way of Spain or Portugal, although a few stopped at Leghorn, a free port. Italian imports to England had been limited to currants and olive oil, but recently the demand was growing for Italian raw silk and silk yarn (Ralph Davis, The Rise of the English Shipping Industry, 1962, pp. 235-45).

⁵The American colonists initiated the first non-importation agreements in 1767, in response to the Townshend Acts; colonists urged each other to abstain from buying English manufactured goods and tea. These efforts were largely abandoned in 1769, in part because of the colonists' divided sympathies. In Sept. 1774, the Continental Congress passed a non-importation agreement to take effect on 1 Dec. 1774, and also passed an agreement not to export goods to Great Britain after 10 Sept. 1775 unless the Coercive Acts were repealed (Morison, 197-99, 207-08).

⁶He saw him two and a half years later; see ante From Bosville, 5 Mar. 1774 n. 10.

⁷Joseph Addison, Cato, V. i.

⁸Unidentified.

⁹Bosville apparently means "adapt".

¹⁰Bosville refers to the house on Great Russell Street; the date of purchase is unknown, but it was prior to 1757 (A. E. B. Macdonald, p. 131).

¹¹See ante From Bosville, 5 Mar. 1774 n. 11.

¹²Claud Irvine Boswell (1742-1824), later Lord Balmuto, a judge in the Court of Session, was Lord Auchinleck's first cousin. The date of his trip to France is unknown. As an advocate, however, he was required to be in Scotland during the Court of Session terms, and he had remained in Edinburgh during the last autumn recess (Journ. 11 Oct. 1774). So possibly the trip took place during the previous spring recess (11 Mar. - 14 June 1774).

¹³His wife Mrs. Bosville, and two of his children: Julia and Capt. William Bosville. See ante From Bosville, 5 Mar. 1774 nn. 12, 15.

¹⁴Daniel Charles Solander (1735-82), Swedish naturalist, was secretary to Sir Joseph Banks and had accompanied him on Captain Cook's first voyage to the South Seas on the Endeavour. JB met him in 1772 at Sir John Pringle's house in London and Solander had later visited JB in Edinburgh (Journ. 22 Mar. 1772; Notes 12-18 Nov. 1772). Omai, also "Mai" or "Omiah", was a South Sea Islander, about 22 years old, who had been brought to England by Captain Furneaux of the Adventure in July 1774. An object of much curiosity in London, he met the King, dined with the Royal Society, and was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds. JB does not mention meeting him. He returned to Tahiti with Cook in 1777, taking with him such souvenirs as a jack-in-the-box, numerous firearms, and a complete suit of armour. A later visitor to the South Seas, William Ellis, reported that Omai incurred only resentment from other islanders, and "passed the remainder of his life in inglorious indolence or wanton crime" (The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks, 1768-1771, ed. J. C. Beaglehole, 1962, i. 102-07; Gent. Mag., Aug. 1774, xliv. 388, 441; Edward Smith, Life of Sir Joseph Banks. 1911, pp. 41-42; Ellis, Polynesian Researches, 1829, 2nd ed. [1834], ii. 369).

¹⁵ Thomas Bosville, the youngest son, joined the Coldstream Guards on 26 May (Army List, 1775, p. 51; see also ante From Bosville, 5 Mar. 1774, nn. 10, 15). In Feb. 1776 a composite battalion was formed of both Grenadier and Coldstream Guards; this battalion of 1000 men and 30 officers joined Howe in New York in Aug. 1776 (R. J. Marker, The Record of the Coldstream Guards 1650-1950, 1950, pp. 13-14; C. T. Atkinson, "British Forces in North America 1774-1781", Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research, 1937, xvi. no 61. 7) William Bosville was with this battalion but Thomas may not have been, for on 7 Apr. 1777, Godfrey Bosville wrote to JB: "Capt. Bosville has stood the Campagne, but has suffered in his health, and is gone I hear to Barbados ... Thomas is in Yorkshire recruiting".

¹⁶ Possibly Bosville's faulty information comes from the "Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman of Distinction at Boston, dated Dec. 26": "I am glad to tell you that the back settlements in general disapprove of the nonimportation resolves ... Most of [the] officers that served [in the] last war are ready to serve under their old Colonels" (Lond. Chron., Feb. 7-9, xxxvii. 134).

¹⁷ George Johnstone (1730-87) was governor of West Florida 1763-67, and after his return to England was M.P. for various constituencies, 1768-87. He continued to be called "Governor Johnstone" throughout his Parliamentary career and was known for his belligerent and tactless behaviour (Namier and Brooke ii. 683-85). Frederick Bull was an alderman of London; for Bull and Wilkes, see ante From Bosville, 5 Mar. 1774 nn. 5, 13. Both Bull and Wilkes were sympathetic to the American cause; Johnstone opposed Lord North's American policy but also objected to the colonists' demands.

¹⁸ This seems a frivolous allusion: contemporary accounts of Tahiti noted that rats were the only wild quadrupeds there, and that the natives ate domestic dogs, but did not refer to the sort of taboo that Bosville's remark suggests (Ann. Reg. 1773, p. 2).

From George Dempster,¹

Thursday 16 February 1775

MS. Yale (C 946). Received 20 Feb. (Reg. Let.).

JB has edited the MS. throughout and added page numbers; it formed Paper Apart "GD" at p. 738 of the MS. of the Tour (Life v. 407-09). The letter is given here as Dempster wrote it, with JB's changes and deletions given in footnotes.

Differences between this and the printed version have been noted only if significant; other divergencies, usually of spelling or punctuation, have been ignored.

HEADING in Edmund Malone's hand: G.D. To James Boswell Esqr., Edinburgh.

Dunnichen,² 16 Feb., 1775

MY DEAR BOSWELL:³ I cannot ommit⁴ a moment to return you my best thanks for the entertainment you have furnished me, my Family, and Guests, by the perusal of Your Tour thro' the Hebrides,⁵ and now for my Sentiments of it.⁶ lmo. It is printed on a very imposing pick pocket paper and Print. Its solid contents might and to a man in Johnsons Circumstances they ought to have been comprized in a two shilling Book. He does not want

money and an author who is not necessitous ought to watch the Printers and Publishers, being the only check upon their rapacity and extortion. Well said in me who has got the Book for nothing.⁷

2d.⁶ I was well entertained. His descriptions are accurate and vivid. He carried me on the Tour along with him. I am pleased with the Justice he has done to Your humour and vivacity. The "noise of the wind" "being all its own"⁸ is a bon-mot that it would have been a pity to have omitted,⁹ and a robbery not to have ascribed to its author.¹⁰ There is nothing in the Book, from beginning to end, that a Scotchman need to take amiss. What he says of the Country is true, and his observations on the People are what must naturally occur to a sensible, observing, and reflecting inhabitant of a convenient Metropolis, where a man on 30£ a year may be better accommodated with all the little wants of Life, than Col or Sir Hector¹¹ He reasons candidly about the second sight;¹² but I wish he had enquired more¹³ before he ventured to say he even doubted of the possibility of such an unusual and useless deviation from all the known Laws of Nature. The notion of the second sight I consider as a remnant of superstitious¹⁴ Ignorance and Credulity, which A Philossopher will set down as

such, till the contrary is clearly proved, and then it will be classed among the other certain, though unaccountable, parts of our Nature, like dreams and -- I do not know what.

In regard to the language, it has the merit of being all his own. Many words of foreign extraction are used, where, I believe, common ones would do as well, especially on familiar occasions. Yet I believe he could not express himself so forcibly¹⁵ in any other Stile. I am charmed with his researches concerning the Erse Language, and the Antiquity of their Manuscripts.¹⁶ I am quite convinced; and I shall rank Ossian and his Fingals and Oscars among the Nursery Tales, not the true History of our Country, in all time to come.

Upon the whole, the Book cannot displease, for it has no pretensions. The author says he neither is a Geographer¹⁷ nor an Antiquarian, nor very learned in the History of Scotland, nor a Naturalist, nor a Fossilist. The manners of the People, and the Face of the Country, is¹⁸ all he attempts to describe, or seems to have thought of. Much were it to be wished, that they who have travelled into more remote and of course more curious regions had all possessed his good sense. Of the state of learning, his observations on Glasgow

University shews¹⁹ he has formed a very sound judgment.²⁰ He understands our Climate too, and he has accurately observed the change however slow and imperceptible to us which Scotland has under gone, in consequence²¹ of the blessings of Liberty and internal Peace. I could have drawn my Pen through the Story of the old woman at St. Andrew's, being the only silly thing in the Book.²² He has taken the opportunity, of engrafting into the work several good Observations, which I dare say he had made upon men and things, before he set foot on Scotch ground, by which it is considerably enriched.²³ A Long journey like a tall May-pole tho not very beautifull itself yet is pretty enough when ornamented with Flowers and garlands. It furnishes a sort of Cloak-pins for hanging the furniture of Your mind upon; and whoever sets out upon a Journey without furnishing his mind previously with much study and usefull knowledge erects a May-pole in December, and puts up very useless Cloak-Pins.²⁴ I hope the Book will induce many of his Country men to make the same Jaunt, and help to intermix the more liberal part of them still more with us and perhaps abate somewhat of that virulent antipathy which many of them entertain against the Scotch who certainly would never have formed those Combinations which he takes notice of,²⁵ more than their ancestors, had they not been necessary for their

mutual safety, at least for their Success in a Country²⁶ where they are treated as Foreigners. They would find us not deficient at least in point of Hospitality and they would be ashamed ever after to abuse us in the Mass.

So much for the Tour.²⁷ Let me now thank you for the trouble you have had in enquiring about the Lunatic²⁸ for whom it seems no relief can be expected, which I was apprehensive of when I undertook the Enquiry.

I have now for the first time in my Life passed a winter in the Country²⁹ and never did three months roll on with more swiftness and Satisfaction. I used not only to wonder but pity those whose Lot condemned them to winter any where but in either of the Capitals. But every place has its charms to a chearfull mind. I am busy planting and take measures for opening the Summer Campaigne of Farming and I find I have an excellent resourse, when revolutions in Politics perhaps, and revolutions of the Sun for certain will make it decent for me to retreat behind the Ranks of the more forward in Life.³⁰ I am glad to hear the last was a very busy week with You, I see You as counsel in some causes which must have opened a charming field for your humerous vein.³¹ As it is more uncommon so I very believe it is more usefull than the more serious exercise of reason. And to a man

who is to appear in Public more eclat is to be gaind,
 some times more money too, by a Bon-Mot than a learned
 Speech. It is the fund of natural humour which Lord
 North possesses, that makes him so much a favourite of
 the House and so able because an amiable leader of a
 Party.³² I have now finished my Tour of seven Pages.
 In what remains I beg leave to offer my Compliments and
 those of ma tres chere femme³³ to You and Mrs. Boswell.
 Pray unbend he busy bow³⁴ and frolic a little in a
 Letter to, My Dear Boswell, Your affectionate Friend.

GEORGE DEMPSTER ³⁵

[In JB's hand]:

Notes

+ Mr. Orme, one of the ablest historians of this age
 gave the same opinion.³⁶ He said to me - There are in
 that Book thoughts which³⁷ by long revolution in the
 great mind of Johnson have been formed and polished like
 pebbles rolled in the Ocean!³⁸

++ Every reader will, I am sure join with me in warm
 admiration of the truly patriotick writer of this letter
 with whose permission it is now published. I know not

which most to applaud, that good sense and liberality of mind which could see and admit the defects of his native country to which no man is a more zealous friend; or that candour which induced him to give most praise to the minister whom he honestly and strenuously opposed.

¹Dempster (1732-1818) was M.P. for the Perth Burghs, 1761-90 (Namier and Brooke ii. 313). He had been a close friend of JB's since the summer of 1761 when, with Andrew Erskine, the three formed a self-consciously literary acquaintance (Earlier Years, pp. 64-65). In 1785 he was a member of the "jury" that read JB's Tour before publication (Life v. 1 n. 5; 576-77).

²Dempster's estate, near Forfar in Perth.

³JB has underlined "My dear Boswell". Also throughout the letter, he has added quotation marks before each new paragraph; this and other minor punctuation changes are not noted hereafter.

⁴The "o" of "ommit" has been deleted by JB probably in error for one "m" (see post n. 9).

⁵MS. "Your Tour thro' the Hebrides" deleted by JB; above it he has written: "Dr. Johnson's "Journey to the Western Islands;"

⁶⁻⁶JB has deleted this passage and inserted a dash in its place.

⁷In response to a query about this passage, William B. Todd writes (9 Apr. 1979): "With my copy open before me I can easily see why Dempster would regard unwitting purchasers as having their pockets picked. Compared to similar travel accounts this at 5s. is an unnecessarily expensive book, bulked out with heavy paper, and text in large type, narrow measure, widely-spaced, and with a maximum of 23 lines to a page -- in short every trick the printer can employ to thinly spread the contents over the widest possible area ..." For some other aspects of the book, see W. B. Todd, "The Printing of Johnson's Journey (1775)", Studies in Bibliography, 1954, vi. 248-29.

⁸The second, outer set of quotation marks seem to be JB's. This reference is to Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 125: "I know not that I ever heard the wind so loud

in any other place; and Mr. Boswell observed, that its noise was all its own, for there were no trees to increase it."

⁹The first "m" of "ommitted" deleted by JB.

¹⁰JB has written "N. Par." above the line here. The rest of this paragraph and the one following were later copied by Alexander Boswell (1775-1822) for his father and included as Paper Apart "D", p. 423 of the MS. of Life (ii. 303-04).

¹¹MS. "Hector" deleted and "Allan" written above by JB, who may also have added the underlinings. The reference is to Donald Maclean of Col (see post From Oglethorpe, n. 6) and Hector Maclean. One of SJ's favourite stories, according to JB, concerned how a man might live in London on £30 a year. Dempster's use of this image suggests that he had heard the story, possibly when he dined with SJ and JB on 9 May 1772 (Life i. 105; ii. 195).

¹²Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 107-10.

¹³MS. "me" deleted after "enquired"; "more" written above.

¹⁴MS. "superstition" deleted after "superstitious"

¹⁵MS. JB has written "x" over the first "s" of "espress" and deleted one "c" in "forccibly".

¹⁶Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 114-18.

¹⁷JB has altered this clause to "The author neither says he is a Geographer"

¹⁸JB has written "are" over the Scotticism "is"

¹⁹JB has deleted the final "s" of "shews"

²⁰Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 160.

²¹MS. "through" deleted after "gone,". The phrase originally read "which Scotland has gone through in consequence"

²²Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 8-9.

²³JB has inserted a dagger after "enriched" as a reference to his first note added at the end of the letter.

²⁴JB has here indicated a new paragraph and written "513" in the margin.

²⁵Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 160-61: "... a national combination so invidious, that their friends cannot defend it, and actuated in particulars by a spirit of enterprise, so vigorous, that their enemies are constrained to praise it, enables them to find, or to make their way to employment, riches, and distinction."

²⁶MS. "Success in in the country"

²⁷JB has deleted the rest of this paragraph.

²⁸Unidentified.

²⁹See post To Dempster, 22 Feb. Dempster was not attending the current session of Parliament, partly because he felt his opposition to Lord North's American policies was ineffectual, partly because he could not afford the more elaborate household in London that his recent marriage would mandate (Namier and Brooke ii. 315; Journ. 20 Oct.).

³⁰JB has written "New Par." above the line after "Life."

³¹Probably a reference to the Memis case, among other possibilities less easily identified. A report of the case and JB's role in it had appeared most recently in Edin. Adv. 17-20 Mar. (xxiii. 44). See ante From Pringle, 26 Jan., n. 1.

³²MS. altered by JB: "so able, because so amiable a leader of a Party."

³³On 24 Sept. 1774 Dempster had married Rose Heming, daughter of Richard Heming of Jamaica. She died childless in 1810 (Letters of George Dempster to Sir Adam Fergusson 1756-1813, ed. James Fergusson, 1934, pp. 81, 324).

³⁴The version in Life gives "brow" for "bow"; Dempster has clearly written "bow". The same metaphor occurs in Pope, Iliad i. 597 and in Cervantes, Don Quixote I, xlviii (trans. Samuel Putnam, 1958. p. 432).

³⁵JB has added two daggers after Dempster's signature, referring to his second note.

³⁶MS. originally "was of the same opinion." "was of" is deleted, "gave the" written above, "the" deleted, and "pronounced" written next to "gave" apparently as an alternative. The final version in Life is "is of the same opinion."

³⁷MS. "have long been much" deleted after "which"; "by long" written above.

³⁸Robert Orme (1728-1801), historian of the British Army in India, made this remark to JB during a ball at the Mansion House on 7 Apr. "He said ... that there were in his Journey great thoughts which had been rolled and rolled in his mind, as in the sea. The image appeared very good at the time. I doubt if I have taken it well down" (Journ. 7 Apr. See also Life ii. 300).

To General James Edward Oglethorpe,

Saturday 25 February 1775

MS. Yale (L 998). A copy in Lawrie's hand. Sent 25 Feb.
(Reg. Let.).

HEADING: To General Oglethorpe.

Edinr. 25 feb. 1775

DEAR SIR: Much do I wish to have you remarks on Mr. Johnsons Journey to the Western islands of Scotland you who have seen mankind in¹ so many countries and in such various situations who have read so much concerning those whom you could not see, and who have reflected so much upon all, are an excellent Judge of a work of such a nature, you can perceive what is masterly, and what is defective, you can confirm by the sanction of your own Judgement, and illustrate from the stores of your own observation. Mr. Johnson has been very good to me in his book. He is pleased to allow me acuteness frankness and gayety.² Horace says Nilego contulerim jucundo sanus amico.³ And some Latin writer I do not remember who says Come jucundus in via pro vehiculo est⁴ -- I flatter myself that Mr. Johnson experienced this when we were travelling "where no wheel had ever rolled."⁵

What are your sentiments now Sir, on american affairs? I am very much at a loss upon the subject. You have a warm heart⁶ to the Britons on the other side of the Atlantick -- I sincerely wish that you were Umpire between the Mother Country and the Colonies. I am persuaded you would reconcile the dignity of the former with the happiness of the latter. It is many years since Savage in one of his best Poems introduced Publick Spirit speaking as a generous Personage and I allways recollect with pleasure these two lines in the Speech.

"Learn when Despair such sudden bliss shall see,
Such bliss must shine from Oglethorpe or me"⁷

I am in very good health, and in very good spirits, and allways very much at your service. I hope to have the happiness of being with you a few weeks hence;⁸ but in the meantime I beg the favour of hearing from you. I offer my best respects to Mrs. Oglethorpe and ever am with gratefull regard, My Dear Sir, your much obliged, humble servant.

¹MS. "various situations" deleted after "in"

²"... Mr. Boswell a companion whose acuteness would help my inquiry, and whose gaiety of conversation and civility of manners are sufficient to counteract the inconveniences of travel" and "Mr. Boswell's frankness and gaiety made every body communicative" (Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 3, 108).

³Nothing so long as I am in my senses would I match with the joy a friend may bring" (Horace, Satires, trans. H. R. Fairclough, Loeb ed., I. v. 44).

⁴"An agreeable companion upon the way is as good as a coach" Publius Syrus, Sententia, no. 116.

⁵If this is a quotation it is unidentified.

⁶MS. "heat"

⁷Richard Savage, Of Public Spirit in Regard to Public Works. A Poem 1736, ll. 291-92.

⁸JB called on Oglethorpe in London 26 Mar. (Journ.).

To Lord Pembroke,

Thursday 2 March 1775

MS. Yale (L 1032). A copy in Lawrie's hand. Sent 2 Mar.
(Reg. Let.).

HEADING: To Lord Pembroke.

[Edinburgh, 2 March 1775]¹

MY LORD: You may be assured that I should gratefully have acknowledged the receipt of your Lordships last letter² long before this time had I not feared to be troublesome. I now write because I cannot resist the desire of hearing again from your Lordship. This is a kind of genteel beging for I really do not see why I might not as well ask to have some of your Champaigne as some of your pleasantry. What I had last was given in so frank and obliging a manner that I feel myself under no embarrassment when applying for more.

Col. Stopford³ and I have been pretty often together since your Lordship left this.⁴ I like him very much and find that he improves upon being better known - only think of him and Captain Schaw⁵ who are such sober Ladies men making me drink port the last night of the old year till I could hardly walk.⁶ It was a most joyous and cordial evening.

I make no doubt that your Lordship has read Mr. Johnsons Tour to the Western Isles and I am sure you will have made some good remarks on it. The people in this Country are much divided about his Book. But upon the whole he carries admiration.

I hope to be so happy as find your Lordship in London this Spring. I wish much to be in Company with Paoli and your Lordship. I have often heard him speak of you and I was to have accompanied him on a visit to you; but something came in the way.⁷ My wife desires to offer you her respectfull compliments and I have the honour to be with sincere gratitude, My Lord, Your Lordships much obliged and very humble servant.

¹Dated from Journ. 2 Mar.: "St. John's Lodge in the evening for a little, having first written to Lord Pembroke and Beauclerk, a gleam of fine spirits having come."

²Ante From Pembroke, 2 Oct. 1774.

³The Hon. Edward Stopford (1732-94), brother of the second Earl of Courtown, and Lieut.-Col. in the 66th Regiment, which had been stationed in Edinburgh for the past year. Pembroke had introduced Stopford to JB (Comp. Peer. ii. 387; Journ. 7 Aug. 1774).

⁴Pembroke had left Edinburgh 18 Aug. 1774 (Journ. 20 Aug. 1774; see also ante To Pembroke, 20 Aug. 1774, n. 1).

⁵Frederick Bridges Schaw, Capt. of the 66th Regiment, later transferred to the 68th (Army List, 1775, pp. 121, 125).

⁶This actually occurred on Christmas Eve, and Captain Schaw was not present: "Being specially invited to eat venison at Colonel Stopford's mess, I found him, Captain Skeffington, and Mr. Vowel and nobody else. I don't know how it was, but the Colonel got into the humour of drinking, which was very extraordinary for him, and we drank a great quantity of port" (Journ. 24 Dec. 1774). JB began to confuse the date shortly afterwards: "... the last day of the year 1774, when I got drunk with Colonel Stopford, etc." (Journ. 14 Jan.). Pembroke had already received a more accurate report of the evening (See post From Pembroke, 12 Mar.).

⁷Probably a reference to the previous year, when JB cancelled his annual trip to London (ante To Oglethorpe, 2 Apr. 1774 and n. 6). This is the first of several attempts, ultimately successful, to obtain an invitation to Wilton. See post To Pembroke, 22 Mar. and n. 15.

From General James Edward Oglethorpe,

Thursday 9 March 1775

MS. Yale (C 2117). Received 13 Mar. (Reg. Let.).

In an unknown hand.

ADDRESS: Scotland To J. Boswell Esqr. Advocate in
Edinburgh.

POSTMARK: [London] 9 MAR.

Lower Grovesnor Street, March 9th 1775

MY DEAR SIR: It is with Joy I reciev'd Yours,¹ as it
gives hopes of Seeing you in this Town. You ask my
Opinion of Dr. Johnsons Book: it is Equal to himself,
and that is saying All.

He has shewed his Abilities in Stooping to his
Subject, and rememberd Horace,

Telepheus et Pelaeus cum pauper et exul uturque
Projecit Ampullus Et sesquipedalia verba.²

Nothing can be more Pathetick, then the manner
of telling the Decayed State of Cathedrals and Churches,
Consecrated by Holy-men whose Instruction made
Multitudes of Pious simple People happy. The rage of
Ill-Govern'd Zeal, drove on by selfish Men, all rises
to the Eye of the tolerable instructed Reader:³ as
for others -- Procul Este Profani.⁴

It was not proper to allarm Dogs: I should rather say sad Curs.⁵ The Painting in the Isles, over the Graves of Heroick and Holy Things, shews the finest Strokes of the Pencil, which could be executed on Canvis, only by Coregio -- or perhaps by your friend Sir Joshua Reynolds.⁶ If his Thoughts were raised by Johnson. -- The Pathos in the account of the drowned Ceyx, or Euryalus, The hospitable Youth of the Isles⁷ is only Johnsons; but believe me, tho the Multitude who feel Nature, Admire the Book of Dr. Johnsons, The Chesterfields Desciples (the Puppies of the day) whose dulness, or affectation makes them feel nothing Affect to blame, and the Scots in the trifling Pereodical papers, Attack him like Curs, that bay the Moon: whilst Men kick them for making a sad Howling;⁸ and the Moon roles Silent in its Orb, rules the Tides and comforts the benighted Traveller.⁹ So much for the happy Johnson, who is gone to Oxford, where he enjoys the Praises of Men:¹⁰ who know what, and how to Praise.

With respect to the Affairs of America, All is a piece of Art, carried on for Years to Establish the Doctrine, that the People must consent to give what profuse Ministers require: And may have the Priviledge

of raising the Money how they Please, but must raise the Sum. This Established in America, must go down here, and the willing Commons at Westminster, having Granted for Years all desired: therefore there is now a right in Ministry, to have all Desired.

The different Assembly's in America refused Salerys to Governors,¹¹ All has been worked up to bring them to give all Demands by Ministers: As the Courtly Men at Westminster for Years have done. Their stubourness was Attacked by the Men at Westminster in the Stamp-Act, but this allarmed those here: Who desired not to be Slaves, and they got the Stamp Act Repealed.¹² A sting was left, that shone out in the Tea,¹³ and the Opposition was husbanded by the Ministry to make a Rebellion, thereby to get Forfieture beyond the Seas,¹⁴ and a Grant from Parliament for Augmenting Army's and Navies in time of Peace.

Canada, Enlarged makes, that on a Dispute, if France is Successful, They may perhaps, surprise Jersey, or some other trifling thing Else as they did Mahone, and an Exchange may be Obtained; throwing Gold-dust in the Eyes of Ministry, for their old Colony of Canada, augmented by the Act with Newfound-land etc.¹⁵ So they

like Cato, will have parted with their Wife to Hortentius:
to get her Back with a Portion.¹⁶

I have already tired you on this head, Mrs. McCa(ulay's)
Address to the People of England, Scotland and Irela(nd)
Explains more at Large.¹⁷

It Transpires, that next Year an Equalizing the Land
Tax thro Britain is to be the Expedient, the North and
West of England Ireland and Scotland to Pay all Two-Shill-
ings in the Pound, on the full of improved Rents, and near
London no more. A new Assesment to be made by Officers
appointed by the Treasury to the utmost Extent, It is
say'd the Act is prepared, If America swallows the Pill,
the next Year it is to be Given to Scotland and Ireland.¹⁸
All here long to See you, I am, Dear Sir, Your Tedious
Correspondent and Friend,

J. OGLETHORPE

Excuse the Errours of your transcriber.¹⁹

¹Ante To Oglethorpe, 25 Feb.

²"Telephus and Peleus, in tragedy and exile, each throw aside their bombast and Brobdingnagian words" (Horace, Ars Poetica, trans. H. R. Fairclough, Loeb ed., ll. 96-97).

³SJ assumed that zealots of the Scottish reformation had destroyed the cathedrals. See Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 5 n.9, 5-9, 23-24.

⁴"Away, unhallowed ones" (Virgil, Aeneid, trans. H. R. Fairclough, Loeb ed., vi. 258).

⁵If this is a quotation, it is unidentified. The sentence makes some sense if read in context with the "puppies" and "curs" allusions at the end of the paragraph.

⁶Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92), painter and first president of the Royal Academy, had been a friend of JB's since 1769, when Goldsmith introduced them. Correggio or Antonio Allegri (c. 1489-1534) was among the Renaissance painters Reynolds most admired and praised: "His style is founded upon modern grace and elegance, to which is superadded something of the simplicity of the grand style" ("The Fourth Discourse", The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, ed. Edmund Malone, 4th ed., 1809, i. 110).

⁷Donald Maclean, the "young Laird of Col," who drowned Sept. 1774; see Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 145 and n. 6. Ceyx was a legendary king of Thessaly who drowned (Ovid, Metamorphoses, xi. 410-748); Euryalus, a Trojan youth who, with his older friend Nisus, was killed in battle (Virgil, Aeneid, ix. 176-449).

⁸See ante From Dilly, 23 Jan., n. 16.

⁹This seems to be a flight of fancy rather than a quotation.

¹⁰ SJ spent the first week of March in Oxford (Life ii. 543).

¹¹ Apparently a reference to the Suffolk Resolves, adopted in Massachusetts on 9 Sept. 1774, declaring among other things that taxes collected locally should be withheld from the British government. On 8 Oct. 1774, the Resolves were also adopted by the Continental Congress in Philadelphia (J. C. Miller, Origins of the American Revolution, 1943, rpt. 1976, p. 384).

¹² The Stamp Act was passed in 1765 and repealed in Mar. 1766. Despite William Pitt's famous arguments against the right of the British government to tax the colonies, the reasons for the repeal of the Act were primarily financial; the Act hurt British merchants as well as the colonists (Miller, pp. 149-64).

¹³ This is probably not a reference to the Boston Tea Party (16 Dec. 1773) but to the events which led to it. In 1769, the British government dropped duties on all exports to America except tea; the tea duty of 3d. per pound was retained as a symbol of British sovereignty in America (Miller, p. 339).

¹⁴ Until the Forfeitures Act of 1870, the Crown claimed all property of a convicted traitor. Oglethorpe is suggesting that the Crown might seize land in America owned by revolutionaries.

¹⁵ The Quebec Act of June 1774 extended the boundaries of Quebec to the south and west. Port Mahon is the principal town in Minorca; the reference is to the French invasion there and the defeat of Admiral Byng in May 1756. Minorca was traded back to the British in return for Belle Isle in the Peace of Paris (1763). Oglethorpe is suggesting that if the French captured Jersey or some other small British possession, they might trade it back in return for Canada.

¹⁶Plutarch, Cato Minor. Cato gave his wife Marcia to his friend Hortensius. When Hortensius died, Marcia inherited his fortune, whereupon Cato remarried her. See also Caesar, Anti Cato, xi. 4.

¹⁷Mrs. Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay, later Graham (1731-91), had published in January An Address to the People of England, Scotland, and Ireland on the Present Important Crisis of Affairs, attacking SJ's The Patriot and deploring Lord North's American policy. The Address criticised the Quebec Act as pro-Catholic, and warned that excessive taxation of the colonists, if successfully enforced, might encourage the government to tax the English excessively as well. Macaulay argued that the Ministry's oppressive measures had succeeded in uniting the previously divided colonies, and she suggested that England, if distracted by an American war, would be vulnerable to attack by France and Spain. SJ later retaliated in Taxation No Tyranny, referring to Macaulay as "a female patriot bewailing the miseries of her 'friends and fellow-citizens'" When JB remarked that SJ had made her ridiculous, SJ replied, "To make Macaulay ridiculous is like blacking the chimney" (SJ, Political Writings, ed. D. J. Greene, 1977, p. 449 n. 2; Journ. 2 Apr.; see also Life i. 447-48, iii. 185, 508).

¹⁸A confusing and surely inaccurate statement, although Mrs. Macaulay hints at similar measures. The land tax in Britain was attacked throughout the century as inequitable; it varied in each region between 1s. and 4s. per pound of assessed value, and in practice regulated the rent charged by the landowner. Scotland was generally thought to pay less land tax than England, but JB maintained that inequities between the two countries were no greater than those between various regions within England (Life ii. 431-32). The refusal of Parliament to raise the tax in order to pay for maintaining the American colonies led, of course, in the decade preceding the American Revolution, to the Ministry's disastrous attempts to tax the colonies themselves. In 1775, the land tax in England was set at 3s. per pound; in 1776 it became 4s. (William Kennedy, English Taxation 1640-1799, 1913, p. 128; Gent. Mag. 1775, xlv. 7; 1776, xlvi. 162).

¹⁹Written in Oglethorpe's hand. The identity of the "transcriber" is unknown; it is possibly Mrs. Oglethorpe. Ante From Oglethorpe, 15 June 1774 is in the same hand.

From Sir John Pringle,

Friday 10 March 1775

MS. Yale (C 2312). Received 14 Mar. (Reg. Let.).

Lond. 10 Mar. 1775

DEAR SIR, I am two letters in your debt, besides the present you made me of your elaborate defence of the good people of Aberdeen.¹ It were a pity the subject had not been of more consequence to do credit to so much good writing. But lest we should seem to Mon-signiory one another,² let us leave off compliments, and suffer me only to say in the way of praising myself, not you, that you still justify my prediction, when I told you, that whenever you should apply, you would make a distinguished figure at the bar. If I spoke to you against all inversions, I surely spoke wrong, and retract; for some kinds of writings require a few, others many. If I have hit upon the proper number, I have been more lucky than wise, as I am on that, as well as on other parts of rhetoric, not a little illiterate.

Your apology I received, and favourably; as You know how much I confied in your veracity.³

I was glad to think I should soon see You in London, for 'tis very uncertain whether I shall cross the Tweed this year, or not. Mean while, be assured that I was happy in hearing of Mrs. Boswell's being well, and in a fair way of making you pater trium liberorum.⁴ I hope that in a few months a dancing master will be no longer the presumptive heir of a certain apparent heir of a certain ancient lairdship.⁵ My warm compliments to Her.

I see sometimes your friend General Paoli, who still enjoys good health, and acts here a very prudent part. He and his Count⁶ have done me once the honour to dine with me, and when you arrive, it will, I hope, happen again. I am, Dear Sir, most unfeignedly, Your affectionate friend and humble Servant.

JOHN PRINGLE

¹The Reg. Let. indicates that JB wrote to Pringle 10 Feb., 2 and 6 Mar. (all not reported). He wrote his argument on behalf of the managers to the Infirmary of Aberdeen on 6 Feb. (Journ. and see ante From Pringle, 26 Jan. and n. 1 for particulars of this case).

²That is, "let us not exchange elaborate compliments in the foreign manner", apparently an idiosyncratic phrase of Pringle's.

³Presumably this refers to JB's response (2 Mar.?) to ante From Pringle, 28 Feb. (2) in which Pringle reproaches JB for his part in the Ayrshire elections. Pringle must be using "apology" in its primary meaning of "explanation" rather than "asking pardon", for JB felt himself truly wronged in that affair.

⁴"Father of three children". Alexander Boswell was born 9 Oct.

⁵See ante From Pringle, 2 Feb. 1774, nn. 7 and 8.

⁶Count Gentili was "a Corsican count long in the Austrian service, and who gave up his commission to go home and fight along with his countrymen, and then accompanied the General to England" (Journ. 19 Mar. 1772). Gentili lived in Paoli's house, and drew a pension of £200 from the British government. JB found him irritating (Journ. 8 Apr. 1772; 16 Mar. 1776).

From Lord Pembroke,

Sunday 12 March 1775

MS. Yale (C 2196). Received 22 Mar. "Earl of Pembroke (held)" (Reg. Let.). "A most obliging letter from Lord Pembroke, which had gone to me in Scotland and had been returned, put me in high spirits" (Journ. 22 Mar.).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esqr., Edingburgh.

POSTMARK: FREE; 12 MR; SALISBURY.

FRANK: P; Embroke.

ENDORSEMENT: Earl of Pembroke.

Wilton House, 12 March. 1775

I can not agree with you, My Dear Sir, in thinking it extraordinary; that two Irish men should make one Scotch man drunk.¹ The only account I could get formerly of Stopford from a countryman of his,² after a ten years absence was, that my friend was fit to mount with the masters. Growling vexation of spirit, and hot climates have, since that time, made a sober man of him.³ How does he bear the loss of his friend Perihaelion,⁴ who, I understand, is on the road to London? Tell him, pray, that I really don't know how to answer his last stupid letter; that there is nothing in the report of Skeffing-

ton's marriage, though a Lady, a middle aged North Briton, who keeps a house of intrigue in Cleveland Row, Mrs. Chambre, had fallen in love with him, and christened him the Handsome Captain.⁵ He was a good deal alarmed here, with a swelled face, occasioned by a rotten stump -- He called it a Palsy, and went up to town, a good deal frightened, for advice, in consequence of which a dentist punched out the tooth root, and the Palsy subsided.⁶ Lord William Gordon⁷ however swears, that his mouth, far from being horizontal yet, is now as pretty a diagonal, as a man shall see of a summer's day. The Lt. Col.'s Parliamentary proposal to me is so enticing, that to be sure; I should not be able to resist it, if my Navy Cousin Captn. Charles Herbert is not already chosen here.⁸ I am detained here upon the watch for votes, in case the disfranchisement of Hindon should take the turn I wish,⁹ at a season, when nobody will come so far out of town to see anybody, and when there is nothing to be done in the country -- guns and other amusements hung up, like David's harp in his old age. I fear we differ in every point about Johnston. I know you admire him -- I rather acquiesce in Lord Chesterfield's idea of the learned Hottentot,¹⁰ and his

pomposity of expression, equally on the most trifling,
 as on the most serious occasions, does not, I own,
 take with me. Yet I like his book, not as an account
 of Scotland, but as an extraordinary performance. He
 mentions your notes.¹¹ I wish you would let us
 compare them. I understand, that Mr. Macpherson has
 challenged him for the abuse of his Poem, and that
 Johnston's answer was ridiculous, and laughable.¹²
 Excuse me, if I say, that I shall not be sorry, if
 the Highlander rosse le Cafre,¹³ though I am told,
 that the unprejudiced people in Scotland are of Dr.
 Johnston's opinion as to the originality of the work.
 The only man he speaks thoroughly well of being
 drowned puts me in mind of Lee,¹⁴ who never speaks
 well, but of the dead, Lord Howe, General Braddock,
 and a few friends long since gone¹⁵ - De Mortuis
nil nisi bonum. Stopford seems to be more of
 your mind about him, and I fear, that I should have
 Mrs. Boswell too against me, if it was not for the
 Doctor's very frequent, almost endless, demands upon
 the tea pot. Pray make my best compliments acceptable
 to her. I trust, that the augmentation of the 66th
 goes on well, and that my friend¹⁶ finds entertain-

ment these cold mornings with his additional young awkward raw recruits. The last thing almost I saw in Scotland was M. Dilkes posting off for fear of being arrested. His absence, has not, I hope, deprived Edingburgh of all theatrical amusements this winter.¹⁷ Paoli is, I take for granted in London, where I left him last. He will be very happy to see you, I dare say, as I shall, in town. When do you propose coming up? Too late I fear for me to have any chance of the pleasure of giving you a meeting here. The situation of Corsica seems to vex him at heart, and I fear his poor Countrymen, who attend him in shoals, eat him out of house, and home. Ever your's, My Dear Sir, Most Obediently and Sincerely etc.

PEMBROKE

¹A reference to JB's Christmas Eve party (see ante To Pembroke, 2 Mar.). The "two Irishmen" are Stopford and William John Skeffington, younger son of the first Earl of Massereene, Capt. in the 66th Regiment, and later an Irish M.P. and Constable of Dublin Castle. He died unmarried in 1811, age 61 (Gent. Mag. Jan. 1811, p. 90).

²Unidentified.

³Pembroke means that Stopford used to be able to hold his liquor as well as anyone. Stopford joined the Army in 1765, and served with the 66th Regiment in Jamaica 1767-1772 (Army List).

⁴Unidentified. Perihaelion or perihelium means the point in a planet's orbit nearest the sun. The word appears in SJ's Dictionary and in John Harris, Lexicon Technicum, 1704. Stopford's friend and fellow officer most frequently mentioned by JB was Richard Vowell (d. 1806? Gent. Mag. Nov. 1806, lxxvi. 1086), but there is no other reason to connect Vowell with this reference.

⁵In 1774-75, Anne Chambre occupied a house in King Street on the corner of an alley then called Cleveland Court or Row; in 1776-78, she was known as Ann Melbank, presumably her married name. After that, there is no record of her at that address. Mr. E. J. Burford discovered this in the records of the Collectors of Watch Rates for the Pall Mall Ward of St. James Parish, Record Office, Westminster District Library, Buckingham Palace Road, London.

⁶Skeffington left Edinburgh for London a few days after Christmas (Journ. 24 Dec. 1774). During his visit to Wilton, he apparently told Pembroke of his participation in the drunken Christmas Eve party, for JB did not mention him in ante To Pembroke, 2 Mar.

⁷ Lord William Gordon (1744-1823), second son of the third Duke of Gordon, was a London dandy; JB met him through Pembroke, possibly not for the first time, a few days after receiving this letter (Journ. 26 Mar.). Lord William had recently returned from a self-imposed exile in France which followed a scandalous and short-lived elopement; he later became M.P. for various boroughs, 1779-90 and 1792-96 (Namier and Brooke i. 421).

⁸ The Lt.-Col. and his proposal are unidentified; possibly he was William Gordon of Fyvie (1736-1816), first cousin of Lord William Gordon and M.P. for the neighboring borough of Heytesbury (1774-80). He was Lt.-Col. of the 105th Regiment of Foot. Charles Herbert (1743-1816), Pembroke's first cousin, had been appointed M.P. for Wilton on 20 Feb. to fill the vacancy caused by the death of the previous incumbent; he was re-elected in June and held the seat until 1780, and again 1806-16. Herbert had been Capt. in the Royal Navy since 1768 (Namier and Brooke i. 421; ii. 610).

⁹ Pembroke was hoping to obtain control over a larger number of local votes if the borough of Hindon was disenfranchised. The Hindon election of 1774 was characterised by widespread bribery, and on 14 Feb. the House of Commons had declared it null and void. A bill was now before the House to disenfranchise the 190 voters of Hindon and merge the borough with neighboring Downton. "Proceedings dragged on throughout the session of 1775 and were restarted in that of 1776, but in the end the bill was dropped, partly as a result of the obstructive tactics of its opponents, partly because the fixing of a new and wider franchise raised the problem of the addition this would make to the influence of various landowners in the neighborhood" (Victoria History of Wiltshire, ed. R. B. Pugh, Elizabeth Crittall, 1957, v. 225).

¹⁰ In Letters ii. 105 (28 Feb. 1751) Chesterfield referred to an unnamed friend as "a respectable Hottentot". For the reasons why this was erroneously assumed to be an allusion to SJ, see Life i. 267 n. 2.

¹¹Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 130.

¹²See ante From Dilly, 23 Jan.

¹³Literally "roast the Kaffir"; Pembroke hoped that Macpherson might triumph over SJ, the foreigner. The phrase is not a common one.

¹⁴General Charles Lee (1731-82) had fought in the French and Indian War but was about to resign his commission in the British Army to become a major general under Washington. He was captured by the British in 1776 and treated harshly. He then professed disapproval of the Declaration of Independence, but was exchanged and rejoined Washington's army. He was eventually court-martialled and relieved of his command ("Was not General Lee of your Lordship's acquaintance? I should think he must be in a very bad humour at present. His conduct has not been suitable to the desperate game which he ventured to play". To Pembroke, 1 Mar. 1777).

¹⁵Sir George Augustus Howe, fourth Viscount Howe, was killed at Fort Ticonderoga in 1758. He was the older brother of Gen. Sir William Howe. Gen Edward Braddock (1695-1758) died of wounds incurred at the Battle of Fort Duquesne. Lee had served under both men.

¹⁶Col. Stopford.

¹⁷Pembroke has apparently written "Dilkes" in error for West Digges (1720-86), actor, manager of the Theatre Royal in Edinburgh, and a close friend of JB's. He was continuously in debt and pursued by creditors. He had spent part of this winter performing in Ireland, but had returned to Scotland in January; JB saw him on 25 Feb. and may have attended his "grand ridotto" on 10 Mar. at the Theatre Royal (Journ. 27 Oct. 1774; 25 Feb.; Scots Mag. Mar. xxxvii. 165-66).

To Lord Pembroke,

Wednesday 22 March 1775

MS. Yale (L 1033). A copy.

London,¹ 22 March 1775

MY DEAR LORD: This morning I had the honour to receive your Lordships very agreeable letter of the 12 current, which has gone to Scotland and returned to London.²

In my last I said that asking to hear from you was like asking for Champagne. Whether this Champagne having been in Scotland is improved, like Madiera having been in the East Indies, I shall not say. But believe me, it has a relish like what one imagines of Nectar or any exquisite liquor of which one has read: And I am to thank your Lordship not only for quality but quantity. Your letter is not a few lines, which your Lordship has deigned to write to me, as a King deigns to speak a few words at his levee. Your Lordship was written as a particular King, as Charles the Second spoke, when he found a man who was fortunate enough to please him.³ You have poured yourself out, as Pope says, liberally.⁴ You have given me, not a scanty flask but a Scotch pint of Champagne.⁵

I have come to London, a great deal sooner than your Lordship expected.⁶ Your letter has crossed me on the road. That you are not in town is a dissatisfaction for the time; as I was very impatient for the pleasure of another interview with one who though so much my Superiour, contrives it so, that I am quite happy in his company, and happiness cannot be without ease. Ease is the ground on which happiness is embroidered.

I am glad that your Lordship likes Mr. Johnson's Book in any view. I own that I have a very high admiration of him. His powers are vast, so that your Lordship's criticism on his pomposity is just. I mean his pomposity when he mentions trifling, or, if you please, little matters. He should be Omnia magna loquens. He should speak only of great subjects.⁷ Macpherson threatened him rudely. His answer was: I am not to be⁸ deterred from detecting what I think a cheat by the menace of a ruffian.⁹

I have three little volumes of my own notes during our Journey to the Hebrides; and as I know your Lordship will make every allowance, I shall be glad to read them to you. I have them in town.

Your Lordship has pourtrayed our friend Stopford admirably. But should not vexation of spirit and hot climates have rather made him more a Master? Grief or sorrow is dry, and heat produces thirst. I am sending him according to my promise, a most excellent Pamphlet called "Observations on the prevailing abuses in the British Army."¹⁰ Has your Lordship seen it? It is really, as far as I can judge, one of the best performances that has appeared.

I arrived here only yesterday morning. I have inquired for Skeffington,¹¹ at the St. James's Coffeehouse, where I am now writing; but they dont know where he lodges. I am, to a certain degree, disconsolate, a Bohemian servant who was quite a Governour¹² having left me, to go to a Roman Catholick family, he being of their Religion, though I gave him all the indulgence that he could wish.¹³ I am at present without a servant. A Barber officiates, like the Judges formerly, durante bene placito.¹⁴ If I come to Wilton House, your Lordship must put me under the care of one of your people whom you know; for, I

cannot put myself hastily under a new administration. Your Lordship's kind expression that you fear I shall come too late for your giving me a meeting at Wilton, makes me talk of being there. I have never seen that celebrated Place, and having seen it's Master makes me desirous to see more of him. I have nothing particular to keep me close in town; and if your Lordship invites me with a Corsican warmth, I shall fly to you.¹⁵ My Wife will be much flattered with your remembrance of her. I have the honour to be with sincere gratitude your Lordship's much obliged, humble servant.

¹"I went to the St. James's Coffee-house and wrote to Lord Pembroke, who, I heard, was at Wilton" (Journ. 22 Mar.).

²Ante From Pembroke, 12 Mar.

³A curious remark, considering that JB had recently been reading, at SJ's recommendation, Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time (Journ. 13 Nov. 1774; 22 Jan.). Burnet says of Charles II: "When he saw young men of quality who had something more than ordinary in them, he drew them about him, and set himself to corrupt them both in religion and morality" (3rd ed., 1766, ii. 288). SJ called Charles II "social" (Life i. 442), and George Savile, Marquis of Halifax described him as "affable" and remarked upon "his Condescension to talk with Men so very unequal to him" (A Character of King Charles the Second, 1750, pp. 34-35).

⁴From The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace, 11. 51-52: "I love to pour out all myself, as plain As downright Shippen, or as old Montagne."

⁵A Scotch pint or Stirling jug is equal to about three English pints.

⁶JB arrived in London 21 Mar.

⁷Horace, Satires, I. iii. 13).

⁸MS. "to be be deterred"

⁹This version of SJ's famous remark is different from Dilly's version (ante From Dilly, 23 Jan. and n. 22) and from versions which had appeared in various newspapers (Life ii. 513). It is nearly the same, however, as the version given in the "true copy" of SJ's letter which JB wrote down to SJ's dictation (Life ii. 297-98). This suggests that SJ had dictated the letter on 21 Mar., the only day that SJ and JB had met since the Macpherson dispute. JB mentions two occasions on that day when SJ discussed Ossian, but

he does not mention SJ's letter (Journ.; Life ii. 311). Mysteriously, the original letter, now in the British Museum, contains yet another version of the remark (Life ii. 297 n. 2).

¹⁰Thomas Erskine, later Lord Erskine (1750-1823), Observations on the Prevailing Abuses in the British Army. Arising from the Corruption of Civil Government. With a Proposal to the Officers toward Obtaining an Addition to their Pay, 1775.

¹¹See ante From Pembroke, 12 Mar., n. 1.

¹²MS. "Goverinour"

¹³The servant was Joseph Ritter, who had accompanied SJ and JB on the Scottish tour. He later returned to JB's service (Ominous Years, p. 196 n. 5). The Roman Catholic family is unidentified.

¹⁴"During (good) pleasure", the old criterion of tenure for English judges. It was changed to quamdiu bene se gesserint, "during good behavior", in the reign of William III (William Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England, 1765-69, I. vii. 267).

¹⁵See ante To Pembroke, 2 Mar. and n. 7. JB visited Wilton with Paoli 19-22 Apr., but he was sadly disappointed: "There was at Wilton no state, no grand order, not a cook -- in short, not what one would wish to see at a nobleman's country seat" (Journ. 21 Apr.). "A Corsican warmth" is a reminder to Pembroke that both he and JB have visited Corsica. "I had given Lord Pembroke a letter of recommendation to Paoli when he went to Corsica. This made a connexion ... I said, 'We Corsicans should meet'" (Journ. 7 Aug. 1774).

From Edward Stopford,

Wednesday 29 March 1775

MS. Yale (C 2576). Received 3 Apr. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr.

Edinburgh, March 29 1775

DEAR SIR: Your punctuality in the discharge of the little commission I took the liberty to trouble you with, deserves my earliest acknowledgment, and accordingly I lose no time in returning you many thanks for your agreeable letter, with the inclosed Pamphlet, which I have just read over with much pleasure.¹ I think tis wrote with spirit and cleverness, and exhibits a very just, tho melancholy picture, of the present state of our profession, which tho severely felt by many, is but little attended to. I hope by the help of your good offices it will soon be better known, that in time it will make its way to the closets of the Great Men, and be read by them with the attention it deserves.

I am glad to hear my friend Skeffington has such good success in the way of intrigue, this will serve to make him amends for the loss of his Mistress, tho

I really believe, notwithstanding the reports, he had never any serious thoughts of matrimony.² I beg my Compliments to him and Lord Pembroke, in whose company I presume you are now very happy at Wilton, a place in which I have spent many agreeable days. Nothing new has happened in this town I believe since you left us, we still pursue the dull round of entertainments from Play house to Card rooms, and Card rooms to Play house, with now and then the social bottle to enliven us a little, which will all appear but bad diversion to you, I dare say, from the account you give me of your journal for one day; a propos, I have the pleasure to be acquainted with two of your Club, Lord Charlemont, and Mr. Vesey, to whom I beg you'll present my Compliments.³

I cannot yet say for certain, whether I shall be able to see you in London, but I live in hopes;⁴ in the mean while, whenever you can spare time from the amusements of the great world, I shall be very happy to hear from you. Please to let me know if that affair of Col. Ricksons widow be at an end, I have not heard a syllable of it since you went, and should be glad to have my examination taken before I go away.⁵ --

Believe me with great truth -- Dear Sir -- Your very
affectionate and Obedient humble servant,

EDWD. STOPFORD

¹JB had written Stopford, enclosing Erskine's Observations on the Prevailing Abuses in the British Army, on 23 Mar. (Reg. Let.; ante To Pembroke, 22 Mar.). The nature of the "little commission" is not known.

²The mistress is unidentified. See ante From Pembroke, 12 Mar.

³James Caulfeild, first Earl of Charlemont (1728-99), had been a member of The Club since Mar. 1773; Agmondesham Vesey (d. 1785), since Apr. 1773 (Annals of the Club 1764-1914, 1914, pp. 138-39). Stopford's remark implies that JB had sent him a part of his Journal of 24 Mar., the day on which JB had attended a meeting of The Club (attended also by Vesey, but not by Charlemont). This suggests that the date of JB's letter to Stopford (see ante, n. 1) is incorrectly given in the Reg. Let.

⁴They met at least once, during the third week of May: "The last time that we met was in St. James's Street, a day or two before I left London about four o'clock on a fine day when we were going to dine at different houses with a good sharp appetite which enlivens the spirits" (To Stopford, 23 Feb. 1776).

⁵Euphan Brymer Rickson (1736-1811), a client of JB's, was engaged in a dispute with some Army officers over the perquisites of her late husband, Col. William Rickson (1719-70), formerly of the 19th Regiment of Foot, the parent regiment of the 66th. JB presented a petition for Mrs. Rickson on 24 Feb. and another on 3 July; the case, Mrs. Rickson vs. Major Bird, etc., was heard on 16 Nov. The outcome is unknown (Session Papers of James Boswell in the Signet Library and Advocates' Library, Arniston Collection 119:28 (24 Feb. 1775); Lg. 27.5; Journ. 16 Nov.). The purpose of Stopford's examination is unclear. Pre-trial examinations of witnesses were of two sorts: an examination in inialibus to determine the witness's integrity, and a subsequent preliminary examination given in the presence of one judge and his clerk (An Introduction to Scottish Legal History, The Stair Society, 1958, p. 308).

From Sir James Foulis.¹

Wednesday 29 March 1775

MS. Yale (C 1314). Received 8 Apr. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswall Esqr. London.

POSTMARK: [illegible].

Colinton,² March 29th 1775

SIR, After having teased one half of the Faculty at Edr., I find my labour is likely to be all lost, if I do not also stir up such part of them as are at London. I called at your house one day, very lately, to mention my business to you, but finding that you had crossed the Tweed, I send this letter after you, to complain of one of the many evils that are under the Sun,³ and to beg that you will endeavour to redress it.

Dr. Ketting, or Keating (no body can determine the orthography of an Irish name) wrote a history of Ireland in Irish. A translation of it has been published, but the original was never printed; and the only Copy, that I can hear of in this country, was in the Advocate's library.⁴ Mr. Dempster borrowed this long ago, and being called on to restore it, said he had taken it out for the use of Macpherson, the

Translator of Ossian. The Curators of the Library ordered the Librarian⁵ to write to Macpherson, and demand the Manuscript of him: but he reported to the Curators that having written oftener than once to Macpherson, neither the book nor any answer was returned. The Curators, upon this, ordered the Librarian to prosecute Macpherson; and there the matter stands at present, and may perhaps stand till time shall be no more,⁶ unless you will be publick=spirited enough to recover the book, by demanding it either from Mr. Dempster or from the Person for whom he borrowed it. It appears to me a strange thing that a publick body, whose profession it is to endeavour that Ius suum cuique tribuatur,⁷ should suffer themselves thus to be deprived of their own Ius, because no body will pay them for procuring it to themselves. But I hope you will interest yourself to recover the property of that Body of which you are a member, and of which I expect to see you one day a Judge. In the mean time my Galic studies are greatly retarded;⁸ but if by your activity in getting the Manuscript restored to the Library, I may be enabled to continue them, I will compose a panegyrick upon

you in Erse; and as I doubt not of your preferring
Praise to money, I hope that consideration will work
on you more than if I had given you a swinging fee.⁹
At any rate I will allways be, (but more or less
according as you exert yourself in this affair) Sir,
Your obedient, humble Servant,

JAMES FOULIS

¹Sir James Foulis, fifth baronet of Colinton (1714-91), a Scottish antiquary. JB deplored his "whim and lack of dignity" (Journ. 19 Sept. 1774).

²Foulis's seat, three miles southwest Edinburgh.

³An echo of Ecclesiastes 6: 1.

⁴Geoffrey Keating, D.D. (?1570-?1644), Foras Feasa ar Eirinn, 1629, translated by Dermot O'Connor as Foundation of Knowledge in Ireland, 1723. The DNB cites this as "the last book of importance to circulate in manuscript in the British Isles." The Advocates' Library later had both the O'Connor translation and the MS, "copied in a late 17th century hand" (Catalogue of the Printed Books in the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, 1876, iv. 309; Donald Mackinnon, A Descriptive Catalogue of Gaelic Manuscripts in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, 1912, p. 122).

⁵Alexander Brown (d. 1801) was Keeper of the Advocates' Library, 1766-96. JB was on cordial terms with him, and SJ had met him in Edinburgh on 16 Aug. 1773 (Life v. 40, 466-67; Journ. 19 Aug. 1774; 25 June 1776; 1 Feb. 1779).

⁶Revelation 10: 6. JB had heard a sermon on this text on New Year's Day (Journ.).

⁷"Each shall be given his due" (Justinian, Institutes I. i. 3).

⁸Foulis was collecting Gaelic words for a dictionary which was never published. JB saw this "large collection" on 2 Oct. 1778 (Journ.). Among Foulis's published works were Remarks made in a Tour through several of the Western Isles and West Coast of Scotland, by Mr. James Robertson, a report presented to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1788 (see ante From Macqueen, end of Jan. 1774, n. 8), and six articles on antiquarian and linguistic subjects, which were printed posthumously in Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1792, i.

⁹ Apparently JB did exert himself, although the outcome is unknown: the Reg. Let. indicates that he wrote to Foulis and to "Mr. Brown Librarian" on 17 Apr., and received a letter from Brown on 2 May.

From the Reverend Richard Palmer,¹

Wednesday 5 April 1775

MS. Yale (C 2150). Received 11 Apr. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esq. at Mr. Dilly's
Bookseller in the Poultry, near the Mansion-House.
POSTMARK: ?ASTERBY, POST PAID [illegible].

Grant. Ap 5th 75

DEAR SIR: I am much obliged by the favour of the
Memoirs; which I received as soon as possible, after
you had forwarded them from Town.² And which I
should have acknowledged much sooner, but that I
was impatient to run over the Book; both on account
of the rich entertainment I promised myself in the
perusal of it, and that I was willing to read it
through before I wrote, in hopes that I might make
some observations, in passing, for the subject of
part of my letter. The result of which has been
no more, than that I am agreeably confirmed in the
Opinion which I had allways entertained of his great
Talents from what I had read, and what I had heard
of him from those who knew him much more than I had

the honour of doing.³ This account of him has increased that Esteem; and I could not but often find my admiration of his capacious Mind, and my pleasure in contemplating his moral Virtues, interrupted by reflecting that I was reading a memorial of Accomplishments and Virtues now no more. That Fastidiousness imputed to him⁴ Seems not so much to have been natural, as Occasional; and of Which there do not Appear any Testimonies towards Persons or Writers of real merit. Indeed when one considers that State of Mind which views all things with superior knowledge and refined Taste, It cannot be but that such must often feel Offence from Persons and Things, which others of Inferior Judgement and proper passions are Strangers to; and are apt to impute, with resentment, to the Pride and Vanity of Others what is indeed their Own. Some infirmities of this kind are at most very pardonable among so many and great excellencies. And the Only Failing of this sort, which I could not read with indifference, was his Affected (for I am confident it could be no more) Contempt that he expresses in his

Correspondence for his Alma Mater;⁵ Which I have ever esteemed as the noblest Seminary of True Science in Europe; and equal to any Other in sending forth into the World Sons of the first Lustre in polite Letters. But what concerned me most was, that his Ingenious Biographer should think it for the honour of Mr. Gray or of his Own University, or that It could Effect any good End, to publish this Foible to the World. I cannot disown also that I thought that the Juvenile part of Mr. Gray's correspondence is of as little Use to the Republick of Letters. At least a considerable part might have been better Omitted, and what was less trifling have been interwoven incidentally in the Body of the Work. Which after the first, and part of the Second Section was over, grew (to my taste) Far more valuable and entertaining: especially in those noble Fragments, and designs of Magnificent Buildings which we are never to See Otherwise than in a confused heap of Materials and Angular Stones.⁶ When I have the pleasure of Seeing You, I shall be glad to point out some of those compositions and parts of them, which pleased me most, in hopes that I may have your better Taste coincide with my Own.

At least I hope It wont be long before I have
Opportunity of repaying your Expenses on my
Account; and showing in person, that I am, Sir,
Your Obliged and Obedient, humble Servant,

R. PALMER

Mrs. Palmer presents her Compliments.⁷

¹Richard Palmer (1714-1805), D.D., Prebendary of Canterbury and, after 1776, Rector of St. Swithin's, London. The origin of JB's acquaintance with him is not known. JB habitually visited him at Grantham on his way to and from London, and had last done so on 19 Mar.; he called on him again on his return trip to Scotland, 22 May (Alum. Cant. I, iii. 300; Journ., 19 Mar.; To Temple, 22 May)..

²The Poems of Mr. Gray. To which are prefixed Memoirs of His Life and Writings by W. Mason. This book was announced as being published "this day," price, 15 s., in Lond. Chron. 28-30 Mar., xxxvii. 303. JB must have arranged to have the book sent to Palmer before he himself had read it, for he mentions seeing the book, apparently for the first time, on 4 Apr. (Journ.).

³Palmer had attended Jesus College, Cambridge; he received his B.A. in 1736. He was two years older than Gray, thus their undergraduate careers had overlapped for one year, 1735-36 (Alum. Cant. I, iii. 300).

⁴A reference to the "character" actually written by Temple: "There is no character without some speck, some imperfection; and I think the greatest defect in his was an affectation in delicacy, or rather effeminacy, and a visible fastidiousness, or contempt and disdain of his inferiors in science" (The Poems of Mr. Gray, p. 403).

⁵Gray had written to Richard West, from Peterhouse, Cambridge, Dec. 1736: "Surely it was of this place, now Cambridge, but formerly known by the name of Babylon, that the prophet spoke when he said 'the wild beasts of the desert shall dwell there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures'" (The Poems of Mr. Gray, p. 13).

⁶The first section covers Gray's childhood and education; the second, his trip to the Continent with Walpole. The fourth section contains some fragments of unfinished odes.

⁷Mrs. Palmer is not further identified; JB had admired her "comely Vandyck figure" during his visit on 17 Mar. 1772 (Journ.).

From John MacLeod,¹

Monday 10 April 1775

MS. Yale (C 1861). Received in London 6 May (Reg. Let. and post To Macleod, 8 May). This letter was included in the Tour (Life v. 410-11).

ADDRESS: Mr. James Boswell of Achinleck, Advocate, Edinr.²

HEADING: L. R. To James Boswell Esq.³

Rasay, Aprile 10th 1775

DEAR SIR: I take this occasion of returning you my most hearty thanks for the Civilities shown to my Daughter by you and Mrs. Boswell⁴ yet tho she has informed my that I am under this obligation, I would very probably have deferred troubleing you with making my acknowledgements at present, if I had not seen Doctor Johnson Journey to the Western Isles, in which he has been pleased to make a very friendly mention of my family for which I am surly oblidge to him, as being more than equivalent for the reception you and he mett with. Yet there is one paragraph I Should have been glad he had omitted which I am sure was owing to misinformation, that is, that

I had acknowledged MacLeod to be my Chief, tho my ancestors disputed that preheminance for a long track of time.⁵

I never had occasion to enter seriously on this argument with the present Laird or his Grand-father,⁶ nor could I have any temptation to such a renunciation from either of them. I acknowledge the benefite of being Chief of a Clan is in our days of very little significancy, and to trace out the progress of this honour to the founder of a family of any standing, would perhaps be a matter of some difficulty.

The true state of the present case is this, the MacLeod family Consists of two different branches, the MacLeods of Lewis of which I am descended, and the MacLeods of Harris. And tho the former have lost a very extensive Estate by forfeiture in King James the sixth's time, there are still several respectable families of it existing who would justly blame me for such an unmeaning Cession when they all acknowledge me head of that family, which tho in fact it be but an Ideal point of honour is not hitherto so far disregarded in our Country, but that it would determine some of my friends to look on me as a much smaller man than either they or myself judge me at present to be.

I will therefore ask it as a favour of you to acquaint the Doctor with the difficulty he has brought me to. In traveling among rival Clans such a silly tale as this might easily be whisper'd into the ear of a passing stranger, but as it has no fundation in fact, I hope the Doctor will be so good as to take his own way in undeceiving the publick,⁷ I principally mean my friends and connections who will be first angry at me (and) next sorry to find such an Instance of my littleness recorded in a book which has a very fair chance of being much read. I expect you'll let me know what he will write you in return, and we here beg to make offer to you and Mrs. Boswell of our most respectfull compliments and am, Dear Sir, your most obedient, humble Servant,

JOHN MCLEOD

¹John Macleod, ninth Laird of Raasay (d. 1786), had entertained JB and SJ at Raasay 8-12 Sept. 1773 (Life v. 165-179).

²The address has been deleted, presumably by JB before he sent the letter to the printer.

³This heading appears in the Tour, except for "LR" ("Laird of Raasay").

⁴Macleod's eldest daughter Flora (d. 1780) had been spending the winter in Edinburgh; she had dined at the Boswells' on 28 Jan., 28 Feb., and 7 Mar. (Journ.). She later married Colonel James Mure Campbell, afterwards fifth Earl of Loudoun. (Life v. 178, 577; iii. 118; MacLeods, 1889, p. 383).

⁵The paragraph ends: "He acknowledges Macleod of Dunvegan as his chief, though his ancestors have formerly disputed the pre-eminence" (Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 59).

⁶The present Laird was Norman Macleod of Macleod, 20th chief (1754-1801). His grandfather was also Norman Macleod, 19th chief (1706-72). See Life v. 526-28.

⁷See post To Macleod, 8 May, and, for a further discussion of SJ's correction of this point, Life v. 411-12, and Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 59 n. 2.

To Robert Boswell,¹

?Monday 17 April 1775²

MS. Yale (*L 196). A fragment.

[London]

pleased with you.

I have as yet had no armorial conferences.³ But Lord Mountstuart has promised to introduce me to one of the Kings at Arms; and I shall get any information that is to be had.⁴ But I do find that Heraldry is in a very feeble state here.

And

* * *

With best compliments to Mrs. Boswell,⁵ I am,
Dear Sir, your very humble servant etc.

JAMES BOSWELL

¹Robert Boswell (1746-1804), W.S., Lyon Depute and principal Lyon Clerk, also Clerk to the College of Physicians, was JB's first cousin, the second son of Dr. John Boswell (Writers, p. 21; Cal. Merc., 3 Dec. 1774, p.[2]).

²Dated tentatively from an entry in the Reg. Let. for 17 Apr.: "Mr. Robert Boswell".

³Possibly a reference to the authentication of the Boswell "pedigree"; see post To Wilkes, 26 May and From Wilkes, 10 Aug., n. 4).

⁴JB had dined with Mountstuart the previous evening (Journ. 16 Apr.).

⁵Sibella (Sandeman), whom Boswell had married in Mar. 1769 (Writers, loc. cit.).

From William Julius Mickle,¹

c. Tuesday 2 May 1775²

MS. Yale (C 2010).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esqr. at Mr. Dilly's,
Bookseller, London

POSTMARK: Tetsworth, [London] 4 MA.

[Tetsworth]³

SIR: As your opinion of the *Lusiad*⁴ if favourable, may be of great service to me among the London Booksellers I have ordered a complete copy to be sent to you to the care of Mr. Dilly. Complete, I mean, of the poem and notes. The preface, which is at press, contains a dissertation on, or history of the rise of Commerce under Prince Henry of Portugal, the voyage of Gama; the history of the Portuguese Governors of India, the best lesson that probably may be given to the East India Company; the life of Camoens; a dissertation⁵ on Epic poetry and the *Lusiad*; a full critic on Voltaire's *Henriade*, a disseration on the use of poetry in a civil light, and the use of translation etc. and thus from its length, which increased on my hands,⁶ I have not been able to come to London in the beginning of May as I lately calculated, but

lest a few weeks longer stay might make me lose the pleasure of seeing you I beg that you would write me about a week before you set out that I may have the pleasure to come to see you for I shall be exceeding sorry if I lose this⁷ opportunity of a conversation.⁸

I am, Sir, with great esteem, your most obedient,
humble servant,

W. J. MICKLE

¹Mickle (1735-88) Scotsman, poet and translator, had been a correspondent of JB's since 1768. Both had contributed to Alexander Donaldson's Collection of Poems by Scotch Gentlemen, 1762, and in 1769, on his way to London, JB had stopped at Oxford to meet Mickle, then a corrector of the Clarendon Press. From 1768 to 1772, JB attempted unsuccessfully to persuade Garrick to produce Mickle's play, The Siege of Marseilles, originally entitled Chateaubriant (Journ. 5 Sept. 1769, Life ii. 495; v. 349 n. 1).

²Dated from the postmark and from JB's answer (post 5 May).

³A town about ten miles southeast of Oxford. Since 1772, Mickle had been living in "a farm-house at Forest Hill near Oxford" (Burton, Camoens, i. 146).

⁴Mickle had just completed a translation into heroic couplets of Os Lusíadas (The Portuguese), by Luis Vaz de Camoes, or Camoens (1524-80). A portion of his translation, part of Canto V, had appeared in Gent. Mag. Mar. 1771 (p. 134), and its favourable reception had encouraged Mickle to give up his job at the Clarendon Press and devote most of the intervening four years to the translation. His work was published in June 1776 as The Lusíad, or the Discovery of India: an Epic Poem (Burton, Camoens, i. 146; Luis de Camoens, The Lusíad, trans. Richard Fanshawe, ed. J. D. M. Ford, 1940, p. xxiv).

⁵MS. "Dissertatation"

⁶An echo, perhaps, of "Matter grows under our hands" (Laurence Sterne, Tristram Shandy v. ch. 16) or of a similar phrase in Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria i. 3.

⁷MS. "pleasure" deleted after "this"

⁸MS. "with you" deleted after "conversation"

To John Campbell,¹

Thursday 4 May 1775

MS. Yale (L 353). A copy.

[London]

DEAR SIR: Allow me to congratulate you on the publication of your Great Work³ and be pleased to accept of four dozen of Edinburgh Beer⁴ which I hope will not prove unworthy of being drank at your hospitable board. I shall very soon pay my respects to you in person and I ever am with most sincere regard, Dear Sir, Your most obedient humble servant.

¹Dr. John Campbell (1708-75) LL.D. University of Glasgow, 1754, was a Scot, long resident in England, and a prolific writer and translator. He was a friend of SJ's, and JB had met him by 1769 (Life i. 417; Earlier Years, p. 431).

²Dated by Campbell's answer.

³A Political Survey of Britain, published in 1774.

⁴London breweries were beginning to produce large amounts of porter, a blend of beer popular with the working class, so that provincial beers, although twice as expensive, were welcomed as a change. The four or five Edinburgh breweries operating at this time sold weak "twopenny beer" locally, and exported stronger beer to England, but only to the northern counties, so that Edinburgh beer was probably still unavailable in London. A few years later however, Scottish "Pale Ale" appeared on the London market, where it was among the most popular of the provincial beers. Thus JB's four dozen bottles may have contained any of several types of beer, but doubtless carried the same appeal that foreign beers do today. Although most British beer was sold by or from the barrel as it is today, bottled beer had existed since the end of the previous century. It was bottled from the cask, already fermented, and generally thought inferior to draught beer (Peter Mathias, The Brewing Industry in England 1700-1830, 1959, pp. 150-51; H. A. Monckton, A History of English Ale and Beer, 1966, pp. 144, 188).

From John Campbell,

Thursday 4 May 1775

MS. Yale (C 747).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esqr. at Mr. Goodwins, Gerard Street, Soho.¹

POSTMARK: TFR PENY POST PAYD; 3 O'CLOCK; MASON.

Queen Square Ormond Street, May 4th, 1775

DEAR SIR: I beg your acceptance of my grateful Thanks for your kind Present and also for your obliging Felicitations on the Publication of the Political Survey the Labour of Twenty Years and which hath nearly wore me out.² Any morning that your leisure will allow you to honour me with a visit will be considered as an additional obligation and shall live in the Remembrance of -- Your faithful, obliged and obedient Servant,

JOHN CAMPBELL

P.S. This was intended to have been conveyed by your messenger³ but He was gone before it could be closed.

¹Edward Dilly had found these lodgings for JB: "a very neat first floor at sixteen shillings". JB had moved in on 24 Mar., but was soon to remove to Gen. Paoli's house in Berkeley Square. "Mr. Goodwin's, Gerrard Street" remained his mailing address, however, through this and subsequent London visits (Journ. 22, 24 Mar., Ominous Years, pp. 157, 345).

²See ante To Campbell, 4 May. The "Proposals" for A Political Survey of Britain (then called Britannia Elucidata) had been issued on 13 Jan. 1755. SJ felt that it was not the labour over this work which caused Campbell's death on 28 Dec., but the lack of public interest after its eventual appearance. Another blow suffered by Campbell during this year was the death of his son "on his passage to the East Indies", reported on 11 July (Life ii. 447; Edin. Adv., 11 July, xxiv. 22).

³Unidentified.

To W. J. Mickle,

Friday 5 May 1775

MS. Yale (L 966.3).

POSTMARK: [London], 5 MA.¹

London, 5 May 1775

SIR: Your Preface to the translation of the Lusiad promises to be a valuable work of itself. I hope the Book altogether will be of considerable advantage to you. Be assured that any service I can do it shall be cordially tried. I have been rambling into the west of England, which has exhausted a good part of my time.³ I must set out for Scotland on Wednesday the 17 or thursday the 18 current.⁴ If therefore we are to meet in London it must be some time next week or early in the week after. I lodge at Mr. Goodwin's Gerrard Street Soho. I am, Dear Sir, Your very humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL

¹The letter was written on two conjugate leaves; the leaf on which the address was written is torn off, leaving only the postmark.

²See ante From Mickle, c.2 May.

³JB had left London for Wilton on 19 Apr., then visited W. J. Temple at Mamhead, near Exeter, until about 30 Apr., and had returned to London by 2 May (Journ. 19-23 Apr.; Life ii. 371).

⁴He left London for Edinburgh on 22 May (Life ii. 377 and n. 1).

To John MacLeod,

Monday 8 May 1775

MS. Yale (L 912). A copy. Sent 8 May. "Rasay"

(Reg. Let.). Printed in Life v. 411.

HEADING: J. B. To the Laird of Rasay.¹

London, 8 May 1775

DEAR SIR: The day before yesterday I had the honour to receive your letter and I immediately communicated it to Dr. Johnson.² He said he loved your spirit, and was exceedingly sorry that he had been the cause of the smallest uneasiness to you. There is not a more candid man in the world than he is, when properly addressed as you will see from his letter to you which I now enclose. He has allowed me to take a copy of it; and he says you may read it to your clan or publish it if you please.³ Be assured Sir that I shall take care of what he has entrusted to me which is to have an acknowledgement of his error inserted in the Edinburgh Newspapers.⁴ You will I dare say be fully satisfied with Dr. Johnson's behaviour. He is desirous to know that you are; and therefore when you have read his acknowledgement in the papers I beg you may write to

me; and if you choose it, I am persuaded a letter from you to the Doctor will be taken kind.⁵ I shall be at Edinburgh the week after next.

Any civilities which my Wife and I had it in our power to shew to your daughter Miss MacLeod were due to her own merit and were well repaid by her agreeable company. But I am sure I should be a very unworthy man if I did not wish to shew a grateful sense of the hospitable and genteel manner in which you was pleased to treat me. Be assured My Dear Sir that I shall never forget your goodness and the happy hours which I spent in Rasay.

You and Dr. MacLeod⁶ were both so obliging as to promise me an account in writing of all the particulars which each of you remembers concerning the transactions of 1745-6. Pray do not forget this and be as minute and as full as you can. Put down every thing. I have a great curiosity to know as much as I can, authentically.⁷ I beg that you may present my best respects to Lady Rasay my compliments to your young family⁸ and to Dr. MacLeod; and my hearty good wishes to Malcolm with whom I hope again to shake hands cordially.⁹ I have the honour to be, Dear Sir, your obliged and faithfull,

humble servant,

JAMES BOSWELL

¹This heading, except for "J.B.", appears above the letter as it is printed in the Tour.

²Ante From Macleod, 10 Apr. Presumably JB and SJ discussed Macleod's complaint when they dined together at the Mitre on 6 May (Life ii. 372).

³Neither the letter nor the copy is reported, but the text is printed in Life v. 412-13. SJ's letter is dated 6 May.

⁴The correction, received "in the handwriting of Dr. Samuel Johnson", appeared in Cal. Merc., 27 May, and the same notice was reprinted in Edin. Eve. Cour. 7 June, according to H. L. McGuffie, Samuel Johnson in the British Press 1749-1784, 1976, pp. 167-168. The text of this notice is printed in Life v. 412.

⁵See post From Macleod, 9 July.

⁶Dr. Murdoch Macleod of Eyre (fl. 1773), younger brother of John Macleod. The brothers escorted Prince Charles from Skye to Raasay and back in 1745 (Life v. 165, 522, 524).

⁷See post From Macleod, 12 July.

⁸Macleod was married to Jane Macqueen of Rigg, Skye; they had three sons and ten daughters (MacLeods, pp. 383-89).

⁹Malcolm Macleod (b. 71711), cousin of John Macleod and another participant in the escape of Prince Charles (Life v. 523).

From Hester Thrale,¹

Thursday 18 May 1775

MS. Yale (C 2265).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr. Gerrard Street, Soho.

ENDORSEMENT: Mrs. Thrale after having read a great part of my Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides.

Streatham, Thursday 18 May 1775

SIR: I return you a thousand Thanks for your entertaining Manuscript and hope it will not be very long before we shall have an Opportunity of conversing freely about our Friend's Excellencies without offending him as on last Tuesday Evening² -- Your Journal has almost blinded me,³ and I can but just see to tell you how earnestly I wish you a happy meeting with your family, and with what sincere Esteem I have the honour to be, Sir, Your most Obedient Servant,

HESTER L. THRALE

¹Hester Lynch Thrale, later Mrs. Piozzi (1741-1821).

²JB and SJ had visited the Thrales at their house in Streatham on Tuesday and Wednesday, 16 and 17 May. (Life ii. 378 and n. 1). Apparently Mrs. Thrale and JB discussed SJ in front of him; of a dinner a month earlier JB reported: "Mrs. Thrale ... frequently practised a coarse mode of flattery, by repeating [SJ'S] bons mots in his hearing" (Life ii. 349). SJ regarded such behaviour as indelicate and rude (Journ. 25 Mar. 1776; Life ii. 472).

³On 27 Aug., SJ wrote JB: "Mrs. Thrale was so entertained with your 'Journal', that she almost read herself blind. She has a great regard for you" (Life ii. 383-84).

To John Wilkes,¹

Friday 26 May 1775

MS. Yale (L 1291). Sent 29 May (Reg. Let.). A copy in Lawrie's hand.

HEADING: To John Wilkes Esq. When Lord Mayor.

Edinburgh, 26 May 1775²

MY LORD: I called at the Mansion House when your Lordship was out of Town, and faithfully restored your Cologne Gazettes which afforded me much entertainment.³ Beleive me I am very sensible of your polite and obliging behaviour to me, upon every occasion, particularly when I was last in London. We were classical and gay at the Mansion house, as when at Rome and Naples, nor did I concern myself more with your wild politicks, than you did with my dul scotch law.⁴

I have recommended to the care of Mr. Dilly who is my universal Charge d'affaires, to get a pedigree of our family authenticated before your Lordship, to be transmitted to my brother a merchant at Valencia in Spain. It is a matter of some consequence to him in that Country; and I am sure you will be kind enough to let it have all due solemnity.⁵

It is long since I enjoyed the pleasure of your correspondence. Will you renew it with me now? I should value as curiosities of the first rate, lively sallies from a Lord Mayor of London, such as those from Mr. Wilkes which are preserved in my Cabinet.⁶

You did not like my addressing you My Lord when I saw you in private.⁷ Having therefore in the beginning of my letter paid the proper compliment to the Chief Magistrate of the City of London, I shall conclude as formerly, Dear Sir, Your very humble servant.

May I beg you will present my best Compliments to Miss Wilkes.⁸ I shall send you the Glasgow edition of Grays Poems by the first opportunity⁹ and some black game if I can get it; you asked me to send you some.¹⁰

¹See ante From Bosville, 5 Mar. 1774, n. 5. Wilkes had been Lord Mayor of London since Nov. 1774.

²JB had left London for Edinburgh at 2 a.m. on 22 May. He should have been back in Edinburgh in time for the opening of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on 24 May, but it seems unlikely that he could have arrived before 25 May (Life ii. 377).

³JB had wished to see the Cologne Gazettes before, although why they were entertaining is not known. The Rev. Robert Brown, minister of the English Presbyterian Church at Utrecht, wrote on 27 Jan. 1767: "There is no getting, at present, all the Latin Gazett's of Cologne for the year 1763; but the editor has promised to send me by the first occasion what of them he has been already been able to pick up, and to continue to do his best to get the remainder. Those of 1766 I shall have by the first opportunity and shall send you". And in a subsequent letter Brown reiterated his promise: "I shall be sure to send you towards the end of next month, all the latin gazettes of Cologne you have not yet received, down to the last of this currt. year" (c. 25 Dec. 1769).

⁴"Many a social repast did we partake of and much classical gaiety we enjoyed, notwithstanding of our direct opposition of sentiment on every important subject" (To Temple, 22 Apr. 1765, from Rome, describing JB's friendship with Wilkes). Of their most recent evening together, JB wrote: "On Saturday last I dined with John Wilkes and his daughter, and nobody else, at the Mansion-house; it was a most pleasant scene" (To Temple, 17 May).

⁵The pedigree was for David Boswell; see post From Wilkes, 10 Aug.

⁶Presumably the same ebony cabinet which C. B. Tinker found at Malahide Castle in 1925, now owned by Mrs. Donald F. Hyde.

⁷On 23 Apr. (Journ. 24 Apr.).

⁸Mary ("Polly") Wilkes (1750-1802), Wilkes's daughter, companion, and housekeeper.

⁹JB sent Wilkes "two volumes of Gray" (post From Wilkes, 10 Aug.). Robert and Andrew Foulis of Glasgow had published editions of Gray's poems in 1768 and in 1773; the two editions were nearly identical, both following the text furnished by James Beattie (1735-1803). Whether the "two volumes" were copies of the same edition or one of each is not clear (C. S. Northrup, A Bibliography of Thomas Gray, 1917, pp. 10-11).

¹⁰Black cock and gray hen, a variety of grouse, were abundant in the Highlands. SJ had seen the species for the first time during his visit to Raasay, and later this year JB enjoyed "the luxury of a black-cock and claret" (Life v. 167; Journ. 28 Oct.). JB could not have procured black game at this time, however. The black game season ran from 20 Aug. - 10 Dec., and even then, the birds were never sold, but were available only from landowners. Black game and all other heath fowl had been protected since 1600, and a new game law had been passed in 1773 which reiterated the old law and enumerated strict penalties for violations (William Ross, Abridgement of the Laws of Scotland relative to Hunting and Fowling, 2nd ed., 1809, p. 30).

From Sir John Pringle,

Monday 29 May 1775

MS. Yale (C 2313).

Pall Mall, 29 May 1775

DEAR SIR, Hoping you have had a good journey, and a joyful meeting with your family and friends, I beg leave to introduce to your acquaintance and good offices at Edinburgh the bearer Monsr. Leclero,¹ recommended to me from Paris, as a modest, sensible and well-behaved young man, and such having found him, I take the mere liberty to address him to my friends; and for this other reason that being desirous to travel into Scotland, he wished to see principally nos auteurs celebres there. I have given him a letter to Mr. Hume, and I intend him another to Lord Kames. May I also beg the favour of you to present him to Lord Monboddo,² and to our worthy friend Dr. Alexr. Dick.³ It is said that M. de Septchenes is breeding for being one of the private Secretaries to the King of France, and that for the department of English affairs; and for this reason it is that he is learning the language, and travelling so much in the country. If this be true, as I believe it is, you will excuse me for wishing that the more

civilities should be shewn him in our native country, and that he may have an opportunity of seeing with you how much we Scotch are well affected in these days to this country and the present establishment.

I beg to be remembered in the most respectful and affectionate manner to Mrs. Boswell, and in case you have forgotten, I would remind you of the compliments I desired you to make her on the honour she did me in the present of the very excellent marmalade she sent me, too long unacknowledged.⁴ I am, Dear Sir, with unfeigned affection, Your faithful, humble Servant,

JOHN PRINGLE

¹Nicolas Marie Leclerc de Septchenes (d. 1788) also visited Holland, Italy, and Switzerland during this tour. Upon his return to France, he became a secretary to Louis XVI. In 1777, he published his translation of the first volume of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire; Gibbon wrote that "the first volume had been feebly though faithfully translated into French by M. Le Clerc de Septchênes, a young Gentleman of a studious character and liberal fortune". Septchenes later published Essai sur la religion des anciens Grecs, 1787, and his edition of the Œuvres of Nicolas Freret was published posthumously in 1796 (Biographie Universelle, 1854, 1969; The Autobiographies of Edward Gibbon, ed. John Murray, 1896, p. 339 n. 63).

²James Burnett, Lord Monboddo (1714-99), a Lord of Session, antiquarian, and the author of Origin and Progress of Language (1773-92). He was frequently ridiculed by SJ and others for his belief in man's kinship with apes.

³"On Wednesday last I dined at Sir Alexander Dick's, where we had the Wyvill family, a M. de Septchenes, a very young Parisian, introduced to me in London by Mr. Burke, and who brought letters to me and some others here from Sir John Pringle, and was also recommended by M. Buffon ... On Thursday I supped at Mr. Hume's where we had the young Parisian, Lord Kames, and Dr. Robertson" (To W. J. Temple, 19 June).

⁴Possibly JB had brought Pringle the marmalade on his journey to London in March; Mrs. Boswell later sent marmalade to SJ also (Life iii. 108, 129, 372).

To William Mason,

?Tuesday 30 May 1775¹

MS. Yale (L 956). Sent 30 May (Reg. Let.). A draft.

REVEREND SIR: Not having had the good fortune to be introduced to your acquaintance, I should not have taken the liberty to write to you² if amidst many gratifications which your memoirs of Mr. Gray have afforded me, I had not received a very high³ one, from finding a character of him published in the London Magazine stamped with your approbation.

That character Sir was written by a very particular friend of mine⁴ Mr. Temple Rectour of Mamhead in Devonshire formerly of Trinity Hall Cambridge a learned ingenious and most worthy man. It was never intended for publication,⁵ for it made part of a letter to me about the time of Mr. Gray's death. I liked it so much, that I copied it out and sent it to the Magazine which Mr. Temple never knew till now that⁶ his composition and my taste have been impartially honoured.⁷

I presume to give you this information in justice to my friend whose modest merit⁸ well deserves to be illustrated⁹ and it is unnecessary¹⁰ for me to add that I am at the same time indulging a¹¹ very pleasing vanity.

¹²If you should ever visit this part of the Island¹³ I shall be exceedingly happy in contributing to your entertainment.¹⁴ I am, Sir, your most obedient, humble servant.

¹Dated from Reg. Let. and from a reference in To Temple, 6 June: "I wrote to Mason a week ago".

²MS. "had I not" deleted after "you"

³MS. "as well as a very" deleted after "high"

⁴MS. "the Revere" deleted after "mine"

⁵MS. "nor even for being shown" deleted after "publication,"

⁶MS. "your" deleted after "that"

⁷William Johnson Temple (1739-96), a close friend of JB's since their days together at the University of Edinburgh, wrote his "character" of Gray in a letter of 3 Sept. 1771; Gray had died on 30 July. The letter appeared in Lond. Mag., Mar. 1772 (xli. 140). JB discovered the reprinted "character" when he saw Mason's Life of Gray at John Claxton's in London, 4 Apr. The same day he wrote to Temple to tell him of the "character", and also told the partners of the Lond. Mag. That day or soon after he may also have written the unsigned review of Mason's book which appeared in the May issue of Lond. Mag. (see post From Mason, 14 June, n. 2). and which is similar in wording to JB's journal entry (Life i. 436 n. 3; Journ. 4 Apr.). In a later letter to Temple, JB wrote: "I am ashamed to say that I have not yet written to Mason about your character of Gray. It would have been too late for the second edition of his book, which is come out. I shall certainly write" (To Temple, 10 May).

⁸MS. "may" deleted after "merit"; "well deserves to" written above.

⁹MS. "by this accident" deleted after "illustrated"

¹⁰MS. "I must" written above "it is unnecessary" and deleted.

¹¹MS. "vanity which I cannot think unreasonable and which is" deleted after "indulging a"; "very" has been added after this deletion, and "vanity" added after "pleasing"

¹²MS. "If you have any commands for me, my address is at Edinburgh which" deleted before "If you"

¹³MS. "this part of Scotland" written above "visit"; "Scotland" deleted and "the Island" written above it.

¹⁴JB met Mason eventually, although not in Scotland; they dined together on 25 Dec. 1785 at Mason's house in York where Mason was Prebendary at the Cathedral. The occasion was cordial: Mason observed that he had met only six Scots who had a sense of humour and JB was one of them (Journ.).

From William Mason,

Wednesday 14 June 1775

MS. Yale (C 1978). Received 19 June (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esq., Edinburgh, Scotland.

POSTMARK: ROTHERHAM.

Aston,¹ June 14th 1775

SIR: The Editors of the London Magazine had, in a most ridiculous puff, acquainted me with the name of Mr. Temple, before I was favoured with your letter.² There was some truth in the Character and it was well written; what I thought exceptionable in it I endeavored to obviate in my notes; and I flatter myself, if Mr. Temple was as much the friend of Mr. Gray, as Mr. Gray was his, he will think himself more obliged to me for those strictures, than for giving his text a place on my Page. He knows best how far he is obliged to your for publishing it at first, without his leave, thro so very ordinary a vehicle. In my poor opinion, had you meant to do him credit, it would have been better to have communicated it in MS. to the person who you then knew was preparing the Memoirs of Mr. Gray for the press.³

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

W. MASON

¹Aston, Mason's parish since 1754, was near Sheffield (Alum. Cant. I. iii. 158).

²The "puff" was the review of the Life of Gray, probably written by JB: "We must now be permitted to mention for the honour of the London Magazine, that Mr. Mason, instead of employing his own pen in drawing Mr. Gray's character, has adopted one originally published by us, in our Magazine for March 1772. Mr. Mason gives it as the production of an anonymous pen. It was written by the Reverend Mr. Temple, rector of Mamhead in Devonshire, in a letter to Mr. Boswell, to whom we are indebted for communicating it: and as Mr. Mason has given it his sanction and enriched it with notes, we shall now again present it to the public with that valuable addition. [There follows Mason's introduction, Temple's character, and Mason's notes.] And let it be remembered, that a character of Mr. Gray in our Magazine has been thought worthy of being placed by the hands of Mason as an apex upon the top of the monument of Gray" (Lond. Mag., May, xliv. 217; Lit. Car., p. 224).

³"I enclose you a copy of my letter to Mason, together with his answer, which I received this afternoon. I certainly wrote to him with sufficient civility; yet his answer is, I think, very dry and ill-humoured. Worthy Grange, who was with me, said he must be a surly cheild. Observe with what arrogance he talks of his strictures on your character of Gray; when I published it, I did not know that he was preparing memoirs: I fancy he is of a sour temper. Pray return me my copy and his letter, and tell me if I should write to him again" (To Temple, 19 June). And of this correspondence Mason wrote: "Mr. James Boswell, the friend of Paoli and Dr. Johnson, has writ me a very Scotch letter about Gray's character, to tell me it was written by a friend of his, Mr. Temple, and that he put it into the London Magazine without his leave. I writ him a very plain English answer which I hope will quit me of this correspondent" (Mason to Horace Walpole, 17 June, Walpole's Correspondence, Yale ed. xxviii. pt. 1.209).

From John Collet,¹

Saturday 24 June 1775

MS. Rylands University of Manchester Library (542/3).

A draft. There is no indication that JB received this letter.

HEADING: To James Boswell Esqre. at Auchinleck, in Ayrshire, Scotland.

Newbury, Berks. June 24, 1775

SIR: I have just finished the reading of Dr. Johnson's very sensible account of his and your voyage² to the Hebrides: I have also read Mr. Pennant's tour to the same islands,³ and am greatly concern'd to see the poverty and miserable condition of their inhabitants.

As I really feel for their distresses, I cannot but wish for their relief: and compassion and humanity naturally suggest⁴ some methods which appear to me likely to answer so desirable an intention. And tho' I am an intire stranger to you; yet⁵ as your good⁶ character, your kind concern for General Paoli and the Corsicans are not unknown to me,⁷ I flatter my self, you will receive this with your usual candour and goodness.

I observe that tho' some of the Lairds of these Islands are become rapacious landlords yet all are not such: and I would hope that most of them would upon some further⁸ consideration be inclin'd to redress the grievances of their people, to lower their rents, and endeavour by good usage, and every encouragement they can give them, to prevent their emigration, and make them happy at home.

In⁹ the first place the present method in Arran (as Mr. Pennant informs us p. 177, and I suppose the like in the other Islands) of granting leases only for 19 years, and then putting them up to auction to the highest bidder, must certainly be a great discouragement to the tenants making any lasting improvement on his land; as at the expiration of that term all his improvements must go to his landlord, or he must pay the more for a new lease of them.¹⁰ Whereas if the Laird was to give every one a proper quantity of land in a lease for 99 years, or rather to give him a perpetuity of such an estate, subject only to a moderate annual rent; and not to be forfeited but either for the non payment of that rent, or for any notorious and wilful neglect in not improving it, or in not keeping

up in some tolerable degree the improvements made upon it:¹¹ this would inspire every one of them with new vigour and alacrity to build good huts or houses, and to improve their little estates to the utmost advantage, as not only themselves, but their families and posterity would enjoy all the advantages arising from their labour and expense. And if the Lairds of only one or 2 of these Islands which now are not well inhabited were to embrace this method, many industrious families from the neighbouring islands, instead of going to America would flock to them, to enjoy so great a happiness as to be able to call a few acres their own: a happiness never yet known in these parts to any but their chiefs. This would by degrees turn these desarts into as fruitful and delightful a country as their climate would permit.¹²

And give me leave here to mention the remarkable instance of a gentleman near Culloden in Scotland, who has brought near 2000 persons to his new town of Keith by only giving them for ever, land sufficient to build a house upon, with gardens and a back yard, on payment of a slight acknowledgement every year. See Mr. Pennant's tour thro Scotland. p. 137.¹³

That these Islands are capable of great improvements appears both from Dr. Johnson and Mr. Pennant: the first informs us that¹⁴ the Island of Iona is remarkably fruitful; that Mr. Macleod in Raasay has an orchard and some large timber trees: that the young Laird of Col (whom it grievd me to read is now dead) had sowed turnips there which succeeded:¹⁵ and Mr. Pennant tells us p. 233 etc. that in Ilay Mr. Campbell's improvements were excellent, the grass good, the fields clear, and that he had not only strawberries, but an apple orchard which bore plentifully nay even wheat had been raised there with good success.¹⁶

Dr. Johnson tells us that in Col there are pretty villages, every hut of which has a little garden adjoining, and thus they make an appearance of social commerce and mutual good offices, and show some attention to conveniences and future supply.¹⁷ Suppose then that after the Laird of any island had made choice of what lands he would reserve for himself, he was to¹⁸ fix on some proper spots of ground for such villages, and then give to every man for ever on the terms above mentioned, about 2 or 3 acres or a sufficient quantity of land for him to build his hut or house upon, and for

his garden, orchard and yard: together with 30 or 40 or more acres of land close to the village, as should be judgd sufficient to feed a proper number of Cows and Sheep or Goats, and to supply him and his family with corn: but not enough to make him a Gentleman or a Tacksman. By this method he¹⁹ would make hundreds happy, and become a friend and father to his people. Every tenant should pay him a moderate rent every year, and the estate should go at his death to his posterity or²⁰ in default of such, to his relations according to his will, but if ever the estate should be sold or be left to any one of another family a fine or one or two years value of it, should be paid to the original proprietor.

And further, as these islands are quite naked of trees, and are in great want of wood and inclosures: every tenant should be obligd (under a proper penalty) to plant every year on his farm so many²¹ firs or other timber trees as shall be judgd proper, and to fence them with stones, and weed and preserve them untill their number amounted to ...; and whenever he cut down or lost one, he should be obligd to plant another. But as too²² great a number of such trees in so wet a country, would keep the ground always

damp, and thereby make the air unwholesome, the number to be constantly kept up on every farm should be properly limited.

Every tenant should also be obligd to plant every year on his farm, a proper number of yards of Quicksets furz or Hawthorn or birch for hedges,²³ as would suit the climate and keep them weeded and well fenc'd with stones, till they were well grown: and till not only his whole farm was surrounded with them: but also his ground subdivided and surrounded with the same: as he ought to have 1 or 2 fields for corn, another for turnips for his Cows and sheep,²⁴ and one for potatoes to feed his hogs, if he can be prevaild upon to eat bacon,²⁵ which would afford him and his family an additional provision in the winter, as our farmers have in England. In these hedges, I should think, some Crabtrees should be planted, if vinegar be scarce among them, as they would give him virjuice to pickle his fish, and for several other uses. I would further recommend their trying the Siberian barley as it approaches nearer than any other barley to wheat²⁶ and I have eat some bread made only from (it which was) good.

When his garden is dug deep and well fencd, he could not only raise the common garden stuff, such as

Cabbages, Potatoes, Onions, Lettice, carrots, radishes, etc. but might also²⁷ have Beans, pease, french beans, wood and alpine strawberries; and perhaps also Gooseberries, Currants Raspberries and the like, as the winters are not very cold.

In his Orchard, Codlins and other sorts of early ripe apples, Cherries, and some sorts of Plums would probably succeed.

As the heath abounds very much, and must be destroy'd before any good grass will grow there; they should be taught the best methods of destroying it. Mr. Pennant tells us, that in Ilay he saw a piece of²⁸ good grass ground, which had been very lately cover'd with heath, but had been destroyd by the use of Shell sand. p. 224.²⁹ Mr. Penrose tells us in his late account of Falklands islands, that when an accidental fire had consum'd the heath and grass there for about 20 miles in circumference, the ashes proved a very good manure, and the grass sprung up after some rains very soon and very green.³⁰ But this last method cannot be tried, unless they can stop the fire whenever they please, lest it should consume their huts and destroy their cattle. -- After the heath is

destroy'd the best method perhaps would be to procure seeds of the best sorts of grasses which would suit their soil and climate and afford the most nourishment for their cows and sheep. A particular account of the various sorts of grasses is³¹ published at the end of the second edition of Mr. Stillingfleet's miscellaneous tracts relating to natural history husbandry and physic in Octavo: and any of these sorts may be had from London.³²

As the storms have thrown the sand from the shore over a good deal of land in the isle of Col, and perhaps also in some of the other islands, I would mention that Mr. Borlase in his natural history of Cornwall p. 234 tells us, that some sorts of Rushes (which may also be useful for other purposes) prevent the sands from shifting, by fixing their roots in them.³³ Mr. Osbeck also in his account of his voyage to China, p. 42 and 43 says, that at Cadiz in Spain, the Spanish Broom grows on the sands, where scarce any thing else will: and that it stops the progress of the sands, its leaves and branches are delicious food for the goats; it's twigs are us'd for tying bundles; and it turns the most barren place into a fine odoriferous

garden by its flowers.³⁴ As this spanish Broom flourishes in our gardens in England, I suppose it will also in the Hebrides. There are also several plants and trees which will bear the spray of the sea, and flourish close to it. Mr. Miller recommends the Sycamore and Norway Maple.³⁵ See also an account of several other trees and plants proper for the same purpose published³⁶ in the Gentleman's Magazine for August 1757.³⁷

I am very sensible that the above mention'd grasses, plants quicksets trees etc. cannot be procur'd and carried to these islands without expence. And besides I believe they will not succeed there unless some person of good understanding in these affairs is sent with them, to see that they are judiciously sown or planted and well fenc'd; which will increase the expence. To encourage also these little Farmers to industry care and diligence, it would be an excellent method to give annual premiums to those who clear the largest quantity of their own lands from heath: to those who³⁸ planted and secur'd the greatest number of trees, and of Quicksets for hedges on their own grounds, to those who have planted the

greatest number of fruit trees in their own orchards; to those who have raised the greatest crop of garden stuff etc. -- Some manufactures should also be encouraged by the same method, as knitting of Stockings etc. etc.. I should imagine there should be three or 4 prizes³⁹ of different value to every premium, to promote a little emulation among them. It is surprising to consider the great advantages, which have risen in England from the premiums given by the society for encouraging of arts, manufactures etc. at London.⁴⁰ And I make no question but a similar improvement would be made by the inhabitants of these Hebrides, upon a like plan: if a number of Gentlemen would form themselves into such a society at Glasgow: and if they appointed some person in London to receive contributions to it, I don't doubt but many there would contribute to it, if the plan when well settled be drawn up and printed in the public News papers at London. I live in the Country, and seldom see any paper but the General Evening post:⁴¹ but as soon as I should see it published or advertized there, and should see⁴² your name as one of the Managers of it: I would give some⁴³ Guineas to it, if I should be alive.

Give me leave also to recommend to the Proprietors of these islands, to plant timber trees on the tops of the hills in their own possessions, and carefully to fence them from the deer and goats: as by this method their estates would in time be improv'd and be more valuable when the trees are grown: and the vallies on the eastern sides of those hills would be defended from the strong westerly winds. They might also perhaps have warrens for rabbits in their high dry lands. They should also stock those lochs with fish, which are at present without them, particularly with trout and gudgeons. And where their coasts are without oysters, lobsters or crabs, they might easily stock them. -- Dr. Hales says that if a few drops of strong spirit of Vitriol be added to a good deal of water, fish may be carried many miles and may be kept alive⁴⁴ many hours or even a whole day.⁴⁵ Du Halde in his history of China vol. 1 p. 27 in Octavo tells us that⁴⁶ in May the Chinese place hurdels or mats cross their rivers, which stop the spawn of many sorts of fish these they⁴⁷ put into proper vessels and convey them into different provinces to stock their ponds and pools: and in a few days the young fry begin to appear in little shoals.⁴⁸

I dont know whether there are any Saltworks erected in any of these islands, or whether salt is very cheap there: if⁴⁹ not, I should think it would be of advantage to any of the Lairds to erect a proper building and vessels for making of salt out of the sea water, and to sell it at a moderate price: as it must be of great service to these⁵⁰ inhabitants to be able to salt a good deal of their fish: and a proper person may easily be procurd from Limington or some other parts⁵¹ to instruct them in the making it.⁵² Mr. Hartley has discover'd an easy⁵³ method of preserving any flesh meat for 2 or 3 months thus, but whether it will answer as well for fish, I dont know. He generally cuts off pieces of Beef or mutton etc. about 5 or 6 lls. weight each or singly and boils them nearly as much as is usual, then lets them stand till they are quite cold and dry in a cool place: then lays them on unglazd earthen dishes, and covers them well over with dry salt, so that no air can come to them: and keeps them thus in a cool place for some Months. When he designs to dress them, he wipes off all the salt, and soaks them for some house in fresh water, then just boils them in fresh water and brings them to table.⁵⁴

By this method all the juices of the flesh are preserv'd, and the salt never melts: so that it is more nourishing and better than what is salted in the common method.

As the inhabitants of the Hebrides are used to take the dram of Whiskey every morning: I could wish they would steep 1 ounce of the Bark of Oak in a quart of it: which would render this poison more wholesome; and preserve them more effectually from the putrid fevers, which arise from the dampness of their country.⁵⁵

Since they are not permitted to have any swords or fire arms, and may thereby become an easy prey to a few wicked men: should they not be instructed in the use of bows and arrows, or of Cross bows, the best of which Mr. Pennant tells us p. 14, are made at Wiggan.⁵⁶

Lastly I would beg leave to recommend it to the consideration of the general Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland; that since they have no churches and so few Ministers in these islands, whether it would not be proper to⁵⁷ erect some larger buildings or churches and to appoint a larger number of Ministers with

proper salaries or glebes, that piety and virtue, righteousness and goodness, may be inculcated upon them, that they may thereby become the fitter objects for the favour of God, that he may bless them with temporal as well as with spiritual blessings: for it is he only that directs and governs the winds, and the weather and is able to bless them both here and hereafter.⁵⁸ I am, Sir, with sincere respect, Your most obedient, humble Servant,

J. COLLET

¹ John Collet (1709-80), M.D. Leyden 1731, had practised medicine in Newbury since about 1733. "His amiable qualities and eminence in his profession deservedly entitled him to the extensive practice which he enjoyed for a great number of years" (Gent. Mag. May 1780, l. 252; College of Physicians ii. 129). An extract of a letter from Collet to Richard Bishop of Ossory -- who, as Richard Pococke, was the author of a number of travel books -- was published as "An Account of the Peat-pit near Newbury in Berkshire" (Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society 1 (1757), pt. 1, art. 15).

² MS. "journey" deleted after "your"; "voyage" written above. Of the large number of deletions in this letter, only those that remain legible (about half) will be noted.

³ Pennant, 1772.

⁴ MS. "to me" deleted after "suggest"

⁵ MS. "I hope" deleted after "yet"

⁶ MS. "amiable" deleted after "you"; "good" written above.

⁷ MS. "you" deleted after "to"; "me" written above.

⁸ MS. "little" deleted after "some"; "further" written above.

⁹ MS. "And" deleted before "In"

¹⁰A reference to the run-rig farms of Arran (Pennant, 1772, pp. 176-77).

¹¹MS. "them" deleted after "upon"; "it" written above.

¹²Collet has written "add x" after "permit" and marked the second paragraph following with "x". In this transcription, the paragraph has been inserted here as he indicated.

¹³"The country round Cullen has all the marks of improvement, owing to the indefatigable pains of the late noble owner ... His Lordship collected together near 2000 souls, to his new town in Keith, by feuing, i.e. giving in perpetuity, on payment of a slight acknowledgement, land sufficient to build a house on, with gardens and back-yard" (Pennant, A Tour in Scotland 1769, 3rd ed., 1774, p. 137 and n.). "About the year 1750, the late Lord Finlater divided a barren Moor, and feued it out in small lots, according to a regular plan still adhered to; on which there now stands a large, regular, and tolerably thriving village, called New Keith, containing 1075 inhabitants" (J. F. Gordon, The Book of the Chronicles of Keith, Grange, etc., 1880, p. 12).

¹⁴MS. "at Raasay Mr. M" deleted after "that"

¹⁵Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 60-61, 124.

¹⁶Pennant, 1772, pp. 223-28. Although Pennant describes "Mr. Campbel" or "Sunderland" as a proprietor, not a tenant (p. 224), he is probably the Duncan Campbell of Sunderline, or his descendant, listed as a rent-payer of Sunderline or Kilchoman in 1741 (G. G. Smith, The Book of Islay, 1895, p. 559).

¹⁷Works SJ, Yale ed. ix. 131; nearly a direct quotation.

¹⁸MS. "lay out" deleted after "to"

¹⁹MS. "might" deleted after "he"

²⁰MS. "relations" deleted after "or"

²¹MS. "timber" deleted after "many"

²²MS. "many" deleted after "too"

²³"By the Word Quick are generally understood all live Hedges, of whatever Sort of Plants they are composed ... but, in the more strict sense of this Word, it is applied to the Hawthorn ..." (Philip Miller, *The Gardeners Dictionary*, 1724, s.v. "Quick"). Miller also points out that Furze does not make an effective hedge for cattle, because after a few years the bushes become thin, sometimes dead, at the bottom, "therefore the raising of them has been of late years, little practised". Hawthorn, on the other hand, "is one of the best and most durable Plants" for a hedge. He does not suggest birch for hedges, but recommends it for barren land, "where better Trees will not thrive" (s.v. "Ulex: Furze Gorse or Whins", "Mespilus, The Medlar", and "Betula: The Birch Tree").

²⁴MS. "in the winter" deleted after "sheep"

²⁵"The vulgar inhabitants of Sky, I know not whether of the other islands, have not only eels, but pork and bacon in abhorrence, and accordingly I never saw a hog in the Hebrides, except one at Dunvegan" (*Works* SJ, Yale ed. ix. 61).

²⁶ Possibly Siberian barley is the modern "Manchurian" variety, a hardy six-rowed barley with a high yield per acre (H. B. Derr, "Barley: Growing the Crop", Farmers' Bulletin No. 443, 1911, U.S. Agriculture Dept., pp. 3-9). Barley production in Scotland increased tremendously during the next few decades as a result of the growing demand in England and abroad for Scottish beer (See ante To Campbell, 4 May, n. 4).

²⁷ MS. "perhaps" deleted after "also"

²⁸ MS. "ground" deleted after "of"

²⁹ Pennant, 1772, p. 224.

³⁰ Bernard Penrose, An Account of the Last Expedition to Port Egmont in Falkland's Islands in the year 1772, 1775, pp. 58-64.

³¹ MS. "are" deleted after "grasses"; "is" written above.

³² Benjamin Stillingfleet, "Observations on Grasses", Miscellaneous Tracts relating to Natural History, Husbandry, and Physick, 1762, 2nd. ed., pp. 363-391.

³³ Along the sandy hills of the parishes bordering on the North-sea, as Philac, Gwythien, and Piran-sand, there grows a rush in the dryest and most naked sand-heaps, which I take to be Juncus acutus capitulis Sorghi. These rushes have a two-fold use; their roots fix the sands, and prevent them from shifting with the winds, and consequently from making further encroachments upon the arable grounds ... The other use is floor-matting. William Borlase, The Natural History of Cornwall, 1758, pp. 233-34.

³⁴Collet is closely paraphrasing a passage from Peter Osbeck, A Voyage to China and the East Indies, trans. from the German by J. R. Forster, 1771, pp. 42-43).

³⁵"[The Sycamore Tree] thrives, and resists the Spray, which is usually blown from the Sea, better than most other trees do ... The Norway maple ... will answer the same purpose, for sheltering Plantations near the Sea" (Philip Miller, The Gardeners Dictionary, 1759, s.v. "Acer").

³⁶MS. "publish"

³⁷"Trees proper for St. Mary's Island", Gent. Mag. Aug. 1757, xxvii. 356-57.

³⁸MS. "have" deleted after "who"

³⁹MS. "to every" deleted after "prizes"

⁴⁰The Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce was founded in 1754 by William Shipley (brother of Jonathan Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, a member of The Club), whose system of "encouragement" consisted of premiums or awards offered for achievements or inventions in "the Polite Arts, Agriculture, Mechanical Arts, Chemical Arts, and Trade". In the eighteenth century, the Society was responsible for considerable progress in reforestation, in dye production, in improved methods of feeding livestock, and in the development of farm machinery (Aims, Activities and History of the Royal Society ... Arts, 1957, pp. 15-16; R. Dossie, Memoirs of Agriculture and other Oeconomical Arts, 1768, i. 1-26. For SJ's relationship with Dossie, see Life iv. 11 and n. 2). Sometimes before 1748, Alexander, tenth Earl of Eglinton, founded the Society for Improving of Agriculture and Manufactures in the

Shire of Ayr, which anticipated the English Society's system of awarding premiums to farmers who effected improvements (Ayrshire, p. 133).

⁴¹The General Evening Post appeared tri-weekly, 1733-1822, when it was absorbed by St. James's Chron. (R. S. Crane and F. B. Kaye, A Census of British Newspapers and Periodicals 1620-1800, 1927, new ed. 1966, pp. 136-37). It was "sent to persons residing in the country, free of postage, and in the neatest and most punctual manner" (Advertisement in Lond. Chron. June 3-5 1777, reproduced in D. Nichol Smith, "The Newspaper", Johnson's England, ed. A. S. Turberville, 1933, II. 359).

⁴²MS. "Mr. Bos" deleted after "see"

⁴³MS. A short word is heavily deleted after "give"; "some" is written above.

⁴⁴MS. "they" deleted after "and"; "may be kept" written above.

⁴⁵Stephen Hales (1677-1761), Rector of Farringdon, Hants, and an amateur scientist, discovered that a grudgeon would live longer in distilled sea water if "a few Drops of Spirit or Oil of Vitriol" was added to the water (Preface to "An Account of Some Attempts to make Distilled Sea-Water Wholesome", Philosophical Experiments ... Read before the Royal Society, 1739, pp. xiv-xv).

⁴⁶MS. "the Ch" deleted after "that"

⁴⁷MS. "convey" deleted after "they"; "put" written above.

⁴⁸"In the great River Yang-tse-Kyang ... a prodigious number of Barks meet every Year to buy the Spawn of Fishes. About May the People of the Country dam up the River for 9 or 10 Leagues together, in several Places, with Mats and Hurdles ... in order to stop the Spawn, which they know how to distinguish at first Sight, tho' the Water is scarce alter'd; with this Water, mixt with the Spawn, they fill several vessels to sell to the Merchants, who at this Season arrive in great Numbers to buy, and transport it into divers Provinces, taking care to have it stirr'd up from time to time. This Water is sold by Measure to such as have Fish-Ponds, and Pools belonging to their Houses; in a few Days the young Fry begin to appear in little Shoals" (A Description of the Empire of China and Chinese Tartary ... from the French of P. J. B. Du Halde, 1738, i. 19). Fish culture has taken place on the Yang-tse for many centuries. The process involves only the four varieties of carp, not "many sorts of fish" as Collet supposed. Carp cannot spawn in still water, so the ponds must be replenished each year.

⁴⁹MS. "it be" deleted after "if"

⁵⁰MS. "people" deleted after "these"

⁵¹MS. "where they make the Salt" deleted after "parts"

⁵²Salt production in England and in Scotland was the focus of much controversy in the eighteenth century, and it is surprising that Collet seems unaware of this. Salt was not produced in the Hebrides, but numerous saltpans existed on the Firth of Forth; in Prestonpans, Kirkaldy, Burrowstones, and other shore towns, where salt was derived from brine. But since 1745, Scottish salt had been exempt from the English tax, and it was therefore exported to England, where it competed favourably

with English salt. This may have created a shortage in Scotland; in any case, Scottish fishermen could not afford the only salt available to them: barrels of rock salt costing 3s. apiece, and probably imported from Ireland, which was also exempt from the tax. This situation badly damaged Scotland's fishing industry. Although in the seventeenth century the Scots had dominated North Sea fishing and had sold salted fish to England, Pennant observed in 1772 that "by some mischance" the trade had been taken over by the Dutch and the Germans (Pennant, 1772 ii. 145). Collet's reference to Lymington also shows he is ill-informed; Lymington, Hants, had been a center for English salt production for centuries, but the salt was made not from brine, but from rock salt, which involved a different process. By the mid-nineteenth century, salt supplies at Lymington had run out, and Cheshire became the center for English salt (E. Hughes, Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825 with Special Reference to the History of Salt Taxation in England, 1934, pp. 409-32; C. P. Jones, History of Lymington, 1930, pp. 170-72).

⁵³MS. "has found out such" deleted after "has"; "discovered" written above; "way" deleted after "easy"

⁵⁴This observation is untraced; it was presumably made by the younger David Hartley (1731-1813), known chiefly for his researches in fire prevention and for his opposition to the American War.

⁵⁵"Putrid fever" had no specific definition although it probably most often described typhoid or paratyphoid, diseases which were identified only in the late nineteenth century, and frequently were caused by contaminated water supplies. One contemporary writer stated that "putrid fever" was synonymous with "malignant fever", "when livid or petechial spots shew a putrid state of the humours"; another authority wrote that "there is no fixing such limits to it as to admit of establishing a species under the title of putrid" (William Buchan,

Domestic Medicine, 1769, 1798 ed., p. 95; William Cullen, First Lines of the Practice of Physic, 1779, trans. from the Latin of A. Von Haller, 1790 ed., p. 92). Both writers felt that such fevers were frequently caused by the air which rises from swampy areas (the "marsh miasma"), or by the effects of foggy or rainy weather (Cullen, p. 98-99; Buchan, pp. 130-31). Their source for this assumption was probably Joseph Priestley's "Observations on Different Kinds of Air" (see ante From Pringle, 29 Jan. 1774, n. 4), and more specifically his letter to Pringle "On the Noxious Quality of the Effluvia of putrid Marshes", followed by a letter from Richard Price, "Further Proofs of the Insalubrity of marshy Situations" (Philosophical Transactions, 1774, lxiv. pt. 1.). Collet's preventive medicine seems curious; cinchona bark or quinine was a frequent remedy, but bark of oak suggests tannin, more commonly used as an astringent. Buchan counsels that "any one who is apprehensive of having caught the infection [putrid fever] ought immediately to take a vomit, and to work it off by drinking plentifully of camomile tea ... The person ought likewise to take an infusion of the bark and camomile flowers for his ordinary drink; and before he goes to bed, he may drink an English pint of pretty strong negus, or a few glasses of generous wine" (p. 136).

⁵⁶Pennant, 1772, p. 14.

⁵⁷MS. "build" deleted after "to"

⁵⁸Collet was a Dissenter (College of Physicians ii. 129).

From John MacLeod,

Sunday 9 July 1775

MS. Yale (C 1862). Received 17 July, "Rasay"
(Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: James Boswell Younger of Achinleck Esqr.,
Edinr.

Rasay, July 9th 1775

DEAR SIR: I had the pleasure of receiving your Letter covering one from Doctor Johnson sometime ago and had the further pleasure of seeing the publication mentioned in it in the newspapers.¹ Mr. MacLeod the writer² also informed me of the obliging part you acted in getting that thing done. I am really thankful to you and to the Doctor for your condescension and would willingly embrace any occasion to express my sense of it.

Neither Dr. MacLeod or I can authenticate any facts in the transactions you mean but in what passed within Sky which we know with precision: if you mean these you shall have them soon transmitted to you with great distinctness, you may either speak to or write by Mr. MacQueen³ and we shall pay all regard

to your commands. Please convey the Inclosed to
Doctor Johnson sealed.⁴ I am with Mrs. MacLeod's
compliments, Dr. MacLeods and old Malcolm's, Dear
Sir, your most oblidge, most humble Servant,

JOHN MCLEOD

¹Ante To MacLeod, 8 May and n. 4.

²Roderick MacLeod (d. 1784), a member of the Society of Writers since 1732, belonged to the Bernera branch of the MacLeods. His father, William MacLeod of Luskintyre, was a brother of John MacLeod's grandmother, Catherine. Roderick MacLeod's son, Bannatyne, was the advocate who had helped JB defend John Reid in the trial of 1766 (Writers, p. 136; MacLeods, pp. 240-46, 371-75).

³The Rev. Donald MacQueen, of Kilmuir, Skye, the bearer of this letter (ante From MacQueen, end of Jan. 1774, n. 1; post From MacLeod, 12 July). JB entertained MacQueen "cordially" during his visit to Edinburgh (Journ. "Review of My Life During the Summer Session 1775").

⁴A letter to SJ, not reported (post To MacLeod, 11 Oct.).

From John MacLeod,

Wednesday 12 July 1775

MS. Yale (C 1863). Received 21 July, "Rasay" (Reg. Let.).

Rasay, july 12th, 1775

DEAR SIR: Last week I had the honour to write to you and Doctor Johnson by Mr. Donald Macqueen.¹ Since, Doctor Macleod and I with Mr. Malcomes assistance have put together, all we know consistant with our own knowledge of the famous escape in 1746, as minutely as we cou'd remember, what made a story of 23 folio pages of it within the Compass of six days. As it is so bulky that it cou'd not be safely sent you, but by a private hand, we embrac'd the opportunity of the Bearer Mr. Bethune, who was in Such a hurry that we had not time to transcribe it, and tho' it be not writt in a very clean hand and interspers'd with several Marginal Notes, it is to be hop'd you will make it out.²

If there are any other of the Transactions of that period consistant with our knowledge, you want to be inform'd of, you will please let me know, and I will transmitt it to you by the first proper con-

venience. Mrs. Macleod, Doctor Macleod and Mr. Malcome join me in their most Respectfull Compliments to you and I am, with all Esteem, Dear Sir, your most obedient, and humble Servant,

JOHN McLEOD

¹See ante From MacLeod, 9 July and n. 3.

²The twenty-three pages of MS. which accompany this letter contain a narrative of Prince Charles's escape. JB used this as one of the sources for his version of the story in the Tour (Life v. 187-202). The Rev. William Bethune or Beaton (1738-1814) was minister of Duirinish, Skye (Life v. 536).

From John Wilkes,

Thursday 10 August 1775

MS. Yale (C 3091). Received 14 Aug. (Reg. Let.).¹

ADDRESS: James Boswell Esqr. Edinburgh.

FRANK: Free John Wilkes.

POSTMARK: FREE; 10 AU.

Mansion House, Aug. 10 1775

DEAR SIR, I should tire you with a long apology for my silence till this hour, if I did not know both your thorough goodnature, and that you have been a witness to the hurry of the life I am doomed to pass till november.² I am now just returned from the busy hum of men; as Milton calls it,³ at Guildhall, and expect in half an hour a score of worthy Liverymen, friends of Wilkes and liberty, whom so liberal a Scot as you would rejoice to hear and make libations with, for I know they drink the same toasts, which your good and happy genius whispers to you.

The pedigree was authenticated with all due Solemnity, and in a more beautifull manner than has been done before at the Lord Mayor's Office, that

the name of Boswell may be considered in as fair a light in Spain as it is in Scotland and England.⁴ You will however agree with me that your brother cannot give your name to any female composition of beauty, elegance, and goodnature, equal to our favourite in Yorkshire,⁵ whose charms I hope will draw you to the capital early in the winter, for I know no coercive, centripetal, power equal to it on so animated matter as that of which you are made.

Mr. Cumming very obligingly called here, and left me the two volumes of Gray,⁶ for which I am much indebted to your polite attention, but hope to be more so for the pages you have of the reveries at Naples and Paris.⁷ I beg you to transcribe them and to send them to me by the post. You mention Black-game, but you must establish a barter, as in the good old time, or I cannot agree. Tell me then what you wish from this capital, and I will send it --⁸ My company are just arrived -- Mr. Boswell in a bumper -- huzza, huzza, huzza! ---.⁸ Adieu.

¹"I am now writing on Monday the 14th. The post has brought me a letter from the Lord Mayor Wilkes" (To Temple, 12 Aug.).

²The term of the Lord Mayor expired annually on 30 Nov.

³L'Allegro, 1. 118.

⁴The ceremony had taken place on 5 June. The pedigree, which JB had requested for his brother (see ante To Wilkes, 26 May), had been drawn up by Robert Boswell, the Lyon Depute. Wilkes enclosed with this letter copies of two "certifications" vouching for the authenticity of the pedigree, one dated 5 June, and signed by Wilkes and by the Alexander Kincaids senior and junior, printers of Edinburgh, and the other dated 12 June, certifying Wilkes's signature and signed by the Prince of Masserano, the Spanish Ambassador.

⁵Julia Bosville, whom JB thought "a prodigious fine woman", and to whom he may have introduced Wilkes at the Mansion House ball on 7 Apr. (Journ. 24 Mar., 7 Apr.). She is elsewhere described as "a beauty in her youth, [who] took refuge in later life in cards and strong waters" (an unidentified quotation in Comp. Peer. iv. 488-89 n. d).

⁶See ante To Wilkes, 26 May. James Cummyng (d. 1793), herald painter and Lyon Clerk Depute, had assisted Robert Boswell in drawing up the pedigree, according to one of the "certifications". Robert Fergusson, the poet, described Cummyng as "a walking alm'nack", and JB later spent an evening discussing genealogy and antiquities with him over dinner: "a little feast" (Journ. 26 Sept. 1780; Court of the Lord Lyon, Scottish Record Society, Dec. 1945, cxlviii. 14; "On James Cumming", The Poems of Robert Fergusson, ed. M. P. McDiarmid, 1956, ii. 172-73, see also i. 54 n. 1 for more biographical material).

⁷Presumably JB's Journal of time spent with Wilkes in those cities Feb. 1765 and Jan. 1766.

⁸⁻⁸After quoting this passage, JB wrote to Temple:
"Tell me, my dear Temple, if a man who receives so many marks of more than ordinary consideration can be satisfied to drudge in an obscure corner, where the manners of the people are disagreeable to him?" (To Temple, 12 Aug.).

From Patrick Preston,

Monday 14 August 1775

MS. Yale (C 2287). Received 15 Aug. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr. James Court, Edin.

Valleyfield, 14th Augst. 1775)

MY DEAR JAMES: I had the favor of Yours last Week,¹
which I heartily thank You for, and got the News
of the Victory over Christie the Day after from Sir
George, which I am sure has cost You much Plague and
Trouble, so calls for my most sincere Acknowledgements,
and will, I am confident, be attended with very good
Effects in this Country.²

I have Hopes as Your Labors are now at End,³
that I have a Chance of seeing You in this Country,
at least so my good friend Mrs. B. once flattered me,
and should wish (if still in a travelling Condition,⁴)
that You and Her wou'd come when My Mother does, which
I fancy will be soon.⁵ I cannot conclude without
taking the Liberty of reminding You of the Conversation
we had last Winter about Your paying a Visitt at
Auchinleck, of the propriety and even Necessity of
which I can imagine You are fully convinced (let)

me therefore My Dear James conjure You not <to> allow any thing to prevent it, that You may give no pretext for any Body to say You have been defficient, in Your Duty.⁶ Assure Mrs. B. of my most Respectfull Compliments and excuse the Liberty I have taken believe me ever, My Dear James, most Sincerely and affectionately Yours,

P. PRESTON

¹To Patrick Preston, 8 Aug. (Reg. Let.), not reported.

²Information is incomplete on the case of Sir George Preston v. Christie. JB's notes of 21 July indicate that it involved a dispute over maintenance of fences (Lg. 27:14).

³The Court of Session had risen on 11 Aug.

⁴Mrs. Boswell was seven months pregnant.

⁵Sir George and Lady Preston spent much time in Edinburgh and JB had been with them often during the summer (Journ. "Review of My Life During the Summer Session 1775"). Although the Boswells frequently visited Valleyfield during September, there is no record of such a visit this year, probably because Mrs. Boswell's pregnancy (Journ. 24 Sept. 1774; 5 Sept. 1777; 15 Oct. 1778; 30 Sept. 1780).

⁶Preston was concerned about JB's inheritance. He alludes to the previous 10 Jan.: "In the evening Mr. Preston of Valleyfield called, and he and I talked fully of my father's settlements. He did not believe that any harm would really be done, but was for my keeping a strict look-out" (Journ.).

From Godfrey Bosville,

Sunday 24 September 1775

MS. Yale (C 190). Received 27 Sept. (Reg. Let.).¹

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr. at Edinburgh.

Gunthwait, Sept. 24th 1775

DEAR SIR: It is a double mortification to me not to be able to comply with your first request,² but the slight acquaintance I have with Sir Thomas Mills does not enable me to ask any favor of him, and moreover as some little shyness has happend between Lady Mills and Mrs. Bosville I could not expect to have her Ladyships good offices.³ If the young gentleman⁴ happens to be in London when I am there I shall be very glad to see him, and if it should lye in my power to be of any service to him, which I have no hopes that it will, I would neglect no oportunity both upon the account of our name and for the relationship he bears to you. A dangerous illness attended with a delirium kept us a long time in the utmost anxiety for poor Julia's life, but think she has now for some time been perfectly recoverd of the Fever, which left her without voice or use of her hands, her nerves have been so terribly affected, and she still con-

tinues extreamly weak, though by bathing and airing on our Moors she now speaks nearly in her natural Voice, and can manage a knife and fork well enough to dine with us, and we hope will soon be able to undertake a journey to Thorp, as Sea bathing is more bracing than fresh water.⁵ She says she is disappointed that you did not send her an account as you promised of your journey in the Stage to Edenburgh. Capt. Bosville is gone into Spain, I had a letter from him at Paris and another at Marseills, he was going to embark for Barcelona and had luckily met with a Yorkshire Gentleman, Mr. Wombwell a Spanish Merchant who has a house at Alicant,⁶ but the death of the Marquis de la Romagna that was killed, before Algiers and was Governor of Alicant will be a great loss to him,⁷ he met the Marquis formerly at Lions and they went down the Rhone together, he had a vast Retinue, his own Cooks and eat in the Spanish manner and invited William to his table, who you know loves any thing out of the way, and therefore eat heartily of his Oil, and Spices, that his Olios and Soups and Ragouts were so plentifully provided with, and his preferring Spanish to French

Cookery pleasd the Marquis so much that he woud not let him dine at the Inn at Marseills, but insisted upon his continuing with him into Spain, and said he woud see him in London. William had not heard of his death when He wrote his last letter. I am exceedingly glad the Government will act with spirit against these Americans,⁸ their ingratitude to us that have supported protected and raisd them can be surpassed by nothing but the Traytors that assist them in England. Any thing is better than as we have been, for they must either be subjected or independent at the worst and then they will have⁹ their own Goverment and their own wars to maintain, and they will assist us when it is their interest as the Dutch do the Spaniards, who did more to defend them under King William than ever they woud have done had they been their Subjects, for they bore the whole brunt of the War for them in Flanders where the Spaniards had but few Regiments and receivd the revenues.¹⁰ The Rebels have done their worst and our trade is better than ever it was before their Non-importation agreement, which shows their importance not adequate to what they have blusterd, and the people here seem

united against them in so much that a few firebrands can do nothing. I have Deeds for a Settlement from John Boswell my ancestor of the Mannors of Newhall and Gunthwait and various other Estates some of which I have, but many I have not, to Matilda of York Countess of Cambridge and others 11th Hen. 6.¹¹ It is spelt so in many old Writings, and several other ways, but the most usual and antientist method was Bosseville. Whatever mode of spelling we adopt we ought by no means to expunge the Bos out of our Crest.¹² Mrs. and Miss Bosville joyn in our Compliments to you and your Lady and Lord Auchenleck and his Lady and believe <me, Dear> Sir, <to be your most affectionate Kinsman,

GODFREY BOSVILLE

¹Possibly the letter which Mrs. Bosville later reprimanded JB for not answering (Journ. 17 Mar. 1776). There is no subsequent Bosville correspondence reported, or noted in the Reg. Let., until From Bosville, 7 Apr. 1777.

²This is presumably answering To Bosville, 12 Sept. (Reg. Let., not reported); the nature of the request is unknown.

³Sir Thomas Mills (d. 1793) was Town Adjutant of Quebec in 1762; in 1774, he held the post of Receiver-General of Quebec and appeared before the House of Commons in that capacity to report on Canadian trade. He was a friend of David Garrick's and his neighbor at 7 Adelphi Terrace. Horace Walpole described him as "a noisy fellow, who lived at a vast expense without any visible means... supposed to be a natural son of Lord Mansfield, and to be supported by him in that profusion". Sylvester Douglas, a contemporary diarist, denied that Mills was Mansfield's son, and stated that he was illiterate "and had little more sense than he had learning, but was frank, friendly, dashing". Lady Mills is not further identified (Arthur Doughty and D. A. MacArthur, Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada 1791-1818, 1907, p. 195; Lond. Chron., 26-28 May, 1774, xxxvii. 511; Satirical Poems Published Anonymously by William Mason with Notes by Horace Walpole, ed. Paget Toynbee, 1926, p. 117; The Diaries of Sylvester Douglas, ed. Francis Bickley, 1928, ii. 77).

⁴Unidentified. Possibly Sandie Bruce, the son of the gardener at Auchinleck, for whom JB wrote to Topham Beauclerk, Henry Thrale, and Edward Dilly on 30 Sept. ("recommending Sandie Bruce" Reg. Let.). It is not clear whether "the young gentleman" is part of JB's "first request" or a second one.

⁵These symptoms suggest diphtheria, not distinguished as a specific disease until 1826.

⁶ John Wombwell (b. 1737) was the younger son of Roger Wombwell of Barnsley, Yorks.; his uncle, George Wombwell (1701-63) had been English consul in Alicante. John's elder brother, George Wombwell (1734-80) had been a partner in his uncle's London business, and was now M.P. for Huntingdon and a Director of the East India Company. John later became a merchant in London, presumably in the family firm (Joseph Foster, Pedigrees of the County Families of Yorkshire, 1874, iii. pt. 2, n. pag.; Namier and Brooke iii. 654).

⁷ Pedro Caro Fontes Carrillo de Albornoz, second Marquess of Romagna, or Romana (c. 1713-1775) was killed 8 July on the coast near Algiers while serving as General of the vanguard forces of the Spanish Army in a mismanaged campaign against the Barbary pirates. The Marquess was from a distinguished military family, and had been instrumental in reorganising and strengthening the Spanish Navy. His brother, Carlos (d. 1781), held, among other military titles, that of Colonel of the Edinburgh Dragoons (Garcia-Carraffa, Enciclopedia Heraldica y Genealogica Hispano-Americana, 1926, xxiii. 224-27; Lond. Chron. 8-10 Aug. xxxviii. 141; C. Petrie, King Charles III of Spain, 1971, pp. 157-59).

⁸ Presumably a reference to Parliament's passage of a bill in late August authorising an increase in the Army from 33,000 to 55,000 men. Also in August, five battalions were sent to Boston, and negotiations were started to procure about 18,000 Hanoverian troops, a move which caused great controversy and debate in England through the following winter (Fortescue, iii. 170, 173).

⁹ MS. "they will have" deleted after "have"

¹⁰ A reference to the Nine Years' War, or War of the League of Augsburg, (1688-97), when William III led English and Dutch troops in Flanders against the French. The Dutch were motivated to protect the southern Netherlands, then a Spanish province, more from fear of French encroachment than from

friendship with Spain. The Spanish continued to tax their Netherlands territories, but took little part in the land war (Pieter Geyl, The Netherlands in the Seventeenth Century, 1964, ii. 254-69).

¹¹A deed of 1432 is described by Joseph Hunter in South Yorkshire, ii. p. 113. The various other estates included "the moiety of the manors of West Bretton, Bulcliffe, and Bargh", and smaller holdings in eighteen other manors. Matilda of York was the wife of Richard, Earl of Cambridge (d. 1460). The settlement on Matilda and others named in the deed was a method of conveying the estate to heirs by way of trustees, to avoid inheritance payments. This document is now among the Bosville papers in the Wilson Collection of the Sheffield (Yorks.) Library. Newhall, still owned by the Bosvilles, had been in the family since the days of John de Bosville of Ardsley, grandson of the Bosville who fought with William the Conqueror. Gunthwaite was acquired by the marriage of Thomas Bosville to Alicia de Gunthwaite in about 1350. The Boswell mentioned here is John Bosville of Newhall and Ardsley, lord of Gunthwaite (d. 1441), whose son Richard inherited Gunthwaite and was regarded as the founder of the Gunthwaite branch of the Bosville family (A. E. M. Macdonald, pp. 9-10, 21-22, 33, and genealogical tables pp. 226-240).

¹²See ante From Bosville, 5 Mar. 1774 n. 13.

To William Julius Mickle,

Tuesday 26 September 1775

MS. Yale (L 967.1).

Edinburgh, 26 September 1775

DEAR SIR, Upon receiving your last letter,¹ I called on Mr. Creech, who promised to write to you, and I hope has done it.² He told me that he had lost the Subscription paper for your Lusiad. But that as there were not many names at it, there was no harm done; for, he would undertake to sell double the number of copies subscribed for. In my opinion it is lucky that you have not many Subscribers here; because I agree with Dr. Johnson or Mr. Hoole, I am not sure which, that the Subscription price is too low;³ so that after having as many subscribers as will indemnify you of the first edition I think the fewer the better; as you can raise the price to others. I must however beg that my name may appear in the list as I shall be proud to be mentioned among the encouragers of such a Work; though indeed I could do it little service.⁴

And now Sir, having had time amidst a good deal of business and several avocations to read your *Lusiad*, in such a manner as to form a judgement of its merit, I have great pleasure in sincerely thinking it a Work which will give it's readers high satisfaction, and establish your reputation in an eminent degree. I have a few remarks to send to you before a second edition comes out. But, in general your versification is admirable; and the Poem abounds with excellence of various kinds. How much belongs to Camoens I do not know. But I can see that the same epick powers that filled his mind have been imparted to you. There is a copiousness and choice of expression particularly in the descriptive scenes which struck me with wonder. Your notes too are valuable, and make me long to see your Preface. Be assured that I am not flattering. On the contrary, I study to be temperate in my praise. So that so far as my warmest approbation can be a reward, you have it. I wish you had been present while I was reading your *Lusiad*, to have witnessed how it affected me.⁵ I can have no doubt that the Lovers of English Literature will gratefully acknowledge their obligations to you for enriching it with

this noble Portuguese Plant. Fanshaw brought it home all withered and decayed. You let us have it in all it's loftiness luxuriance <and> bloom.⁶ If you are really desirous <to have> the names of Scottish Literati p<refixe>d, I shall get you some.⁷ I am pretty sure Mr. David Hume was in Creech's list.

I am glad that you have a prospect of getting your Tragedy on at Covent Garden.⁸ I shall heartily rejoice in every kind of success that you have. As we are both lovers of Mary Queen of Scots, I wish when you are next in London, you would call at Sir Joshua Reynolds's and see an historical picture of her painted for me by our countryman Mr. Hamilton at Rome.⁹ I am with great truth, Dear Sir, Your most obedient, humble servant etc.

JAMES BOSWELL

¹Received 3 Aug. (Reg. Let.), not reported.

²William Creech (1745-1815) was a bookseller in Edinburgh. A protege of Alexander Kincaid (1734-77), he had succeeded to Kincaid's business in 1773, and was to remain the foremost Edinburgh bookseller for more than forty years (Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, pp. 296-97, 323; I. R. Grant, "William Creech", Books and the Man, (Antiquarian Booksellers' Association Annual) 1953, pp. 70-76; Robert Chambers, Lives of Illustrious and Distinguished Scotsmen, 1836, i. pt. 2. 558).

³John Hoole (1727-1803) was a translator of Tasso and Ariosto and a good friend of SJ's. He had entertained SJ and JB at his house in London on 2 Apr., perhaps the occasion upon which the subscription price was discussed (Life i. 383; ii. 289 n. 2; iv. 70; Journ. 2 Apr.).

⁴The list of about 600 subscribers in the first edition of the Lusiad (1776) included, besides JB, Hugh Blair, George Dempster, John Hoole, David Hume, and William Robertson. The subscription price is not known; the regular price of the book was one guinea (Edin. Mag. June 1776, p. 201).

⁵"I have read half through a translation of the Lusiad of Camoens by Mr. Mickle, a Scotsman, who resides near Oxford, and I shall have done with it in a day or two; it will be published early next winter. It seems to be a work of capital merit; he has translated it well, and enriched it with many good notes" (To Temple, 12 Aug., written 14 Aug.).

⁶The only other English translation of the Lusiad was that of Sir Richard Fanshawe, 1655, but Duperron de Castera's French translation had appeared in 1735. If Burton is correct in saying that Mickle had only a "smattering" of Portuguese, these translations must have provided Mickle with the basis for his work. Later critics were not as enthusiastic as JB, although Robert Southey thought highly of the translation, and Sir Walter Scott credited Mickle with a "vein of great facility, united to a power of verbal melody, which might have been envied by bards of much greater renown". Burton found grave inaccuracies in the translation, and characterized Mickle's heroic couplets as "wholly out of harmony with the form and spirit of the original" (Burton, Camoens, i. 145-52. For a discussion of Mickle's later influence, see S. G. West, "The Work of W. J. Mickle, The First Anglo-Portuguese Scholar", Review of English Studies, 1934, x. 385-400).

⁷MS. damaged. The missing words have been supplied from JB's first, shorthand draft of this letter (Yale L 967).

⁸"The Siege of Marseilles" was repeatedly refused by Garrick as having "no dramatic interest", and never appeared on the stage. It was published posthumously in Poems and a Tragedy, 1794, ed. John Ireland (The Letters of David Garrick, ed. D. M. Little and G. M. Kahrl, 1963, ii. 735, 788, 909-10 and n. 6).

⁹One of Mickle's early poems was Mary Queen of Scots, an Elegy, first published in 1770 (See To Mickle, 1 Sept. 1770). During his stay in Rome in Apr. 1765, JB had commissioned a picture of Mary Queen of Scots to be painted by the expatriate Scottish artist, Gavin Hamilton (1730-97). The painting had arrived only recently in London, shipped care of the Dillys and delivered by them to Reynolds; JB saw it for the first time on 18 Mar. 1776. Although Mickle was with JB earlier that day, he did not accompany him to Sir Joshua Reynolds's to see the picture (Earlier Years, pp. 219-220; To Reynolds, 12 Aug; Journ. 18 Mar. 1776).

To John MacLeod,

Wednesday 11 October 1775

MS. Yale (L 913). A draft or copy.

HEADING: To The Laird of Rasay.

Edinburgh, 11 October 1775

DEAR SIR: I take the earliest opportunity by post¹ to inform you that the night before last my wife was safely delivered of a Son. If you recollect our conversation the forenoon after my arrival at Rasay, when You and I took a walk by ourselves,² you will be sensible what a happiness it is to such a highlander as I am, to have an heir male; and I doubt not that you will sincerely rejoice with me. May your family and mine ever maintain a warm friendship for each other.

I at the same time return you my hearty thanks for the Anecdotes of the year, 1745, which you were so obliging as to send to me. Dr. Johnson is much pleased with your letter to him.³

I offer my best respects to Lady Rasay, and all my friends in your region. I hope my son shall take a stout walk yet with Malcolm. I have the honour to be,
My Dear Sir, your obliged, humble servant.

¹The mail for Skye left Edinburgh every Wednesday morning (Edin. Alm. 1775, p. 7).

²On 9 Sept. 1773: "The day was showery. However, Raasay and I took a walk, and had a very solid, easy, feudal chat" (Hebrides, p. 135).

³See ante From MacLeod, 9 and 12 July.

From Sir John Pringle,

Wednesday 17 October 1775

MS. Yale (C 2314). Received 21 Oct. (Reg. Let.).

Lond. 17 Oct. 1775

DEAR SIR, Whilst the pen was in my hand I received your welcome lines of the 12th which informed me of Mrs. Boswell's safe delivery, and of a son too.¹ You will believe me when I tell you, that I was overjoyed at the happy event. I beg that you would make my compliments to her upon the occasion, and assure her and yourself, that you have no friend that more sincerely partakes of the pleasure that you both must have at present than I. We may likewise be assured that your father will be very far from being insensible to the joy of the prospect, of keeping the estate in the direct male line, and the family from a Salsatorian pollution.² This event³ (prudently and patiently managed) may be productive of a thorough reconciliation between him and you, and likewise of an increase of allowance.⁴ But for his consenting to your London scheme, I am certain he never will come into it.⁵ You say, could you ac-

comply that, you should be at the top of all human happiness; perhaps you might, that is to say, be still wanting something more: for does not every body want something more than they have? You know how well I like to see You, but yet I am far from approving your plan in your present state; sure as I am that my old friend would never listen either to me or any other soul upon such an application.

Many thanks to you for the civilities shewn to M. de Septchenes,⁶ who forgot none of them, more than Mr. Paradise.⁷ They both praised the politesse and the hospitality of those they had been recommended to. It is one circumstance in which we excel the English; but then, as you observe, I believe all that parade of ours is only for a spint; and I question much whether any foreigner that lives a twelvemonth with us, will part with us with the same sentiments that he is disposed to do when he has only been once or twice in our company.

But tho' I can entertain no prospect, as things stand, of enjoying your company for a constancy, yet I should be sorry to think we may not see you by nows

and thens. If I mistake not your last journey had its charges in a great measure defrayed by Jus here;⁸ and therefore I should flatter myself that you would make another experiment next April or May, and if you should, why not bring Mrs. Boswell with you?⁹ I think it is a gallantry that every Scotchman owes his wife, once at least in their lives; for how mortifying to hear so much spoken of this vast and otherwise extraordinary place, without having ever the satisfaction of seeing it!

If your Son will be christened Alexander, I hope you will never allow him to be called Saundie.¹⁰

I have not been quite well, but with no formed distemper. I am, my good friend, your most affectionate and faithful humble servant,

JOHN PRINGLE

Oh the charming Court of Justice, that suffers the quibbles about the distinction between physick and medicine still to subsist!¹¹

¹To Pringle, 12 Oct. (Reg. Let.), not reported.

²That is, of preventing the dancing-master cousin from inheriting the estate (ante From Pringle, 2 Feb. 1774, n. 12). Pringle originally wrote "from the pollution"; "the" is deleted and "a Salsatorian" written above.

³MS. "may be" deleted after "event"

⁴Since JB's marriage, his father had grudgingly given him £300 a year as allowance. Although Lord Auchinleck was pleased to acquire a grandson, by December he was again threatening to reduce JB's allowance and criticizing his extravagance (Journ. 27 Dec.).

⁵See ante From Pringle, 2 Feb. 1774, n. 17.

⁶See ante From Pringle, 29 May.

⁷John Paradise (1743-95) was the son of the English consul in Greece and a remarkable linguist; Bennet Langton had introduced him to JB in a letter of 9 June. Paradise and his wife, Lucy Ludwell, daughter of a Virginia planter, visited Edinburgh sometime during the summer; JB wrote to Langton (24 Oct.): "I shewed them what little civility I could". JB continued the acquaintance with Paradise during London visits, and they eventually became good friends (A. B. Shepperson, John Paradise and Lucy Ludwell, 1942, pp. 398-407).

⁸"A little business as a lawyer in London was desirable both as helping to defray my expense and giving me a solid apology of business for being there" (Journ. 3 Apr.). SJ wrote in a letter to Mrs. Thrale (22 May) that JB had earned 42 guineas during his London visit. But his expenditures were numerous and sometimes extravagant; he purchased upon an impulse a "suit of lace" for Mrs. Boswell that cost him 30 guineas (Life ii. 377 n. 1; Journ. 13 Apr.).

⁹Mrs. Boswell could not have travelled the following spring because she was again pregnant. There is some evidence that Pringle repeatedly suggested that Mrs. Boswell accompany JB on his spring jaunts to London; he may have thought that her presence might curb JB's excesses of behaviour, but the experiment was never tried (Journ. 6 Mar. 1778).

¹⁰This request was ignored. Pringle probably felt that "Saundie" had the derisive connotations of "Sawney the Scot". Lord Auchinleck's family nickname had been "Sanders" (Journ. 7 June 1779).

¹¹A reference to the Memis case; further hearings were scheduled for the next Session.

From Margaret Stuart,

Thursday 18 October 1775

MS. Yale (C 2605). Received 21 Oct. (Reg. Let.;
Journ. 28 Oct.).

ADDRESS: <James> Boswell Esq., <James's> Court,
Edinburgh.

FRANK: <Jas.> Stuart.

POSTMARK: FREE

ENDORSEMENT: <Hon. Mrs. Stuart> on the birth of
<Alexan> der.

Aston, Oct. 18th

DEAR SIR: I share in your Joy with all the warmth of
true friendship, and I wish with all my heart that
not only the present, but every future period of your
Life, may be the happier for the Birth of the most
welcome Boy. I dare say my excellent friend verifys
the Scripture, and has already forgot her sorrow; for
Joy that a Man is Borne in to the World.¹ I shall
write to her in a few days,² but in the mean time
shall be impatient to hear again from you.

I am ashamed to think how very long I have owed
you a Letter.³ I have intended every week to write

to you, but you know I am above all others lazy, and that with the very best intentions I am sometimes very faulty in that respect. You never told me if you receiv'd the things I sent safe, and if they were such as you wanted.⁴ Pray can you tell me any thing about Davie Cuninghame?⁵ When I left London to go to Tunbridge⁶ he had then just listed a trooper in the Granadier guards, and I spoke for him to Lord Harrington, Lord Ancram, and my brother Corbet,⁷ who promised to treat him as favorably as possible but unluckily it was found out by his fellow Soldiers his true Birth (for he very properly conceal'd it when he listed) and after that he found it impossible to remain in the Corpses. I enquired about him as I past through London, and cou'd get no intelligence of him so that I am realy uneasy on his account.⁸ Is his Mother likely to live?⁹ <I hear> with equal regret, that Treesbanks is very ill indeed. I am afraid the pains you took on his account has been to no purpose.¹⁰ I was favor'd with a visit from Sir John Pringle, when last in London, you know I respect and Love him sincerely, we talk'd over your Scheme of coming to settle in London, and wish'd it

might be found practicable without the danger of offending a certain old judge who's Affection I hope will be much increased towards you and your wife by the Birth of this Boy. Vanity will sometimes operate where better motives faile. God bless you, say every [thing] that is most kind to my Dearest friend from me and believe that I am, in good earnest, your most faithfull Servant,

MARGT. STUART

¹John 16: wl.

²Post From Mrs. Stuart to Mrs. Boswell, 30 Oct.

³This remark suggests that JB wrote to Mrs. Stuart between last seeing her in London on 21 May (Journ.) and writing to tell her of Alexander's birth on 9 Oct. (Reg. Let., not reported), but there is no record of such a letter.

⁴Unidentified, but they had arrived safely (post To Mrs. Stuart, 27 Oct.).

⁵David Cuninghame (d. 1814) was the son of Mrs. Stuart's brother, Alexander Montgomerie-Cuninghame (d. 1770) and Mrs. Boswell's sister Elizabeth. He was at this time about sixteen years old; JB found him an "obstinate dog" and "a burthen". But both JB and Mrs. Stuart had been kind to Cuninghame the previous spring (Journ. 31 Mar., 13 Apr.).

⁶Probably at the beginning of July; see ante From Margaret Stuart to Margaret Boswell, 5 July 1774, n. 9.

⁷William Stanhope (1719-79), second Earl of Harrington, was Gen. of the Second Troop of Horse Grenadier Guards, and "was known chiefly for his libertinism" (Army List, 1775, p. 20; Namier and Brooke iii. 467). For a correspondence between SJ and Lady Harrington, see Life iii. 141, 496-97. The Earl of Ancram was John Kerr (1737-1815), who had succeeded his father as the fifth Marquess of Lothian on 12 Apr.; Mrs. Stuart is still calling him by his former title. He was Lieut.-Col. in the Grenadier Guards. Andrew Corbet was a Sub-Lieut., later Capt., in the same regiment; his wife, Augusta (d. 1778), was Col. James Stuart's sister (Army List, 1775, p. 20; Scots Peer ii. 305; v. 481-83).

⁸See post To Mrs. Stuart, 27 Oct. and n. 8. Cuninghame was too well-born to be an enlisted man, yet too poor to buy a commission.

⁹Cuninghame's mother was dying of tuberculosis.

¹⁰James Campbell of Treesbank (d. 1776) was JB's cousin and also his brother-in-law; Treesbank's wife, Mary, was sister to Mrs. Boswell and Mrs. Beaumont. Treesbank was suffering from a malignant cancer on his lip, for which JB had arranged medical treatment. See post To Margaret Stuart, 27 Oct. n. 2.

From James Campbell,

?Monday 23 October 1775

MS. Yale (C 744). "Received 26 Oct. "Treesbank"
(Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: To James Boswell Esqr., Advocate, James's
Court, Edinburgh.

Treesbank, Octbr. 23¹ 1775

MY DEAR SIR: I was honoured with your most friendly
and affectionate Letter of the 19th Instant,² giving
me more and more fresh and Destingwishing proofs of
your Interesting Concern for me and my family believe
me with the greatest truth and without any Sort of
Varnish the Same is reciprocally, with this Diference
that altho the Same is Sincere, yet not So in my power
to give Test of my Gratitude furdur then my bare and
poor acknowledgements.

I am sorry you have had so much trouble about
our Penny Money at Laingshaw, had not Bowman promised
it so Early as May last and made me depend, I Should
been quite Indiferent, for a terme had I been in no
want of it,³ however whether I gett it or not at
the terme⁴ I will gett my Self provided, as we have

now Two Banks at Killmarnock A Branch from Edinburgh
another from Ayr⁵ when I will gett I hope a Supply,
As 500^h will doe my Business with what I can other-
wise Command of my own, I therefore Sincerely thank
you My Dear Sir for your kind offer of Support of my
Credite, whether I had need for the Money or not I
Shall be Glad to have it out of the hands of our Cunning-
hame friends, as I think none of us wou'd now choose
to have much Dependance or <be> Deeply Concerned.
You tell me that Sir Walter C. is not yet arrived I
wonder what is come of him, as he is not a Parlia-
menter, where all is running up I Darr say his business
there cannot be great,⁶ I am Sensible when you see
him you will give him a Caution and proper advice
that if he goes to Laingshaw or wherever that he
Sign no papers Bills or Transactions if he Intends
not his funder and future ruin as Bowman may be att
him about his Coal or god knows what. Poor man I
know not what will come of him many troubles to
Undergoe and Combat. If he could gett a Rich Lass and
the Penny I suppose it wou'd be better than the
Cockade and By Returning his Commission with payt

of the Intrest would all Doe weall provided he and She were dousse and as Lord Auchinlek Says not Love Caputs.⁷

Lord Auchinlek and friends⁸ were Thursday night at Newfield⁹ upon a Visite and I hear Fryday morning Brekfasted with Skerringtoun¹⁰ in their way home, where I intended to have mett them at Both places But I gott a hurt upon my leg and was quite Lane could not move any where for ten Days now growing weall again, which I made known to them at the Same time. Mrs. Campbell was then at Laingshaw and is not yet returned being there Since Wensday last, and will not be home untill Wedensday or Thursday next, what work is going on I know not I have sent over twice to Mrs. Campbell but Mrs. Bowman who is Badly pressed for her stay another Day.-- I am truely happy to hear of Mrs. Boswells recovering so well and that the young Gentleman is in So thriving and prosperous way. May god almighty preserve him. Sure I am Lord Auchinleck will be happy in his mind I heard he was in high Spirits. If I can and be able I must Step up and See him before he leave the Countrey.¹¹

Now as I have tyred your patience reading this Scrible
 which comes By the Killmarnock Carrier who comes
 rarely to Edinburgh¹² have used the freedom not with
 standing of the good wifes absence to Send by him,
 Two pair Ducks for young Turkeys a[illegible]ise your
 own Trunk with a few Apples as bor[illegible] run with
 us this year, as also Inclosed a little Bagg of
 Pottatoe Starch for Cloaths, Together with a Cruick
 of Butter all of our Best. More of the Poultry kind
 reserved,¹³ Untill New year's day when your Honours
 Table Shall be plentifully furnished, I therefore am
 with My Best Compliments to your good friend Mrs. B
 and Mrs. Montgomerie if Still with you,¹⁴ and my
 best Blessing attend you and all the Sweet Infants,
 My <Dear Sir> Your Most Obedient and affectionate,
 humble Servant,

J. CAMPBELL

Nota. The Pottatoe Starch is to be Desolved when
 used in a little Cold water thereafter pouring Boyling
 water upon it this for direction.

¹Campbell apparently had second thoughts about the date; he has written over the second number so that it is uncertain whether his final intention was "21" "22" or "23".

²JB wrote to Campbell on 9 Oct. to inform him of the birth of Alexander, received a reply from him on 17 Oct., and wrote to him again on 19 Oct. (Reg. Let.). None of these letters is reported.

³Campbell's and JB's sister-in-law, Elizabeth, had inherited the Montgomerie estate of Lainshaw, and had leased part of that estate to her new husband, John Beaumont ("Bowman"), as well as settling on him an annuity of £300. "Penny money" here means simply "cash", a return on a loan, perhaps, that Campbell may have made to his sister-in-law.

⁴By Acts of 1690 and 1893, the Scottish year was divided into four terms. Payments such as rent or purchase of land became due at Candlemas, 2 Feb.; Whitsunday, 15 May; Lammas, 1 Aug.; and Martinmas, 11 Nov. Campbell is referring here to Martinmas (Scottish National Dictionary, 1968).

⁵In 1775 the Bank of Scotland opened branches in Ayr and in Kilmarnock. The Ayr bank at Kilmarnock was probably a branch of Hunter and Co., the successor to the bankrupt Douglas, Heron and Co., although there seems to be no other record of its having had a Kilmarnock branch at this time (Ayrshire, pp. 17, 133; Archibald M'Kay, A History of Kilmarnock, 1848, p. 267; A. W. Kerr, History of Banking in Scotland, 1884, 3rd ed. 1918, p. 99).

⁶Sir Walter Montgomerie-Cunninghame (d. 1814), oldest of the Cuninghame children, had recently returned to England from Minorca, where he had been stationed with the 51st Regiment of Foot (Army List, 1775, p. 105). He arrived in Edinburgh from London on 29 Oct. (Journ.).

⁷"The Penny" here means money in general. This usage survives in the phrase "a pretty penny". "Dousse" (also "douce" or "douse") is a Scotticism meaning "sober or respectable". "Love Caputs" is otherwise unattested. It is apparently a combination of love with the adjective cappel meaning "fickle, flighty, whimsical" (see Chambers' Scots Dialect Dictionary, s.v. "cappid"). Lord Auchinleck has nominalized and pluralized the adjective, love-caputs, meaning "love-silly people" or "flighty, love-stricken people". Professor F. C. Robinson kindly provided this etymology.

⁸Unidentified.

⁹Newfield was near Dundonald, about four miles southwest of Kilmarnock. In 1773 it had been purchased by John Campbell, formerly of Glensadell, who sold it to Moses Crawford in 1783 (Ayr and Wigton, i. 488; Ayrshire, p. 308). The relationship between the Campbells of Newfield and Treesbank, if any, is unknown. JB stayed at Newfield 13-14 Mar. 1777 (Journ.), where he admired Campbell's enthusiasm for farming and his "comely race of daughters" (Journ.).

¹⁰John Campbell of Skerrington, advocate, was a contemporary of Lord Auchinleck's. Skerrington's father, Campbell of Horseleugh, had married twice; Skerrington was a son of the second marriage. The first wife, Jean, was the daughter of David Boswell of Auchinleck, and thus Lord Auchinleck's aunt (Ayr and Wigton, ii. 355-56).

¹¹Lord Auchinleck was back in Edinburgh by 9 Nov., in time for the opening of the Court of Session on 14 Nov. (Journ.).

¹²The Edin. Alm. 1776, states that the Kilmarnock carrier left Edinburgh on Fridays and Saturdays, but nothing is said of his return.

¹³MS. "kind reserved" is uncertain; it could also be "pond preserved"

¹⁴Jean (Maxwell) Montgomerie, Mrs. Boswell's widowed sister-in-law, had been visiting the Boswells since 10 Oct. She left on 2 Dec. (Journ.).

From John MacLeod,

Monday 23 October 1775

MS. Yale (C 1865). Received 7 Nov. (Journ.).

Raasay, Octr. 23d 1775

DEAR SIR: This morning I was made very happy upon receiving your most oblidging letter giving me an Account of the birth of your son,¹ may you live long to enjoy him and after you are no more may he and his male succession inherite the virtues endowments and Fortune of his Ancestors till the end of time. I well remember our conversation upon our private walk up the Hill above this house, and I rejoyce to find that our Sanguine and sincere wishes are now come to pass, and expect to live long enough to see half a dozen more of your Sons, and please tell Mrs. Boswell from me that I wish she would breed one of her Daughters to be wife to a Highlander and make her Empress of this my Realm.² I think I hear Mrs. Boswell say I am a Whimsical Old fellow. I will look upon it as a very great honour to cultivate the friendship of you and of your Family, and will always take every opportunity to imbibe these principalls into my Boys.

Your Old friend Malcolm and some more of our friends happen to be here upon receiving the news, we immediately sat down and drank of the best, to the health of good Mrs. Boswell, the young Stranger, and you. Malcolm desires to acquaint you that the Young Gentleman must hurry to this Country for notwithstanding of old age he is determind to have as stout a walk with him as he had with his father, and dance a highland reel with him in the top of Duuncan, and then sett him upon the Seat wherin he took Breakfast which is and will be called Boswell's Chair.³

My Ribb and her Covie⁴ beg to be rememberd to You and Mrs. Boswell with whom we are now pretty well acquainted by the frequent and honourable mention my Flora makes of her in her letters. Mr. Malcolm offers his best wishes and I am with all due Esteem and Affection, My Dear Sir, Your most oblidge, humble Servant.

JOHN McLEOD

When you write Doctor Johnson please make offer of our best respects to him.

¹Ante To Macleod, 11 Oct.

²"I had today a letter from the Laird of Raasay on the birth of my son, in terms most cordial, which pleased me much. He expressed a great regard for me, and mentioned my wife's educating one of our daughters to be empress of his realm. I actually looked on this as an event that might happen, and I exulted in it. I am a man of old times" (Journ. 7 Nov.).

³A reference to 10 Sept. 1773, a day which JB spent walking on Raasay with Malcolm Macleod and others. "We mounted up to the top of Duncaan, where we sat down, eat cold mutton and bread and cheese and drank brandy and punch. Then we had a Highland song from Malcolm; then we danced a reel" (Hebrides, p. 137).

⁴That is, "my wife and her brood".

To Margaret Stuart,

Friday 27 October 1775

MS. Yale (L 1200). A copy in Lawrie's hand.

Edinburgh, 27 October 1775

DEAR MADAM: A thousand thanks to you for your kind letter.¹ My wife shed tears of affection when she received it. It is not enough to say You have one of the best hearts that ever possessed a human breast. There is something about your heart peculiarly amiable, not only pleasing but constant and communicative. Your goodness is like the oriental essence of Roses. It diffuses its sweets in the liveliest manner. But I just rave when I speak or write of you -- That I love and admire you is evident and that is enough.

My wife has recovered remarkably well. Her son has been most consolatory; and I am persuaded he will have all the good effects which your friendly concern foretells. I love your wish -- "that not only the present but every future period of my life may be the happier for his birth". For indeed he may be the occasion of much suffering to me, either by his

dying, or by his acting in an improper manner. But I hope the best; and in the meantime, am gratefull to God for his present goodness. You and I are happy in having pious habits. To speak merely as beings that are to have no other existence than in this world there is a happiness from such habits superior to any thing else. I thought I had let you know in my last that the things you was so obliging as to send, came safe, and answered well their several destinations. The bills of them have been paid by Mr. Dilly.

I am happy that I can give you better accounts of Treesbank. He indeed had a return of his alarming complaint; but his lip was cut a second time, so effectually that he has been for some months quite well.² He has never used Mr. Broughtons remedy.³ But when I am in London next spring, I am to give him from Treesbank a gratuity for it. I was a fortnight in the shire of Ayr this autumn, at Auchinleck and Treesbank.⁴ There is something very comfortable in keeping up the connections of relationship.

Captain Cunninghams widow (for I know not well what name to give her) is very ill.⁵ She intends

setting out for France immediatly with her daughter Annie, and Dr. Cairnie who traveled with Lady Crawford to attend her.⁶ I expect Sir Walter here every day. I should think it would not be a miss for him to go along with her, and try to secure a little of the reversion of the unlucky estate of Lainshaw. I know it makes your heart sore to think of its fate.⁷

It was a pity that Davie Cunninghame was taken out of the horse guards as it might have been a good school to him. Sir Walter writes to me that he has boarded him somewhere near London. I wish he had a Commission.⁸

My wife and I rejoice sincerely to hear of your children being all well. I shall be glad to romp with them again we live in hopes of your visiting Scotland next summer.⁹ I hope to talk of it with you in March.

In the meantime allow me to remind you of a very great favour which you promised us -- Your Picture -- When I spoke of a miniature, you said you would rather send it as big as the life that we might gaze to our full satisfaction. You know your own pleasantry. But seriously it will be a present

which we shall value very highly. I beg then that you may not forget it.¹⁰

If there is any thing that I can possibly do to serve you or Mr. Stuart in the least command me and be certain that I shall enjoy such an opportunity. I am very sensible of Mr. Stewart's kindness to me; and I trust that he will refresh Lord MontstUARTS memory about Baron MAULS office, or any thing decent for me to have.¹¹ It would be of important consequence to me to get something in my Fathers lifetime. I had a letter the other day from our excellent friend Sir John Pringle. One must have patience with our London scheme. I dined today at Sir George Prestons who is not at all well and 73 besides. His eldest son Mr. Preston who was major to your fathers regiment and a great friend of his, gave me a much higher character of Sir David than I supposed him to have; for I never saw him but with the late Lord Eglinteune who used to call him Davie and be so jocular with him that Sir David had no opportunity of talking as a Scholar which Mr. Preston assures me he was.¹² I drank your health in a bumper which I often do. Mr. Preston dines with us tomorrow. If

you knew how much happiness you bestow when you write to me, you would do it oftener. I can only say that I ever am with much esteem, My dear Madam, Your obliged and most affectionate, humble servant.

My wife sends you her love, and will be exceedingly glad to hear from you.

I hope you and General Paoli meet sometimes. He is one of your greatest admirers.

¹Ante From Mrs. Stuart, 18 Oct.

²The operation on Treesbank's lip was performed by Dr. John Boswell and Alexander Wood, Surgeon, in JB's house, and Treesbank and his wife remained there for a month of convalescence. But the cancer recurred, and Treesbank died on 23 Oct. 1776 (Journ. 29 Nov. 1774 - 4 Jan.; 16 Sept., 12, 26, 28 Oct. 1776).

³The nature of the remedy is unknown. Charles Broughton (1723-94) was listed as a member of the Surgeons' Company of London in 1768-69 (Gent. Mag., Aug. 1794, p. 773; Cecil Wall, The History of the Surgeon's Company 1745-1800, 1937, p. 230. JB received a letter from him on 3 Aug. 1776: "Mr. Broughton Surgeon, London, about Treesbank" (Reg. Let., not reported), and possibly later called on him in London ("then called Broughton", Journ. 31 Mar. 1779).

⁴From 22 Aug. to about 5 Sept., based on JB's sketchy "Review of My Life During the Summer Session 1775" and on Reg. Let.

⁵Her name was Mrs. John Beaumont, but JB disapproved of her "debasing herself by a mean marriage" after her first husband's death (Journ. 11 Nov.).

⁶She left in mid-November (Journ. 16 Nov.). Annie Cuningham later lived with the Boswells; she died of tuberculosis in Aug. 1779 (Journ. 10 Aug. 1779). Dr. John Cairnie (M. D. Edinburgh, 1766) was an old friend and medical advisor to JB and his family (Edinburgh University List of Graduates of the College of Medicine, 1846, p. 160).

⁷Sir Walter arrived in Edinburgh two days later, and did accompany his mother on her journey. She never reached France, but died in London on 3 Jan. 1776. The estate of Lainshaw was already impoverished, but Mrs. Beaumont's settlements on her second husband further drained the inheritance of her children, particularly Sir Walter, the heir of entail.

Despite later efforts by JB and others to keep the estate, it was sold at auction in 1779 (Extremes, p. 205 n. 6; Journ. 15 July 1779).

⁸JB received Sir Walter's letter on 25 Oct. (Reg. Let., not reported). In 1779, David Cuninghame went into debt to purchase a lieutenant's commission in the Second (or Royal North Britain) Regiment of Dragoons, and three years later JB helped him find money to pay off the debt (Journ. 19, 23 Aug. 1782; Laird, pp. 472 n. 9; 475 n. 4; 476 n. 6).

⁹There is no evidence that she did.

¹⁰There is no record of such a miniature, although JB later procured a lock of Mrs. Stuart's hair (Laird, p. 330 n. 1). John Donaldson, the English miniature painter, was currently visiting Edinburgh, and JB had called on him on 1 Oct.; in Dec. he painted a miniature of Mrs. Boswell (Journ. 1 Oct; Ominous Years, p. 161 n. 5).

¹¹The previous spring, JB had asked Mountstuart for help in procuring a government post (Journ. 29 Mar.; post To Lord Mountstuart, 13 Nov.).

¹²Patrick Preston had served in the 57th Regiment of Foot from 1755 until recently; Sir David Cuninghame (d. 1770), Mrs. Stuart's father, became Colonel of that Regiment in 1757 (Army List, 1765, p. 111). Alexander Montgomerie, tenth Earl of Eglintoune (1723-1769), had done much to introduce JB to London society during the winter of 1762-63, and it was perhaps at that time that JB met Sir David, although he is not mentioned in the Lond. Journ. Of his dinner at the Prestons', JB notes (Journ. 27 Oct.) that the main topic of conversation was cookery; he does not mention Mrs. Stuart or her father.

From Margaret Stuart to Margaret Boswell,

Monday 30 October 1775

MS. Yale (C 2606).

Aston, October 30th

MY DEAR FRIEND: I am sure you believe that no event can happen which will encrease your happiness without adding to mine: and indeed I have receiv'd much pleasure from the late desirable addition to your family. I pray to God to write in him all the good qualities of both his Parents, and to add to them as many of the good things of this Life as may be expedient but I am exceedingly surprised and uneasy at not hearing again from Mr. Boswell about your health: he said he wou'd continue to inform me how you recover'd, I wish he had been as good as his word. Let me have but two lines to tell me you are well and I shall be happy. Indeed I hardly deserve so much, for I have been shamefully lazy in writing to you, and it appears to myself the strangest thing in the World, that indolence shou'd possess me so entirely, as to make me sit down quietly without enjoying your company and conversation in the only way that is possible for

me to have it at present. I must say that I dont think Mr. Stuarts fortune, or ten times as much,¹ is any recompence for having brought me into a country where I am entirely destitute of (the very greatest blessing of this Life) a tender and faithful friend. I am sadly afraid my heart is become cold and insensible, for I hardly ever find in myself the least attachment to any one. Oh! that it wou'd please the fates so to order things that you might take up your abode some hundred miles nearer me: but at any rate I trust you will send me up the moiety of yourself in the Spring, tell him he will find me again in Hertford Street,² and always happy to see him: as soon as the weather breaks I shall settle in Town, but not before, because I think the country is best for the Children. Tho' I live rather a dismal Life, because Mr. Stuart is obliged to attend the House of Commons so often.³ I wonder if you have the same desire to see my Children as I have to behold yours? I think without partiality to my own, you will love them whenever you come to know them for their own sakes. Our best

wishes to Mr. B give your Bairns my blessing I am
much more than I can express, Yours,

MARGT. STUART

¹Stuart, although a younger son, had been named heir by his grandfather, Edward Wortley Montague, to the vast Wortley fortune which came to him in 1794 by the death of his mother. In 1800, he also inherited the estate of his uncle, James Stuart Mackenzie (Namier and Brooke iii. 501).

²The Stuarts leased a house in London each winter: in 1772, they lived on Queen's Street, in 1773, on Hanover Square, and in 1774, on Hertford Street (Journ. 29 Mar. 1772; 4 Apr. 1773).

³Stuart had eloped with Margaret Cuninghame in 1767, but he soon took a violent dislike to his wife and sought unsuccessfully to have the marriage annulled. Although they continued to live together, Stuart was notoriously unfaithful (Namier and Brooke iii. 501; Journ. 29 Mar. 1772).

From Archibald Campbell,¹

Saturday 4 November 1775

MS. Yale (C 734). Rec. 8 Nov. (Reg. Let.).

Harley Street, 4th November 1775

DEAR SIR: No man on Earth is more ready than I, to Show an implicit obedience to your commands; especially when in the execution of them, I can advance the Interest of a deserving Gentleman the son of a Worthy and Valuable friend. Were I to have the honour of naming a Corps of Officers, I should be happy on my own account, to have Mr. Wellwood's name early inserted in my List -- but in that case, it would be necessary conformable to the present rule of Service, to put down the money for which he sold out, to allow him to re-Enter again. In that event, I am certain he may be got in, but without such a measure, I apprehend it impossible² -- I have reason however to believe, that my Battalion of 500 men will not be orderd by the King; but I should think Frasers Regiment will; in which case I shall not have the naming of any Officers; I believe at the same time my own particular situation with His Majesty, may place me at the head of 1000

Highlanders in Fraser's Regiment unless something unforeseen should occur to disappoint it.³ -- On Monday or Wednesday, the Stirling appeal will come on; and I hope soon thereafter to tell you we were Successful -- I miss exceedingly however my friends Crosby and Culross to Awe the Peers with Striking truths.⁴

Do not be surprised if you hear that the Enemy and I have Settled our Election matters Amicably; and Honourably; without the last, it is impossible the former can take place⁵ -- My best respects and wishes to Mrs. Boswell, and your Son and Heir altho I have not the honour of his acquaintance and that you and they may enjoy all you wish is the prayer of Your friend and humble Servant,

A. CAMPBELL

My best respects to Lady and Sir George Preston Miss Preston⁶ and all who honour me with their remembrance.

¹Lt.-Col. Sir Archibald Campbell (1738-91), later a General, had served with the 78th, or Fraser Highlanders, Regiment in America and been wounded at Quebec in 1758. From 1768-72 he served with the East India Company as chief engineer of Bengal; he was an expert on military fortifications. He returned to England in 1773 with a large fortune, which helped him to run successfully in the election of 1774 as M.P. from Stirling Burghs. He was a friend of Robert Preston's, and through this connexion he had asked JB to be his counsel and one of his supporting delegates in the election (Journ. 12-31 Oct. 1774; Pol. Car. pp. 80-81; Namier and Brooke ii. 179-30). Campbell married the daughter of Allan Ramsay the painter in 1779, and went on to a distinguished career of service in India. For his experiences during the American War, see post From Campbell, 19 Dec. n. 6.

²Robert Wellwood was the son of Robert Wellwood of Garvock and Mary (Preston) Wellwood, Robert Preston's sister. Wellwood Sr. had been involved, with the rest of the Preston family, in Campbell's election campaign. Wellwood Jr. had been Lieut. in the 40th Regiment of Foot from 1771 until 1774, when he sold his commission. He regained his lieutenancy in Jan. 1778 when he joined the 82nd Regiment (Ominous Years, p. 378; Journ. 13, 29, 30 Oct. 1774; Army List, 1771-78).

³Campbell surmised correctly: his old battalion was not called and he was given command of half of the only new regiment enrolled that year, the 71st, raised by Simon Fraser (1726-82), Master of Lovat. Apparently Campbell had not yet heard of the King's order, dated 25 Oct., for "a Highland Regiment of Foot of two battalions to be forthwith raised . . . each battalion to consist of ten companys of four sergeants, four corporalls, two drummers, and one hundred private men in each company" (Fortescue iii. 173; J. M. Bulloch, The Duchess of Gordon as Recruiter, n.d., n. pag.).

⁴On 23 Feb. JB and Andrew Crosbie had argued "the cause of the reduction of the Council of Stirling" before the Court of Session. The cause concerned an illegal bond signed by three of the leading citizens of Stirling, in which they agreed to share certain political advantages. Friends of Campbell's had brought action to have the 1773 election of the magistrates of Stirling declared null and void, and JB had argued for them and won. The case was appealed to the House of Lords which affirmed the original decree on 8 Nov. (Journ. 22, 23 Feb.; Scots Mag. 1775, xxxvii. 731-32; Lond. Chron. 7-9 Mar. xxxvii. 232). Campbell called JB "Culross" because JB voted for him in 1774 as the delegate from Culross, and also, perhaps, because he knew that JB valued his family connexions with the Cochranes of Culross Abbey House (Journ. 25 Sept. 1774; Ominous Years, p. 378). If "to awe the peers with striking truths" is a quotation, it is unidentified.

⁵Probably a reference to Robert Scotland, agent for Campbell in the Stirling election, who was accused of defecting to the opposition candidate in return for money. A minister denounced him from the pulpit and a number of lawsuits resulted, including one in which JB eloquently but unsuccessfully defended the minister (Journ. 30 Oct. 1774, 4 Feb.; Life iii. 58-64).

⁶Probably the Prestons' younger daughter Agnes, who lived with them; she died unmarried in 1795 (Ominous Years, p. 378).

To Lord Mountstuart,¹

Monday 13 November 1775

MS. Yale (L 346). A copy in Lawrie's hand.

HEADING: To Lord Mountstuart.

Edinburgh, 13 Novr. 1775

MY DEAR LORD: Though you have told me that you dislike writing letters, I persuade myself that you will honour me with your congratulations on my having a son and heir, an event which to a man as firm in the old principle of male succession as I am, is of the utmost importance.

When I was in London last spring I had the happiness of being assured by your Lordship of the continuance of your friendship for me, and that you would assist me with your interest when a proper opportunity should happen.² There is now a vacancy of the office of one of the Commissares of Edinbr. by the death of James Smollet Esq.³ Your Lordship will remember that we talked of a much better thing -- Baron Maule's office of Clerk to the Register of Seasines; and that your Lordship kindly promised to concert measures with the Duke of Queensberry for

trying to get it secured for me.⁴ I know not if any thing has been done towards it and your Lordship will excuse me for troubling you with this memorandum. If there is any probable prospect of success in that affair, I should be exceedingly sorry to intrude upon you with a smaller matter. But, the truth is My Dear Lord that I am by no means on such terms with my father as I could wish, owing chiefly to my refusing to give my consent to a settlement of our family estate, excluding two branches of heirs male, which I think would be unjust, and not an honourable fidelity to our ancestors who devised the inheritance to heirs male, by which devise we at present hold it to the exclusion of Lord Cathcart who is the heir of line.⁵ Your Lordship in one of the excellent social nights we sat by ourselves last spring,⁶ confirmed me in my resolution upon this subject. Now it would be of great consequence to me to shew my father, that I am effectually patronised by your Lordship; and for this reason I would beg that if there is no immediate view of bringing about a resignation of Baron Maules office which your Lordship suggested might perhaps be done by means of Lord Panmure and Baron Mure⁷ you would apply for the office

of Commisary; and if it cannot be had for me at this time, a promise may be obtained of it upon the promotion of David Ross which cannot be distant.⁸ Mr. Smollet died yesterday. I do not suppose that any expresses will have been sent for a place of £80 a year. I write by the first post. I hope your Lordship will lose no time. I know what joy it would give me to have it in my power to do essential service to one whom I loved as much as I am certain your Lordship does me.

Let me also recall to your remembrance that we agreed that it might do me much good, if your Lordship would write a letter to my Father expressing the regard which you are pleased to entertain for me, and asking him if he will agree either to advance an immediate sum, or become bound for the annual income, in case a resignation of an office can be had in my favour. You said you would write such a letter. I beg you may.⁹

Let me now my dear Lord wish you joy of your late appearance when you moved for a Militia in Scotland. I well know what you can do, and I please myself with hopes of seeing you one day in a station as high as

your abilities deserve. Such an exertion as this places you far above any puny pretender to the government of Scotland. You understand me.¹⁰

If there is any thing either in your publick or private views in which I can be of any use to you, try me, I am pretty sure that if you would give me a list of any prints, or (to use Mr. Graingers more proper phrase) engraved portraits that you want I might help you.¹¹

Beleive me my dear Lord Mountstuart, that I highly value your friendship without any considerations and interest, and that you shall see, if you doubt my word, and either will not or cannot assist me. I have told you my situation and I leave it to your nobleness of mind how to act. All that I beg leave to insist upon is to have the happiness of hearing from you.

I offer my respectfull compliments to Lady Mountstuart who has allways been my very good friend,¹² and I remain with the sincerity and warmth of an old Baron,¹³ My Dear Lord, Your faithfull and affectionate, humble servant.

¹John Stuart, Viscount Mountstuart, was later fourth Earl and first Marquess of Bute. Since first meeting him in Italy in 1765, JB had assumed, rather unreasonably, that Mountstuart would act as a patron of JB's political ambitions (Pol. Car. pp. 23-27).

²"[Mountstuart] assured me that he would use his interest for me, and spoke in the most friendly manner" (Journ. 29 Mar.).

³James Smollett of Bonhill and Cameron, first cousin of the novelist, had been one of the four Commissaries of Edinburgh, and Sheriff-depute of Dunbartonshire. JB and SJ had visited him at Cameron on 27 Oct. 1773 (Scots Mag. xxxvii. 637; Edin. Alm. 1775, p. 126; Life v. 365, 564).

⁴John Maule of Inverkeillor (1706-81), M.P. for Aberdeen Burghs (1739-48), was a Baron of the Exchequer and Keeper (not Clerk) of the Register of Sasines. Mountstuart had promised to arrange Maule's resignation of the last position if Queensberry would recommend JB for the post, but both Mountstuart and Queensberry continued to procrastinate through the following spring (Faculty of Advocates in Scotland 1532-1943, ed. F. J. Grant, 1944, p. 145; Pol. Car. pp. 81-82; Journ. 29 Mar., 11 Apr.: 17 Mar. 1776).

⁵See ante From Pringle, 2 Feb. 1774. Charles Schaw Cathcart, ninth Lord Cathcart (1721-76), JB's fourth cousin, was descended through a female line from James Boswell of Auchinleck (d. 1618) (Ominous Years, p. 375).

⁶Perhaps 9 Apr. "Dined happily with Lord Mountstuart ... He was warmly friendly" (Journ.).

⁷William Ramsay Maule (1700-82), since 1743 Earl of Panmure, M.P. for Forfarshire (1735-82), was the half-brother of John Maule. William Mure (1718-76) was, like John Maule, a Baron of the Scottish Exchequer. He had been chief advisor to Mountstuart's father, Lord Bute, during the latter's administration, and continued to have great political influence. He was also a friend of Lord Auchinleck's; Mountstuart had written to him in 1765 to request that he be an intermediary in securing JB permission from his father to accompany Mountstuart on his Italian tour (Namier and Brooke iii. 120-21, 181-82; Earlier Years, pp. 225, 513).

⁸David Ross (c. 1727-1805) was a member, with Smollet, of the Commissary Court of Edinburgh; in Jan. 1776 he was made a judge on the Court of Session, taking the title of Lord Ankerville (Journ. 26 Jan. 1776).

⁹"I wrote to him that it would be of great consequence to me to show my father that I had his Lordship's patronage, and therefore a smaller office speedily obtained would serve me much ... I am curious to see how he will act" (Journ. 13 Nov.). No letter from Mountstuart to Lord Auchinleck is reported.

¹⁰On 2 Nov. in the House of Commons, Mountstuart had moved to introduce a bill for the establishment of a Scots Militia; it was read before the House on 7 Dec. and defeated on 5 Mar. 1776. On 23 Nov., JB attended a debate at the Pantheon Society on the subject of a Militia in Scotland and delivered "a vigorous harangue and introduced an eulogium on Lord Mountstuart as the tutelary patron of this country" (Ann. Reg. 1776, pt. 1. 140-142; Journ., 23 Nov., Life ii. 431 and n. 1). The "puny pretender" was Henry Dundas (1742-1811), later first Viscount Melville. Mountstuart was contemptuous of Dundas's political ambitions, but Dundas was soon to be the most powerful man in Scotland, and already wielded

great influence. It was through Dundas's interest that George Fergusson obtained the vacant post of Commissary; JB heard of this "small disappointment" on 25 Nov. (Journ. 6 Apr., 25 Nov.; Pol. Car., pp. 73-80).

¹¹James Granger (1723-76) was a clergyman and the author of A Biographical History of England ... adapted to a Methodical Catalogue of Engraved British Heads, 1769. This book, which provided numerous blank spaces into which engraved portraits from other books or magazines were to be pasted, and which produced the coinage "grangerize", had started a vogue for collecting engravings of famous persons. Mountstuart was an avid collector, and recently he had travelled with Granger on the Continent in search of material. By December JB also was planning to collect "all the engraved portraits of Scotsmen" (Journ. 13 Apr., 4 Dec.; 17 Mar. 1776).

¹²In 1766, Mountstuart had married Charlotte Jane Windsor (1746-1800), whom JB repeatedly described as "civil" (Journ. 17 Mar. 1776; 20, 29 Mar. 1778). Lady Mountstuart was an heiress; it was through her that the Bute family eventually acquired the estates of the Herberts, Earls of Pembroke (Scots Peer. ii. 306).

¹³Mountstuart had called JB "Baron" since their Italian trip, when JB had angrily objected to being called "Jamie" (Earlier Years, p. 227).

From William Downie,¹

Wednesday 6 December 1775

MS. Yale (C 1107).

ADDRESS: Jas. Boswell Esqr Advocate, Edinr.

6 Decr.

SIR: You have three tickets inclosed signed by the President of the Pantheon² to which every visitor is intitled for one night for having deliver'd his Sentiments on the question publicly debated the evening before,³ in that Society.

You are unanimously elected an Honourary Member of the Pantheon, and your own Name wrote upon a⁴ Slip of Paper procures you admittance at all times. I am, Sir, your respectfully,

WILL. DOWNIE ESQ.

Question for to morrow night:

Does the passion of Love proceed most from a regard to our Selves or to the object beloved.⁵

¹The clerk of the Pantheon Society, a debating society.

²Unidentified.

³That is, the last evening the Society met. There seem to have been fortnightly meetings on Thursday, at St. Mary's Chapel, Niddry Wynd. JB had spoken there on 23 Nov. in support of Lord Mountstuart's bill for a Scots Militia (Journ.).

⁴MS. "Ticket" deleted after "a"

⁵JB did not attend (Journ.).

From Archibald Campbell,

Tuesday 19 December 1775

MS. Yale (C 735). Rec. 23 Dec. (Reg. Let.).

ADDRESS: Jas. Boswell Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh.

FRANK: Free, A. Campbell.

POSTMARK: FREE, 19 D E.

NOTE written on flap of cover by JB: 590
470
120 1

DEAR SIR: I received your favor of the 14th Instant and forwarded Mr. Russel his letter.² I am now fixed Lieut. Colol. of the Mountaniards and tomorrow Fraser, Sir Wm. Erskine³ and I kiss His⁴ Majesty's hand in consequence of it.⁵ If you can recommend any clever tight, lighthearted fellows, too proud to Slave, and too Mettlesome to brook the life of indolence and inactivity let them repair to the Royal Standard of the 71st where Glory is to be acquired on the hardened Point of a Bayonet.⁶

Lest this days paper should render my worthy friend Sir George and that valuable family uneasy you may tell them from me there is great reason to believe, this York intelligence is not well founded.⁷

The reasons for thinking so are there. There is a Gentleman in this Metropolis⁸ who left Montreal the 23rd of October who says all was then well and that every step was taken to secure the Posts at Chamblie and St. Johns.⁹ This Rebell Intelligence is Prefaced with a flaming account of Chamblie being taken on the 18th with the number of Officers etc, that Surrendered. Now Sir, as this Post was only 21 miles from Montreal, and the next Post detached from it, is it to be supposed that at Montreal to which the Avenues of Intelligence were so very open, they could be ignorant of a circumstance of such importance to the Colony 5 days thereafter when it was a common custom to have Scouts running daily between the Posts with Intelligence. Chamblie was moreover pretty Strong and had a good Artillery Officer and a Sufficient quantity of Stores in it. St. Johns was also well provided in this respect and to imagine that a lesser Quantity of Artillery managed by less disciplind troops should over power and Silence a greater is to me preposterous.¹⁰ Therefore I contradict the report as groundless;

more especially, as it comes from the Rebels themselves. I thought it right hurried as I am at present, to give you this relief; because I am convinced your Politicians will look as grave as our John Bulls do at any Common Hackneyd Story that Slides over with their Pudding. From yours Affectionately,

A. CAMPBELL

¹This is possibly a year's end accounting of some sort, although the figures do not bear any relation to those in the accounts mentioned in Journ. 1 Jan. 1776. The numbers do not appear to concern anything mentioned in the letter.

²Both letters are unreported, and the identity of Mr. Russell is unknown, other than that he was an "Agent, London" (Reg. Let.).

³Sir William Erskine of Torry (d. 1795) had been in the Army since 1743 when he entered the Scots Greys, his father's regiment, as cornet. He rose to the rank of Lieut.-Gen.; at this time he was Lieut.-Col. of the First Battalion of the 71st Regiment. Campbell was Lieut.-Col. of the Second Battalion (Sketches of the Highlanders ii. 113; Army List, 1776, p. 129; Scots Mag. 1795, lvii. p. 206).

⁴MS. originally "kiss hands"; "His" is written through "hands".

⁵"Yesterday General Frazier, who has been raising a number of Highlanders to be sent to America early in the Spring, was at court, and had a conference with his Majesty. Several navy and military officers attended the levee at St. James's, and kissed his majesty's hand, on account of their late promotions" (Lond. Chron. 19-21 Dec. xxxviii. 598. The two items are under the rubric "Thurs. Dec. 21" which confirms the date of this letter).

⁶Recruiting may have proved for more difficult than anticipated; the Scottish Highlands, the chief recruiting ground for the Army, had been depleted by recent emigration, and many of the existing regiments were far from full. Judging from incomplete records, recruiting in Scotland continued through the spring (Fortescue, iii. 153-54; J. M. Bullock, The Duchess of Gordon as Recruiter). Another source claims, however, that Fraser's Regiment was raised with comparative speed, owing to the personal popularity of Simon Fraser and the memory of his Jacobite father,

executed in 1747. Many of the recruits spoke only Gaelic (Sketches of the Highlanders ii. 114-15).

The 71st or Fraser's Highland Regiment left Scotland for America on 29 Apr. 1776 in a convoy of troop ships. Fraser did not accompany them. Severe storms scattered the convoy on the Atlantic. Some of Erskine's battalion arrived in Halifax in June and became the Seventh Brigade under General Howe, and the rest of the battalion landed at Staten Island. The ships carrying Campbell's battalion sailed into Boston Harbour, not realising that the port had been in the hands of the colonists since 17 Mar.; the English ship had been stationed outside the harbour to warn them had been blown from its post in the bad weather. The entire battalion was taken prisoner by the colonists, and one officer, Major Robert Menzies, was killed when he resisted capture. Campbell remained a prisoner of war until the following year, when he was exchanged in return for Ethan Allen. In the winter of 1778-79, he led an expeditionary force into Georgia and captured Savannah in 1779 (Sketches of the Highlanders ii. 116; Namier and Brooke ii. 180; Edin. Adv., 30 Apr. - 3 May, xxv. 285; Fortescue iii. 182).

⁷The [New] York intelligence was in the Lond. Chron. 16-19 Dec. (xxxviii. 590). This quoted the New York Gazette as reporting the British surrender on 18 Oct. of Fort Chamblee, and on 3 Nov. of St. John's. Charles Preston (d. 1800), Sir George Preston's second and Major in the 26th Regiment of Foot garrisoned at St. John's, was reported to have submitted articles of capitulation. The news was not confirmed for a week. The next edition of the Lond. Chron. (19-21 Dec., xxxviii. 598) stated: "The account of St. John's being taken seems to be doubtful, as neither the letters nor the capitulation were signed: betts of 20 guineas to 10, were laid upon 'Change yesterday that it was not taken the 3rd of November". Speculation ended with the following issue (21-23 Dec. xxxviii. 608): The Adamant ... from Quebec is arrived at Falmouth, She sailed from Quebec the 14th of November, and brings a confirmation of the taking of St. John's after he received Campbell's letter, JB wrote: "An account in the

newspapers that St. John's Fort in Canada, commanded by my cousin, Major Charles Preston, was taken by the provincials agitated everybody". But probably he had not heard the final confirmation (Journ.).

⁸Unidentified.

⁹MS. "Johs"

¹⁰About two hundred Canadian militiamen, and five hundred British troops, mostly members of the 7th and 26th Regiments, had been stationed at the fort at St. John's, with a detachment of one hundred men at Fort Chambly. These men constituted nearly the entire British force in Canada. Gen. Richard Montgomery (1738-75) with fourteen hundred colonial troops had established a blockade around St. John's on 18 Sept. The colonials, however would have run out of provisions and ammunition before the British, had Montgomery not realised the vulnerability of Fort Chambly, which was filled with stores originally destined for St. John's but now undeliverable because of the blockade. On the night of 18 Oct., the colonials "brought two light pieces of Iron Canon thro' the woods out of reach of St. John's fort and soon made a Breach into the thin walls of Chamblee" (Daniel Claus, "Memorandum of the Rebel Invasion of Canada", Historical Documents, Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, series 8, 1906, pp. 105-11; J.C. Smyth, Precis of the Wars in Canada, 1755-1814, 1826, p. 76. The Fort surrendered without firing a shot, and all the soldiers were taken prisoner, including the commanding officer (possibly Campbell's "good Artillery Officer"), the Hon. Major Joseph Stopford (1741-86), a younger brother of Edward Stopford (Army List, 1775, pl 61; Egerton Brydges, Collins' Peerage of England, 1812, viii. 446-49). At Chambly the colonials also seized 124 barrels of gunpowder, 6,564 musket cartridges, 150 rifles, and 238 barrels of food staples (J. H. Smith, Our Struggle for the Fourteenth Colony, 1907, i. 428). With these reinforcements, Montgomery renewed his attack on St. John's, which capitulated on 3 Nov. with only three days' food supply left. Montgomery went on to take Montreal on 12 Nov., but

was killed during his unsuccessful attack on the fortress of Quebec on 31 Dec. One historian has suggested that "Preston's stiff defence ... saved Canada", because his long resistance of Montgomery's siege at St. John's gave the British time to move more troops into Canada, and also extended the Americans' campaign into the winter (Allen French, The First Year of the American Revolution, 1934, pp. 415-31).

John Maclaurin to Sir John Pringle,

Tuesday 26 December 1775

MS. Yale (C 1111). A copy, including signature,
in Lawrie's hand.¹

Edinr. 26 Decr. 1775

SIR: As you are at the head of the learned men in
this Country and was my fathers particular friend²
you will, I know, excuse me for requesting your
advice as to the manner of vindicating his memory
from a very petulant and injurious attack that has
been made upon it in a late Book the author of
which having died before publication the method of
redress is not so obvious as it otherwise woud
have been.

Happening t'other day to look into the 2d
Vol. of Goldsmiths history of the Earth and ani-
mated nature³ I in page 91 to my astonishment read
the following passage "for one person to Yawn is
sufficient to set all the rest of the company a
yawning. A ridiculous instance of this was commonly
practised upon the famous McLawrin one of the
professors in Edinbr.. He was very subject to have

his jaw dislocated, so that when he opened his mouth wider than ordinary, or when he yawned he could not shut it again. In the midst of his harangues, therefore, if any of his pupils began to be tired of his lecture he had only to gape or yawn and the professor instantly caught the sympathetic affection, so that he thus continued to stand speechless with his mouth wide open, till his servant from the next room was called in to set his jaw again.

I wrote last post to J. Nourse the Bookseller⁴ for whose behoof this work is printed that the above ludicrous and contemptuous description was absolutely false as hundreds of most respectable persons in England could attest, that it was very hard my father should be thus held forth as an object of laughter in a book which from the nature of the subject and supposed merit of the author might reach posterity and be dispersed over the world in different translations,⁵ that I had not yet determined in what manner I would resent and contradict it but that I expected he would immediately give orders for checking the farther propagation of this falsehood.

Whether Nourse will do me the justice I have demanded I cannot say, possibly he may decline as it will be attended by some tho' very little trouble and expence and tho' he should reprint the leaf amended or subjoin to each copy a correction yet still as the Book has been publish'd for more than twelve months and many copys must have gone abroad I think the falsehood should be publickly contradicted but am somewhat embarrassed as to the proper method which is my reason for troubling you. I have been told that in a late publication by some fool or other it was asserted that Sir I. Newton had died a changeling and that this not being true had been contradicted but I could not learn how.⁶ I shall be much obliged to you Sir for information and advice as to this strange affair, and also that you would let me know whether it would be proper for me in case Nourse be refractory to apply in a legal way for getting the Sale of the Book stop'd supposing such legal remedy might be had in England as to which I must take advice there.⁷ I am with great respect,
Sir, Your most obedient most humble servant,

signed JO. MACLAURIN

Sir John Pringle Bart.

¹This suggests that Maclaurin gave his letter to JB who had it copied before sending the original on to Pringle; Pringle's reply to JB, 6 Jan. 1776, appears to answer both To Pringle, 23 Dec. (Reg. Let., not reported) and To Pringle, 28 Dec. (Reg. Let.) which was probably Maclaurin's letter with perhaps a covering note (not reported) from JB.

²John's father, Colin Maclaurin (1698-1746) was professor of mathematics at the University of Edinburgh from 1725 until his death. He was a youthful protégé of Sir Isaac Newton and partly through Newton's influence became a Fellow of the Royal Society at the age of twenty-one. His early death left his widow with a number of small children of whom John was the eldest; his book on Newton's work was published posthumously "for the author's children" (Patrick Murdoch, "An Account of the Life and Writings of the Author", prefaced to Colin Maclaurin, An Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries, 1748; Robert Chambers, Lives of Illustrious and Distinguished Scotsmen, 1836, pp. 520-30). For the epitaphs John Maclaurin wrote for his father, emended by SJ, see Life v. 49-50, 50 n. 1, 471-72. Pringle described himself as Colin Maclaurin's "Colleague, physician and intimate friend" (From Pringle to John Maclaurin, 29 Jan. 1776).

³The History of the Earth and Animated Nature had been published in eight volumes on 30 June 1774, and was still being advertised in the London papers as "just published" a year later (Life ii. 182, n. 1; J. H. Pitman, Goldsmith's Animated Nature, 1924, p. 9; Lond. Chron. 16-18 May, xxxvii. 467).

⁴John Nourse (d. 1780) was a bookseller who since 1730 had specialised in French literature and scientific works. He was also the publisher of Maclaurin's book on Newton, which was currently being offered for sale in a third edition (Dictionary of Printers, p. 183; Lond. Chron. 18-20 May, xxxvii. 467). Pringle later suggested that Nourse may have been offended by John Maclaurin's "threatening manner of writing to him" (From Pringle to Maclaurin, 29 Jan. 1776).

⁵ There have been over twenty editions of Goldsmith's book, but only one known translation, into Welsh (Pitman, p. 9).

⁶ Both the "fool" and his publication claiming that Newton was a changeling, an imbecile, at the time of his death in 1727 are unidentified. In Ann. Reg. 1776, however, under "New Anecdotes of Sir Isaac Newton, by J. H. [James Hutton] a Gentleman of his Mother's Family", there is a refutation of a "several times repeated" account of Newton's mental deterioration. Earlier biographers (Fontenelle, 1727; Pemberton, 1728; Maclaurin, 1748; Stukeley, 1752) all emphasized Newton's acuteness at the end of his life, thus suggesting that there was some disagreement on this point. The controversy was revived and expanded in 1821, when Jean-Baptiste Biot wrote in the Biographie universelle that Newton was incapable of any important work after his illness (phrénésie) of 1692-93. Brewster's biography of 1831 vehemently denied this. Modern biographers date the controversy only from Biot's article, and tend to view the "illness" as a midlife depression which affected the direction of Newton's investigations, but not his mental powers (Ann. Reg., 1776, xix. pt. 2. 24-27; Biographic universelle, 1821, xxxi. 127-194; Peter and Ruth Wallis, Newton and Newtoniana, 1672-1975, A Bibliography, 1977; F. E. Manuel, A Portrait of Isaac Newton, 1968, pp. 18, 213).

⁷ This matter was further discussed in subsequent correspondence among Pringle, JB, and Maclaurin. The outcome was that despite the lack of a legal remedy, Pringle persuaded Nourse to add a footnote to the offending passage: "Since the publication of this work, the editor has been credibly informed that the professor had not the defect here mentioned". This note appears in most, but not all, later editions. Because JB asked SJ for his opinion on the incident, the story also appears in the Life iii. 15 and n. 1 (From Pringle, 6 Jan. 1776; From Pringle to Maclaurin, 29 Jan., 19 Feb. 1776; Pitman, p. 71 and n. 1).

[From Donald Macqueen, end of January 1774.]

¹Macqueen (c. 1716-85), minister at Kilmuir, Skye, had accompanied JB and SJ on their Hebridean tour from 8 Sept. until 22 Sept. SJ encouraged him to write an account of Skye (Life v. 257), but Macqueen does not seem to have done so. "A Dissertation on the Government of the People in the Western Isles, written 17 Nov. 1774" and "Of the Gruagich", both by Macqueen, form Appendix xi of Pennant, 1772 ii. (419-38). Macqueen also wrote "A Speculation on the Origin and Characteristical Manners of the Picts and Scots" (Gent. Mag. Oct. and Nov. 1794, lxiv. pt. 2, 881-84, 997-1000).

²The day of the month is left blank in the MS.

³Macqueen could have read of SJ's and JB's safe return in any of numerous newspapers which reported the trip; one possibility is Edin. Adv. (2 and 12 Nov. 1773) xx. 284, 309.

⁴"After various mishaps, after so many perilous chances," altered slightly from Aeneid i. 204.

⁵William Drummond (c. 1708-74), bookseller of Edinburgh, an old friend of SJ's (Life v. 385 and n. 3).

⁶Possibly the Dr. John Maclean (1708-93) who lived at the farm of Shulista, near Duntuil Castle, Skye. A noted classical scholar, he was hereditary physician to the Macdonalds of Sleat (Pennant 1772 ii. 350; A. R. Macdonald, The Truth about Flora Macdonald, 1938, p. 37). Maclean probably delivered this letter with the "trinkets", for it did not go through the mail.

⁷JB had not visited the Balearic Islands, where the inhabitants were known in early times for their skill with the sling shot. Livy reports that 870 "Balearic slingers" fought in Hannibal's army (xxi. 21).

⁸Macqueen presumably enclosed implements of flint, although his description is too vague for precise identification. There was a current tendency to assign ceremonial or sacrificial functions to objects which

later antiquarians thought were used solely for everyday activities. Thus Macqueen's spade and knife were probably similar to many hundreds of such objects found throughout the Hebrides and now identified as Iron Age implements (Arthur Mitchell, "James Robertson's Tour Through Some of the Western Islands etc. of Scotland in 1768" and "Note on Spade-like Implements of Stone", Proceedings of the Society of Antiquarians of Scotland, 1897-98, viii. third series, 11-19 and 30-35. The first article also describes a "Gruagach's or Brown's stone" which Macqueen supposed to be an ancient Druid altar; this stone is also described in Pennant 1772, pp. 341-42. Macqueen's source for the notion of annual sacrificial "solemnities" was probably Pliny, Natural History xxix.)

⁹The "Crusted stone" is unidentified, although it may be a decorated stone similar to the one illustrated in Pennant 1772, Plate vii, facing p. 74.

¹⁰Macqueen's gratitude must have dated from the years he spent studying in Edinburgh before he was licensed in 1737; Ruddiman (1674-1757), a noted scholar, was chief librarian of the Advocates' Library from 1730-52. JB once considered writing Ruddiman's life (Fasti Scot. vii. 171; Life ii. 216). JB presented the Celtic antiquities to the Library on 30 July; this is reported with relevant parts of Macqueen's letter in the Minutes of the Meeting of the Faculty of Advocates for that day. The antiquities still may be in the Library collection, now a part of the National Museum of Scotland. One catalogue lists an axe from Skye donated by Macqueen in 1781 (Journ. 30 July; Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, 1892, p. 24).

¹¹"The Glain-naidr, or Druidical bead, as it is vulgarly called, is an unique in its kind, being of a triangular shape; but, as usual, made of glass, marked with figures of serpents coiled up. The common people in Wales and in Scotland retain the same superstitions relating to it as the antients, and call it by the name of Serpent-Stone ... [they] agree in their belief of its powers; that good fortune attends the possessor wherever he goes. The stupid Claudius, that Ludibrium Aulæ Augusti, put to death a Gaulish knight, for no

other reason than, that he carried an ovum anguinum, a serpent-stone, about him. The vulgar of the present age attribute to it other virtues; such as its curing the bite of the adder, and giving ease to women in childbirth, if tied about the knee" (Pennant 1772, pp. 297-98). Pennant may have invented the phrase Ludibrium Aulae Augusti; the nearest source is "Nam Claudium patrum non nisi in ludibrium reservavit" (Suetonius, Gaius Caligula, 23). Pennant's phrase means "the laughing-stock of the Augustan court". The Pliny reference is to Natural History, xxix. 12, and is also cited by Pennant. For a modern discussion which distinguishes between the serpent stone, a phallic symbol, and the serpent's egg, Pliny's good luck charm, see Ann Ross, Pagan Celtic Britain, 1967, pp. 91-93, 345, and plates 26a, 83b.

¹²Perkin Warbeck (?1474-99) claimed to be Richard, Duke of York and heir to the English throne. He accompanied James IV of Scotland in a raid on England in 1496, joined the Cornish rebellion of 1497, was captured by Henry VII, and later executed.

¹³James IV (1473-1513), who presented the barony and the Auchinleck estate to Thomas Boswell in 1504, after the Auchinleck line had failed (Life ii. 413).

¹⁴In Adages II. v. 1, although the "character" is mostly an encomium on Alexander Stewart, James IV's natural son and a student of Erasmus's.

¹⁵James V, who was a year old when his father was killed at Flodden in 1513.

¹⁶James IV.

¹⁷Macqueen is saying that Erasmus's praise of James IV was disinterested and therefore merited; thus James IV is reliable in his assessment of Warbeck.

¹⁸James IV arranged a marriage between his cousin, Katherine Gordon, "The White Rose of Scotland", and Warbeck. Macqueen means that this effort to lend

Warbeck legitimacy must have stemmed from James IV's personal conviction, not from a desire to challenge Henry VII or to conciliate Charles VIII.

¹⁹In the years following the young King Sebastian's death at Alcazar in 1578, a number of imposters appeared to encourage the cult of "Sebastianism". One of these was a Calabrian, Marco Tullio Caltizzone, who appeared in Venice in 1598 and attempted to convince the colony of Portuguese there that he was Sebastian. His imposture was exposed, and he was executed in 1603 (H. V. Livermore, A New History of Portugal, 1966, pp. 165-67).

²⁰MS. "your"

²¹Macqueen means Gautama the Magian, who impersonated Smerdis, the second son of Cyrus the Great of Persia (521 B. C.).

²²There were actually four men who one after the other claimed to be Demetrius of Dmitri of Russia, son or grandson of Ivan IV (the Terrible). The first is believed to have been a Polish monk; upon the death of Boris Goudonov in 1605 he was crowned as Czar, but was killed in an insurrection a year later. In 1607 another Polish Dmitri appeared. He ruled briefly and was killed in 1610. In 1612 and 1613, two other impostors claimed to be Dmitri's son (George Vernadsky, A History of Russia, 1969, v. 223-56).

²³A number of impostors claiming to be Nero appeared after that emperor's suicide in 68 A.D. (Cambridge Ancient History, 1934-36, x. 741; xi. 144-45). Macqueen's probable source here is Suetonius, Nero. 57. Lambert Semnel or Simnel (c. 1486-1525) pretended to be the Earl of Warwick. He was crowned Edward VI in Dublin in 1487, crossed to England, and was defeated by Henry VII at York in 1487. He was said to have been punished by being made to work in the King's kitchen.

²⁴The two post offices on Skye were at Dunvegan and at Sconcer; mail traveled between Edinburgh and Sconcer once a week. (Edin. Alm. 1774, p. 163).

²⁵Flint arrowheads were called "elf-arrows" because they were popularly supposed to have fallen from the sky, sent by elves or fairies. In both Scotland and Northern Ireland, people thought elf-arrows influenced the health of cattle. Pennant discussed elf-arrows (1769, pp. 94-95), and William Collins referred to "elf-shot arrows" in "An Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands", l. 27. For a detailed discussion, see John Evans, The Ancient Stone Implements of Great Britain, 2nd ed., 1897, pp. 362-66.