

SAMUEL JOHNSON
BRUCE REDFORD

The Letters of
Samuel Johnson,
Volume II

1773-1776



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The Letters of
SAMUEL JOHNSON



SAMUEL JOHNSON

by James Barry, 1778–1780 (National Portrait Gallery, London)

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SAMUEL JOHNSON

VOLUME II · 1773-1776

Edited by

BRUCE REDFORD



PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

MCM · LXXXII

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PUBLISHED BY PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 41 WILLIAM STREET
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY 08540

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA
(REVISED FOR VOLUMES 2 AND 3)

JOHNSON, SAMUEL, 1709-1784.

THE LETTERS OF SAMUEL JOHNSON.

INCLUDES BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES AND INDEX.

CONTENTS: V. 1. 30 OCTOBER 1731 TO 15 DECEMBER 1772

—V. 2. 15 JANUARY 1773 TO 24 DECEMBER 1776—V. 3.

11 JANUARY 1777 TO 26 DECEMBER 1781.

ISBN 0-691-06928-x (v. 2)

1. JOHNSON, SAMUEL—1709-1784—CORRESPONDENCE.

2. AUTHORS, ENGLISH—18TH CENTURY—CORRESPONDENCE.

3. LEXICOGRAPHERS—GREAT BRITAIN—CORRESPONDENCE.

I. REDFORD, BRUCE. II. TITLE.

PR3533.A4 1992 828'.609 90-8806

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS BOOKS
ARE PRINTED ON ACID-FREE PAPER, AND MEET THE
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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE STINEHOUR PRESS, LUNENBURG, VERMONT

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

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EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

POLICIES of annotation and transcription have been modeled on the style sheet for the Yale Research Edition of the Private Papers of James Boswell. The most detailed version in print appears in the front matter to *The Correspondence of James Boswell with David Garrick, Edmund Burke, and Edmond Malone*, ed. P. S. Baker et al. (1986). The statement that follows adheres closely to this version.

THE TEXTS

Choice and Arrangement of Letters

The letters are presented in chronological order. Letters written for others, as well as public dissertations in the guise of letters, have been excluded. Undated letters that cannot be assigned with confidence to a specific year appear in Appendix I, where they are ordered alphabetically by correspondent. Appendix II gathers together the evidence for letters whose texts have not been recovered. Translations of Johnson's letters in Latin appear in Appendix III.

The copy-text has been the MSS of letters sent, whenever such MSS were available. In the absence of originals, we have used MS copies. When no MSS at all have been recovered, we have used printed texts as copy.

Transcription

In accordance with the policy of the Yale Research Series, "manuscript documents in this edition have been printed to correspond to the originals as closely as is feasible in the medium of type. A certain amount of compromise and apparent inconsistency seems unavoidable, but change has been kept within the limits of stated conventions."

The following editorial conventions are imposed silently:
Addresses. Elements appearing on separate lines in the MS are

EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

run together and punctuated according to modern practice. On franked covers, handwriting is that of the franker unless otherwise specified.

Datelines. Places and dates are joined at the head of the letter regardless of their position in the ms. Punctuation has been normalized.

Salutations. Abbreviations are expanded. Commas and colons after salutations are retained; in the absence of punctuation, a colon is supplied.

Complimentary closes. Abbreviations are expanded. Punctuation has been normalized. Elements appearing on separate lines in the ms are run together. Complimentary closes paragraphed separately in the ms are printed as continuations of the last line of text.

Endorsements. Handwriting is that of the recipient unless otherwise specified.

Punctuation. At the ends of completed sentences periods may replace commas or dashes and are always supplied when omitted. A sentence following a period always begins with a capital letter.

Changes. Substantive additions and deletions in Johnson's hand are recorded in the notes.

Lacunae. Words and letters missing through a tear or obscured by a blot are supplied within angle brackets. Inadvertent omissions are supplied within square brackets. Non-authorial deletions are not reported unless the reading is in doubt.

Abbreviations, contractions, and symbols. The following abbreviations, contractions, and symbols, and their variant forms, are expanded: abt (about), acct (account), agst (against), Bp (Bishop), cd (could), compts (compliments), Dr (Dear), Ld (Lord), Lop (Lordship), Ly (Lady), Lyship (Ladyship), recd (received), sd (should), Sr (Sir), wc (which), wd (would), yr (your), & (and), &c (etc.). All retained abbreviations and contractions are followed by a period. Periods following ordinals have been removed.

Superior letters. Superior letters are lowered.

EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

Brackets. Parentheses replace square brackets in the text, brackets being reserved for editorial use.

Spelling. The original spelling has been retained, except for obvious inadvertencies, which are corrected in the text and recorded in the notes.

Capitalization and paragraphing. Original capitalization and paragraphing have been retained.

ANNOTATION

Headnotes. Postmarks, although partly illegible on some letters, are left unbracketed when not in doubt. Marks on the wrappers other than addresses, postmarks, endorsements, and stamped and written franks have been ignored.

Footnotes. When an abbreviated source is given, the full citation may be found in the list of cue titles and abbreviations on pp. xv–xvii. All other reference titles in the footnotes are sufficiently complete to enable ready identification; for each letter, these citations are presented in full the first time they occur and are shortened in all subsequent occurrences in the notes to that letter. Except where a work has been directly quoted, no source is given when the information is available in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, an encyclopedia, or other general reference work.

Reference to all letters is made by correspondent and date. *Post* and *Ante* references supplement but do not replace the index, which should be consulted whenever the identity of names or places is in doubt.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1709 Is born at Lichfield, 18 Sept.
- 1717–25 Attends Lichfield Grammar School.
- 1728 Enters Pembroke College, Oxford, in October.
- 1729 Leaves Oxford in December.
- 1731 Death of his father Michael.
- 1732 Usher at Market Bosworth School.
- 1733 Resides in Birmingham; translates Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia*.
- 1735 Marries Elizabeth Porter; opens school at Edial.
- 1737 Leaves for London in March; begins work for Edward Cave.
- 1738 *London*.
- 1744 *An Account of the Life of Richard Savage; Harleian Miscellany*.
- 1746 Signs contract for the *Dictionary*.
- 1749 *Irene* produced; *The Vanity of Human Wishes*.
- 1750 Begins *Rambler*.
- 1752 Death of Elizabeth Johnson; final *Rambler*.
- 1755 Oxford M.A.; publication of the *Dictionary*.
- 1758 Begins *Idler*.
- 1759 Death of his mother Sarah; publication of *Rasselas*.
- 1760 Final *Idler*.
- 1762 Is granted annual pension.
- 1763 Meets James Boswell.
- 1764 Founding of The Club.
- 1765 Meets Henry and Hester Thrale; Dublin LL.D.; *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*.
- 1770 *The False Alarm*.
- 1771 *Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*.
- 1773 Hebridean tour.
- 1774 *The Patriot*; tour of Wales.
- 1775 *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland; Taxation No Tyranny*; Oxford D.C.L.; trip to Paris.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1777 Trial of Dr. Dodd; begins work on *Lives of the Poets*.
1779 First installment of *Lives*.
1781 Death of Henry Thrale; second installment of *Lives*.
1783 Founding of Essex Head Club.
1784 Final break with Hester Thrale; dies 13 Dec.

CUE TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

- Adam Cat.* R. B. ADAM, *The R. B. Adam Library Relating to Dr. Samuel Johnson and His Era*, 4 vols., 1929–30.
- 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.
- Alum. Oxon. I* JOSEPH FOSTER, *Alumni Oxonienses ... 1500–1714*, 4 vols., 1891–92.
- Alum. Oxon. II* JOSEPH FOSTER, *Alumni Oxonienses ... 1715–1886*, 4 vols., 1887–88.
- Baker *The Correspondence of James Boswell with David Garrick, Edmund Burke, and Edmond Malone*, ed. P. S. Baker et al., 1986.
- Bibliography* W. P. COURTNEY and DAVID NICHOL SMITH, *A Bibliography of Samuel Johnson*, 1915, 1925.
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- Bloom E. A. BLOOM, *Samuel Johnson in Grub Street*, 1957.
- Burke's Correspondence* *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, ed. T. W. Copeland et al., 1958–70.
- Chapman *The Letters of Samuel Johnson, with Mrs. Thrale's Genuine Letters to Him*, ed. R. W. Chapman, 3 vols., 1952.
- Clifford, 1952 J. L. CLIFFORD, *Hester Lynch Piozzi*, 2d ed., 1952.
- Clifford, 1955 J. L. CLIFFORD, *Young Samuel Johnson*, 1955.
- Clifford, 1979 J. L. CLIFFORD, *Dictionary Johnson*, 1979.
- Croker JAMES BOSWELL, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, ed. J. W. Croker, rev. John Wright, 10 vols., 1868.
- SJ's Dictionary SAMUEL JOHNSON, *Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed., 1773.
- DNB *Dictionary of National Biography*.

CUE TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

- Earlier Years* F. A. POTTLE, *James Boswell: The Earlier Years, 1740–1769*, 1966.
- Fifer *The Correspondence of James Boswell with Certain Members of The Club*, ed. C. N. Fifer, 1976.
- Fleeman SAMUEL JOHNSON, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, ed. J. D. Fleeman, 1985.
- GM *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1731–1907.
- Greene, 1975 DONALD GREENE, *Samuel Johnson's Library*, 1975.
- Hawkins SIR JOHN HAWKINS, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, 2d ed., 1787.
- Hazen A. T. HAZEN, *Samuel Johnson's Prefaces and Dedications*, 1937.
- Hebrides* *Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, 1773, ed. from the original ms by F. A. Pottle and C. H. Bennett, 1961.
- Hendy J. G. HENDY, *The History of the Early Postmarks of the British Isles*, 1905.
- Hill *Letters of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, ed. G. B. Hill, 1892.
- Hyde, 1972 MARY HYDE, *The Impossible Friendship: Boswell and Mrs. Thrale*, 1972.
- Hyde, 1977 MARY HYDE, *The Thrales of Streatham Park*, 1977.
- JB James Boswell.
- Johns. Glean.* A. L. READE, *Johnsonian Gleanings*, 11 vols., 1909–52.
- Johns. Misc.* *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, ed. G. B. Hill, 2 vols., 1897.
- JN *Johnsonian Newsletter*.
- Later Years* FRANK BRADY, *James Boswell: The Later Years, 1769–1795*, 1984.
- 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, 2d ed., 1964.
- Lit. Anec.* JOHN NICHOLS, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, 9 vols., 1812–15.
- Lit. Car.* F. A. POTTLE, *The Literary Career of James Boswell, Esq.*, 1929.
- Lives of the Poets* *Johnson's Lives of the English Poets*, ed. G. B. Hill, 1905.

CUE TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

- Lond. Stage* *The London Stage*, Part III (1729–47), ed. A. H. Scouten, 1961; Part IV (1747–76), ed. G. W. Stone, Jr., 1962; Part V (1776–1800), ed. C. B. Hogan, 1968.
- Namier and Brooke
SIR LEWIS NAMIER and JOHN BROOKE, *The House of Commons, 1754–1790*, 3 vols., 1964.
- OED *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- Piozzi, *Letters* HESTER LYNCH PIOZZI, *Letters to and from the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, 2 vols., 1788.
- Piozzi Annotated presentation copy, given to Sir James Fellowes, of H. L. Piozzi's *Letters to and from the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, 1788 (Birthplace Museum, Lichfield).
- Plomer H. R. PLOMER et al., *Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1668–1725; 1726–1775*, 2 vols., 1922, 1932.
- Poems* *The Poems of Samuel Johnson*, ed. David Nichol Smith and E. L. McAdam, rev. J. D. Fleeman, 1974.
- Reades* A. L. READE, *The Reades of Blackwood Hill and Dr. Johnson's Ancestry*, 1906.
- RES *Review of English Studies*.
- SJ Samuel Johnson.
- Sledd and Kolb J. H. SLEDD and G. J. KOLB, *Dr. Johnson's Dictionary*, 1955.
- Thraliana* *Thraliana: The Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale*, ed. K. C. Balderston, 1942.
- TLS *Times Literary Supplement*.
- Waingrow *The Correspondence and Other Papers of James Boswell Relating to the Making of the "Life of Johnson,"* ed. Marshall Waingrow, 1969.
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The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence, ed. W. S. Lewis et al., 1937–83.
- Wheatley and Cunningham
H. B. WHEATLEY and PETER CUNNINGHAM, *London Past and Present*, 3 vols., 1891.
- Works*, Yale ed. *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, J. H. Middendorf, gen. ed., 1958–.

The Letters of
SAMUEL JOHNSON

John Hawkins

FRIDAY 15 JANUARY 1773

MS: Houghton Library.

ENDORSEMENT in an unidentified hand: 15th Jan. 1773, Dr. Johnson to Sir John Hawkins.

Dear Sir:

Jan. 15, 1773

A young Woman of whose family I have some little knowledge, is, I believe, very injuriously and oppressively excluded from her little patrimony, for which she sues in formâ pauperis.¹ Mr. Chambers has undertaken her cause, but we are in want of an Attorney.² I know very few attorneys, and none so well as Mr. Clark,³ yet I cannot venture to ask him to do business for nothing, but should think it a great favour if you would recommend the cause to him.⁴

My compliments to Lady Hawkins.⁵ I am, Sir, Your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

1. SJ refers to "Poll" Carmichael, "a Scotch Wench who has her Case as a Pauper depending in some of the Law Courts" (*Thraliana* I.184-85, 532); she joined SJ's household c. 1777 (*John. Misc.* I.205 n. 2; *Life* III.462-63). *Post To* Richard Clark, 31 Jan. 1774.

2. Because Robert Chambers was a barrister, he and SJ needed to secure the services of a solicitor.

3. Richard Clark (1739-1831), a London solicitor to whom SJ had been introduced by Hawkins; Clark later became Alderman (1776), Sheriff (1777), and ultimately Lord Mayor (1784).

4. *Post To* Richard Clark, 8 Feb. 1773.

5. In 1753 Hawkins had married Sidney Storer (1726-93), youngest daughter of Peter Storer, attorney of Highgate (Bertram Davis, *A Proof of Eminence: The Life of Sir John Hawkins*, 1973, pp. 57-58).

John Hawkesworth

WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY 1773

MS: Hyde Collection.

ADDRESS: To Dr. Hawkesworth at Bromley in Kent.

POSTMARK: 20 IA.

Dear Sir:

Jan. 20

You may by chance remember that I once mentioned in your grove¹ the fitness of an epitome of Chambers Dictionary,² which you said you would some time undertake. This gives you a right of refusing it to another, but if you have now, as I suppose you have, laid aside, all such thoughts, I would transfer it to a gentleman now out of business. Pray send me word.³

But send me word with more care of the health of dear Mrs. Hawkesworth. She is negligent of her self, and by consequence of you and me. I shall never love her when she is sick because she gets sick by her own fault. I am, Dear Sir, your most affectionate,

SAM. JOHNSON

1. *Ante* To John Hawkesworth, Early March 1756, n. 8.

2. The *Cyclopædia, or an Universal Dictionary* (1728) of Ephraim Chambers (d. 1740). "Johnson once considered making a revision of the *Cyclopædia*, which was in his library at his death and for which . . . he expressed a liking; and the tradition has persisted that he 'formed his style' on that of Chambers" (Sledd and Kolb, p. 19).

3. SJ duly transferred the project to the Rev. John Calder (1733–1815), D.D., dissenting minister and literary scholar, Deputy Librarian to the Duke of Northumberland (1773–75) (*Life* 11.502–3). "One of the most important events of Dr. Calder's Literary Life was a contract which he made, in 1773, to prepare for the press a new Edition of Chambers's 'Cyclopaedia.' This project unfortunately terminated to the dissatisfaction of all parties (John Nichols, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, 1822, iv.800). *Post* To Archibald Hamilton, 13 Feb. 1776 and n. 1.

Hester Thrale

TUESDAY 26 JANUARY 1773

ms: Princeton University Library.

Madam:

Tuesday, Jan. 26, 1773

The inequalities of human life have always employed the meditation of deep thinkers, and I cannot forbear to reflect on the difference between your condition and my own. You live upon Mock turtle, and stewed Rumps of Beef, I dined yesterday upon crumpets. You sit with parish officers, caressing and caressed, the idol of the table, and the wonder of the day. I pine in the solitude of sickness, not bad enough to be pitied, and not well enough to be endured.¹ You sleep away the night, and laugh or scold away the day. I cough and grumble, and grumble and cough. Last night was very tedious, and this day makes no promises of much ease. However I have this day² put on my shoe, and hope that Gout is gone. I shall have only the cough to contend with, and I doubt whether I shall get rid of that without change of place. I caught cold in the coach as I went away, and am disordered by very little things. Is it accident, or age? I am, dearest Madam, your most obedient and most humble Servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

1. "It seems to have been Mrs. Thrale's practice this winter to come in town every Tuesday for a brief stay at the Borough house, and it was Johnson's custom to dine with her there" (Clifford, 1952, p. 96).

2. MS: "d" superimposed upon "g"

Richard Clark

MONDAY 8 FEBRUARY 1773

ms: Houghton Library.

ADDRESS: To Mr. Clark.

ENDORSEMENT: 8th Feb. 1773, Dr. Johnson.

To RICHARD CLARK, 8 *February* 1773

Dear Sir:

Febr. 8, 1773

Sir John Hawkins told me that you would be so kind as to undertake the business which I recommended to him and you.¹ Mr. Chambers is now in town, and will be glad to consider the manner of proceeding with you. I am, Sir, Your most humble Servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

1. *Ante* To John Hawkins, 15 Jan. 1773.

Hester Thrale

FRIDAY 19 FEBRUARY 1773

PRINTED SOURCE: Piozzi, *Letters* 1.72–73.

Madam,

Feb. 19, 1773

I think I am better, but cannot say much more than that I think so.¹ I was yesterday with Miss Lucy Southwell and Mrs. Williams, at Mr. Southwell's. Miss Frances Southwell is not well.²

I have an invitation to dine at Sir Joshua Reynolds's on Tuesday. May I accept it?³

Do not think I am going to borrow the Roller.⁴ I have undertaken to beg from you the favour of lending to Miss Reynolds Newton on the Prophecies,⁵ and to Miss Williams

1. *Ante* To Hester Thrale, 26 Jan. 1773.

2. SJ refers to the brother and sisters of his late friend, Thomas (1698–1766), second Baron Southwell of Castle Mattress, Co. Limerick: the Hon. Edmond (b. 1705), the Hon. Frances (b. 1708), and the Hon. Lucia (b. 1710) (Edmond Malone's annotated copy of Piozzi, *Letters*, Dublin ed. 1. 54: Georgetown University Library).

3. *Ante* To Hester Thrale, 26 Jan. 1773, n. 1.

4. *roller*: "any thing turning on its own axis, as a heavy stone to level walks" (SJ's *Dictionary*). "Mr. Thrale flew into a Rage always when anyone beg'd leave to borrow the Roller, and I used to be frighted and stop them slyly if I could" (annotated copy of Piozzi, *Letters*, 1.72, Trinity College, Cambridge).

5. *Ante* To Frances Reynolds, 21 Dec. 1762, n. 6.

To HESTER THRALE, 19 February 1773

Burney's Musical Journey.⁶ They are, I believe, both at Streatham.

Be pleased to make my most respectful compliments to dear Mrs. Salusbury. I wish I could send her any thing better.

*Diversas hominum sortes.*⁷ Here am I, sitting by myself, uncertain whether I shall dine on veal or mutton; and there are you with the top dish and the bottom dish, all upon a card, and on the other side of the card Tom Lisgow.⁸ Of the rest that dwell in darker fame why should I make mention. Tom Lisgow is an assembly. But Tom Lisgow cannot people the world. Mr. K— must have a place.⁹ The lion has his jackall.¹⁰ They will soon meet.

And when they talk, ye gods! how they will talk.¹¹

Pray let your voice and my master's help to fill the pauses. I am, etc.

SAM. JOHNSON

6. Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy: Or, The Journal of a Tour through those Countries, undertaken to collect Materials for a General History of Music* (1771).

7. *diversas hominum sortes*: "various are the fates of men" (proverbial).

8. "Tom Lisgow was a voter at the Southwark election. Mr. K[ee]p was another. When they were entertained at Mr. Thrale's table, . . . [I] used to write the bill of fare on one side of a large blank card in a small character, the names of the company on the other side, and refer to it from time to time as it lay by [my] plate, that no mistakes might be made, or offence given from ignorance or forgetfulness; to this practice Mr. Johnson laughingly alludes" (Piozzi, *Letters* 1.73).

9. "Mr. Keep when he heard I was a native of North Wales, told me that his Wife was a Welsh woman: & desired to be buried at Ruthyn. So - says the Man I went with the Corpse myself because I thought it would be a *pleasant Journey*, & indeed I found Ruthyn is a very beautiful Place" (Piozzi 1.73).

10. *jackal*: "a small animal supposed to start prey for the lion" (SJ's *Dictionary*).

11. "Then he will talk, good gods, how he will talk!" (Nathaniel Lee, *The Rival Queens*, 1677, ed. P. F. Vernon, 1970, 1.ii.48). *Post To Hester Thrale*, 6 Oct. 1777.

James Boswell

WEDNESDAY 24 FEBRUARY 1773

PRINTED SOURCE: JB's *Life*, 1791, 1.389–90.

To JAMES BOSWELL, 24 February 1773

Dear Sir,

London, Feb. 24, 1773

I have read your kind letter much more than the elegant Pindar which it accompanied.¹ I am always glad to find myself not forgotten, and to be forgotten by you would give me great uneasiness. My northern friends have never been unkind to me: I have from you, dear Sir, testimonies of affection, which I have not often been able to excite; and Dr. Beattie rates the testimony which I was desirous of paying to his merit, much higher than I should have thought it reasonable to expect.²

I have heard of your masquerade.³ What says your Synod to such innovations?⁴ I am not studiously scrupulous, nor do I think a masquerade either evil in itself, or very likely to be the occasion of evil; yet as the world thinks it a very licentious relaxation of manners, I would not have been one of the *first* masquers in a country where no masquerade had ever been before.⁵

A new edition of my great Dictionary is printed, from a copy which I was persuaded to revise; but having made no preparation, I was able to do very little.⁶ Some superfluities I have

1. JB had last written SJ on 25 Dec. 1772 (*Life* II.203). For the volume of Pindar's *Works*, *Ante* To JB, 31 Aug. 1772, n. 3.

2. *Ante* To JB, 31 Aug. 1772 and n. 1. In his letter of 25 Dec. JB had quoted Beattie's response to SJ's praise: "it is impossible for me to say how much I am gratified . . . ; for there is not a man upon earth whose good opinion I would be more ambitious to cultivate" (*Life* II.203).

3. "Friday, [Jan.] 15. At Duff House . . . was exhibited the first masquerade ever seen in Scotland. . . . A number of dresses, rich genteel and curious, were exhibited. . . . [Including] Mr. Boswell, [as] a Dumb Conjuror" (*GM* 1773, p. 43). The masquerade, actually the second in Scotland (*London Magazine* 43, 1774, pp. 82–83), was given by Sir Alexander and Lady Macdonald, whom SJ and JB were soon to visit on Skye. *Post* To Hester Thrale, 6 Sept. 1773.

4. "Denounced from the pulpit as 'the encourager of intrigue, of libertinism, of debauchery,' it [the masquerade] encouraged, in fact, no more than fashionable, decorous insipidity" (*Later Years*, p. 44).

5. In an anonymous article that can be attributed confidently to him, JB echoes SJ's opinion: "In this [masking] there is nothing inherently evil; but it has no doubt been often made subservient to licentiousness of manners" (*London Magazine* 43, 1774, pp. 80–83; *Lit. Car.*, p. 223).

6. The fourth folio edition, revised from the first, appeared in March. This revision, the only one in SJ's lifetime, was in fact substantial, particularly in the

To JAMES BOSWELL, 24 February 1773

expunged, and some faults I have corrected, and here and there have scattered a remark; but the main fabrick of the work remains as it was. I had looked very little into it since I wrote it, and, I think, I found it full as often better, as worse, than I expected.

Baretti and Davies have had a furious quarrel; a quarrel, I think, irreconcilable.⁷ Dr. Goldsmith has a new comedy, which is expected in the spring. No name is yet given it.⁸ The chief diversion arises from a stratagem by which a lover is made to mistake his future father-in-law's house for an inn. This, you see, borders upon farce. The dialogue is quick and gay, and the incidents are so prepared as not to seem improbable.

I am sorry that you lost your cause of Intromission, because I yet think the arguments on your side unanswerable.⁹ But you seem, I think, to say that you gained reputation even by your defeat; and reputation you will daily gain, if you keep Lord Auchinleck's precept in your mind, and endeavour to consolidate in your mind a firm and regular system of law, instead of picking up occasional fragments.¹⁰

My health seems in general to improve; but I have been

number of new quotations added (information supplied by Prof. Allen Reddick).

7. It is likely that this quarrel concerned Baretti's lack of progress on his translation of *Don Quixote*, for which Davies had been advancing him £10 a month (Lacy Collison-Morley, *Giuseppe Baretti*, 1909, p. 274).

8. Goldsmith's play was advertised as *The Mistakes of a Night*, and the final title, *She Stoops to Conquer*, was not fixed until just before the premiere, 15 Mar. (*Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Arthur Friedman, 1966, v.88–89).

9. In the case of *Wilson v. Smith and Armour*, which came to trial in Jan. 1772, JB had argued in support of an "established principle" of Scots law, "that whoever intermeddled with the effects of a person deceased, with out the interposition of legal authority to guard against embezzlement, should be subjected to pay all the debts of the deceased, as having been guilty of what was technically called *vicious intromission*" (*Life* II.196; *Later Years*, p. 26). The Court of Session ruled against the principle, but SJ supported JB's position, and drew up a lengthy opinion in order to assist him in an "application to the Court for a revision and alteration of the judgement" (*Life* II.196). "This masterly argument, after being prefaced and concluded with some sentences of my own . . . was actually printed and laid before the Lords of Session, but without success" (*Life* II.200–201).

10. At this time, "Lord Auchinleck was not yet satisfied that Boswell had acquired a solid grounding in the law" (*Later Years*, p. 40).

To JAMES BOSWELL, 24 *February* 1773

troubled for many weeks with a vexatious catarrh, which is sometimes sufficiently distressful. I have not found any great effects from bleeding and physick; and am afraid, that I must expect help from brighter days and softer air.

Write to me now and then; and whenever any good befalls you, make haste to let me know it, for no one will rejoice at it more than, dear Sir, Your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

You continue to stand very high in the favour of Mrs. Thrale.¹¹

11. During his London jaunt of 1772, Boswell visited the Thrales on three occasions, and "Mrs. Thrale expressed the hope that Mrs. Boswell would accompany her husband to London the next year. . . . It was a warm parting between Boswell and the Thrales, and the prospects of a solid friendship seemed quite possible" (Hyde, 1972, p. 18).

John Taylor

SATURDAY 27 FEBRUARY 1773

MS: Pierpont Morgan Library.

ADDRESS: To the Reverend Dr. Taylor in Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

POSTMARK: 27 FE.

ENDORSEMENTS: 1773, 27 Feby. 73.

Dear Sir:

London, Febr. 27, 1773

Is it not a strange thing that we should visit, and meet, and live kindly together, and then part without any enquiry after each other?¹ This is surely not quite right, and therefore I will this day put an end to it, by desiring you to inform me about your health and your quiet, of both which I shall willingly hear the improvement and encrease.

As to my own health it has been pretty much interrupted by a cough which has hung on me about ten weeks, and for six or seven has been very violent.² I have been sometimes near

1. SJ had stayed with Taylor at Ashbourne from 27 or 28 Oct. until 2 Dec. 1772 (*Ante* To John Taylor, 19 Oct. 1772; *Ante* To Hester Thrale, 27 Nov. 1772).

2. MS: no punctuation

To JOHN TAYLOR, 27 *February* 1773

fainting, but have never fainted. My quiet nobody tries to interrupt, or if they try, I seldom hear of it.

When I had left you, I passed some days at Lucy's, and *lent* Mr. Greene the axe and lance.³ I then went to Birmingham, and was a while with Hector.⁴

About three months ago the Schoolmaster who has dedicated his Spelling book to you, came to me with a request that I would put my name to a printed recommendation, which was to stand before it. This, you see was not fit for me to do. He was not importunate, but, I suppose, was not pleased. You will sometime let him see the impropriety of his request, that a man, who considers you as his friend, may not think himself unkindly treated.

My Cold was once so bad that I began to think of Country air, but then what country. I doubt Derbyshire is not the place that cures coughs. While I deliberated, I grew better, but perceive myself now not the match that I once was for wind and weather. Dr. Laurence laughs at me when he sees me in a great coat.

Infirmity has come somewhat suddenly, at least, unexpectedly upon me, and I am afraid that I suffer myself to be corroded with vain and idle discontent.

Let me hear from you. I am, Dear Sir, Your affectionate, humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

3. *Ante* To Lucy Porter, 12 July 1768, n. 2. The weapons were presumably intended for Greene's museum of antiquities and curiosities.

4. *Ante* To Edmund Hector, 5 Dec. 1772.

*Phineas Bond*¹

THURSDAY 4 MARCH 1773

1. Phineas Bond (1749–1815), a Philadelphia attorney, came to England c. 1770 to study law and remained until after the American War. "We know relatively little about him . . . except that during the Revolution he remained a loyalist and after the war served as British consul in Philadelphia. The circumstances of his acquaintance with Johnson are also obscure" (Waingrow, p. 463 and n. 6;

To PHINEAS BOND, 4 March 1773

MS: Haverford College. A copy in the hand of James Abercrombie.²

ADDRESS: To Mr. Bond.

London, Johnsons Court, Fleet Street,

Sir:

March 4, 1773

That in the hurry of a sudden departure, you should yet find leisure to consult my convenience, is a degree of kindness and an instance of regard not only beyond my claims, but above my expectation. You are not mistaken in supposing that I set a high value on my American Friends, and that you should confer a very valuable favor upon me, by giving me an opportunity of keeping myself in their memory.

I have taken the liberty of troubling you with a packet, to which I wish a safe and speedy conveyance, because I wish a safe & speedy voyage to him that conveys it.³ I am, Sir, Your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

M. J. Quinlan, "Johnson's American Acquaintances," in *Johnson, Boswell and Their Circle*, 1965, pp. 196-97).

2. James Abercrombie (1758-1841), a Philadelphia businessman, copied this letter in 1792 for JB's use in the *Life* (Waingrow, pp. 462 and n. 1, 463).

3. SJ enclosed two letters to be taken to America. *Post To William White*, 4 Mar. 1773; *Post To William Samuel Johnson*, 4 Mar. 1773.

*William White*¹

THURSDAY 4 MARCH 1773

MS: Hyde Collection.

ADDRESS: To the Reverend Mr. White.²

ENDORSEMENT: Dr. Samuel Johnson, 1773.

1. William White (1748-1836), first Bishop of Pennsylvania, arrived in England during the winter of 1770-71 to be ordained into the Anglican ministry. White left for America in June 1772. During his stay in England he occasionally visited SJ, who was "very civil" to him and "expressed a wish to see the edition of his *Rasselas*, which Dr. White told him had been printed in America" (JB's note, *Life* II.207 n. 2; J. H. Ward, *The Life and Times of Bishop White*, 1892, pp. 21, 23, 25).

2. *Ante To Phineas Bond*, 4 Mar. 1773 and n. 3.

To WILLIAM WHITE, 4 March 1773

Johnson's Court, Fleetstreet, London,

Dear Sir:

March 4, 1773

Your kindness for your friends³ accompanies you cross the Atlantick. It was long since observed by Horace, that no ship could leave care behind,⁴ you have [been] attended in you[r] voyage by better powers, by Benevolence and Constancy, and I hope Care did not often show her face in their company.

I received the copy of *Rasselas*.⁵ The impression is not magnificent, but it flatters an Authour, because the Printer seems to have expected that it would be scattered among the People.⁶ The little Book has been well received, and is translated into Italian, French, German, and Dutch.⁷ It has now one honour more by an American Edition.

I know not that much has happened since your departure, that can engage your curiosity. Of all publick transactions the whole world is now informed by the Newspapers. Opposition seems to despond, and the Dissenters though they have taken advantage of unsettled times, and a government much enfeebled, seem not likely to gain any immunities.⁸

3. MS: "friends" altered from "fiends"

4. *neque / decedit aerata triremi et / post equitem sedet atra Cura*: "nor does black Care quit the brass-bound galley and even takes her seat behind the horseman" (Horace, *Odes* III.i.38–40, trans. C. E. Bennett, Loeb ed.).

5. White had mentioned to SJ the existence of "a Philadelphia edition of his *Prince of Abyssina*. He expressed a wish to see it. I promised to send him a copy on my return to Philadelphia, and did so" (Ward, *Bishop White*, p. 23). This edition, published by Robert Bell in 1768, was the first to describe the book on its title page as *The History of Rasselas* (*Works*, Yale ed. xvi.257 and n. 8).

6. Bell "patriotically announced on the title page that his version originated in 'America' and was 'printed for every purchaser'" (*Works*, Yale ed. xvi.257). See R. F. Metzdorf, "The First American *Rasselas* and Its Imprint," *Proceedings of the Bibliographical Society of America* 47, 1953, pp. 374–76.

7. By 1773, *Rasselas* had been translated into four European languages: Dutch (1760), French (1760), German (1762), and Italian (1764). SJ does not mention the Russian version, which appeared in 1764 (*Works*, Yale ed. xvi.254–57).

8. On 22 Feb. a bill instigated by the Dissenting denominations was introduced into the House of Commons. This Dissenters Bill would have removed the requirement that all officeholders must subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. It passed the House of Commons on 25 Mar. but was rejected by the Lords on 2 Apr. (*Journals of the House of Commons* xxxiv, 1772–74, p. 146; *GM* 1773, pp. 197, 478). SJ firmly opposed any relaxation of the requirements.

To WILLIAM WHITE, 4 March 1773

Dr. Goldsmith has a new comedy in rehearsal at Covent garden,⁹ to which the Manager predicts ill success. I hope he will be mistaken. I think it deserves a very kind reception.¹⁰

I shall soon publish a new Edition of my large Dictionary; I have been persuaded to revise it, and have mended some faults, but added little to its usefulness.¹¹

No book has been published since your departure of which much notice is taken. Faction only fills the town with Pamphlets, and greater subjects are forgotten in the noise of discord.

Thus have I written only to tell you how little I have to tell. Of myself I can only add that having been afflicted many weeks with a very troublesome cough, I am now recovered.

I take the liberty which you give me of troubling you with a letter, of which you will please to fill up the direction.¹² I am,
Sir, Your most humble Servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

9. *Ante* To JB, 24 Feb. 1773 and n. 8.

10. George Colman, who preferred "sentimental" to "laughing" comedy, had accepted *She Stoops to Conquer* with considerable reluctance. Convinced that the play would fail, "he refused to buy new costumes or settings" (R. W. Wardle, *Oliver Goldsmith*, 1957, pp. 232–33, 237). However, the comedy proved a great success and ran for seventeen performances that season (*Lond. Stage*, Part IV, iii.1702–34). According to SJ, "I know of no comedy for many years that has so much exhilarated an audience, that has answered so much the great end of comedy—making an audience merry" (*Life* II.233).

11. *Ante* To JB, 24 Feb. 1773 and n. 6.

12. *Post* To William Samuel Johnson, 4 Mar. 1773.

*William Samuel Johnson*¹

THURSDAY 4 MARCH 1773

1. William Samuel Johnson (1727–1819), LL.D., served as agent in London for the Colony of Connecticut, 1766–71. One of Connecticut's first senators, Johnson went on to become the first President of Columbia College (1787). The circumstances of his acquaintance with SJ have not been determined; it is possible that the two men met at Oxford in 1767, when Johnson received his honorary doctorate (Mary Hyde, "Two Distinguished Dr. Johnsons," *Columbia Library Columns* 10, 1961, pp. 4, 10, 6).

To WILLIAM SAMUEL JOHNSON, 4 *March* 1773

MS: Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

ADDRESS: To Dr. Johnson [*added in the hand of William White*] in Stratford, Connecticut.²

POSTMARKS: PHILADELPHIA, NEW YORK, 4 MA, [Undeciphered].

ENDORSEMENT: Dr. Saml. Johnson, Fleet Street, London, March 4th, 1773.

Johnson's Court, Fleetstreet, London,

Sir:

March 4, 1773

Of all those whom the various accidents of life have brought within my notice there is scarce any man whose acquaintance I have more desired to cultivate than yours. I cannot indeed charge you with neglecting me, yet our mutual inclination could never gratify itself with opportunities; the current of the day always bore us away from one another. And now the Atlantick is between us.

Whether you carried away an impression of me as pleasing as that which you left me of yourself, I know not; if you did you have not forgotten me, and will be glad that I do not forget you. Merely to be remembered is indeed a barren pleasure, but it is one of the pleasures which is more sensibly felt, as human Nature is more exalted.

To make you wish that I should have you in my mind, I would be glad to tell you something which you do not know, but all publick affairs are printed; and as you and I had no³ common friends I can tell you no private history.

The Government I think grows stronger, but I am afraid the next general election will be a time of uncommon turbulence, violence, and outrage.⁴

Of Literature no great product has appeared or is expected; the attention of the people has for some years been otherwise employed.

I was told two days ago of a design which must excite some

2. This letter was enclosed in To William White, 4 Mar. 1773.

3. MS: "not" del. before "no"

4. SJ's forebodings proved accurate: the election of Oct. 1774 brought to a head the conflicts between the Ministry and the "patriotic" Opposition, and riots ensued in London. SJ joined the fray by producing the second of his anti-Wilkes political tracts, *The Patriot* (*Works*, Yale ed. x.387).

To WILLIAM SAMUEL JOHNSON, 4 *March* 1773

curiosity. Two ships⁵ are [in] preparation, which are under the command of Captain Constantine Phipps to explore the Northern Ocean, not to seek the Northeast or the Northwest passage, but to sail directly North, as near the pole as they can go. They hope to find an open Ocean, but I suspect it is one mass of perpetual congelation.⁶ I do not much wish well to discoveries, for I am always afraid they will end in conquest and robbery.⁷

I have been out of order this winter but am grown better. Can I ever hope to see you again, or must I be always content to tell you that in another hemisphere I am, Sir, Your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

5. MS: final "s" superimposed upon "w"

6. The Hon. Constantine John Phipps (1744–92), R.N., later (1775) second Baron Mulgrave (peerage of Ireland), M.P. for Lincoln (1768–74), Huntingdon (1776–84), and Newark (1784–90) (Namier and Brooke III.277). From their two ships, the *Racehorse* and the *Carcass*, Phipps and his men were commissioned "to make such observations of every kind as might be useful to navigation, or tend to the promotion of natural knowledge" (Constantine Phipps, *A Voyage towards the North Pole*, 1774, in *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages*, ed. John Pinkerton, 1808, 1.543). Phipps did indeed find the ice north of Spitzbergen impenetrable, and the expedition returned in October.

7. "If there is one aspect of Johnson's political thinking that is clearly defined and that does not vary from his earliest to his latest writings, it is his distrust of the foreign invaders of a land and his sympathy with those who originally occupied it" (D. J. Greene, *The Politics of SJ*, 1960, p. 165).

Hester Thrale

TUESDAY 9 MARCH 1773

ms: Hyde Collection.

Dearest Madam:

Johnson's Court, Fleetstreet,
March 9, 1773

Dr. James called on me last night, deep, I think, in wine.¹ Our dialogue was this

1. In 1779 SJ spoke of Robert James as "a physician who for twenty years was not sober" (*Life* III.389 and n. 2).

To HESTER THRALE, 9 March 1773

—You find the case hopeless.—Quite hopeless.—But I hope you can procure her an easier dismissal out of life.—That, I believe is in our power.²

The rest of his talk was about other things.

If it can give the dear Lady any comfort, be pleased to let her know, that my grief for her is very serious and very deep. If I could be useful as you can be, I would devote myself to her as You must do. But all human help is little, her trust must be in a better Friend.

You will not let me burst in ignorance³ of⁴ your transaction with Alexander.⁵ Surely my heart is with you in your whole System of Life. I am, Dear Madam, Your most humble Servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

I had written this letter before yours came. God bless you all.

2. James was attending Mrs. Salusbury in the final stage of her struggle with breast cancer. He apparently visited Streatham the same night: on 9 Mar. Hester Thrale wrote SJ, “James did come though late . . . he says we must purge her still more briskly” (MS: Rylands Library).

3. “Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell / Why thy canoniz’d bones, hearsed in death, / Have burst their cerements” (*Hamlet* 1.iv.46–48).

4. MS: “of” repeated as catchword

5. In her own copy of *Letters*, 1788, H. L. Piozzi identifies Alexander as “the chymist in Long Acre” (1.74, Trinity College, Cambridge). Thomas Alexander (fl. 1748–90) and a Mr. Eyles had threatened to sue Henry Thrale for fraudulent business dealings. Hester Thrale was acting as intermediary in the dispute (Hester Thrale to SJ, 10 Mar. 1773, MS: Rylands Library; Clifford, 1952, p. 97; *The Piozzi Letters*, ed. E. A. Bloom and L. D. Bloom, 1989, 1.245 n. 3). *Post* To Hester Thrale, 11 Mar. 1773.

Hester Thrale

THURSDAY 11 MARCH 1773

ms: Hyde Collection.

Dear Madam:

March 11, 1773

Your negotiation will probably end as you desire.¹ I wish your

1. *Ante* To Hester Thrale, 9 Mar. 1773 and n. 5. On 10 Mar. she had informed SJ, “Your Advice was precisely right; upon my talking in a higher and more fearless Tone my friend Alexander was much disconcerted” (MS: Rylands Library).

To HESTER THRALE, II *March* 1773

pious offices might have the same success, but death is necessary, and your tenderness will make it less painful.² I am sorry that I can do nothing. The dear Lady has my wishes, and sometimes my prayers. I hope our prayers will be heard for her, and her prayers for herself. I am, Dear Madam, Your most humble servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

2. *Ante* To Hester Thrale, 9 Mar. 1773 and n. 2.

Hester Thrale

FRIDAY 12 MARCH 1773

ms: Hyde Collection.

Dear Madam:

March 12, 1773

The pills certainly help her Stomach. Poor, dear, dear Lady, but if she grows weaker, the pills do not help, so much as the Disease wastes.¹ I am sorry the cough cannot yet mend. That perpetual irritation destroys all tranquillity either of life or death. But I hope nothing has been left to these dreadful moments. Dear Lady, how I now love her.² Does she ever name me?

< >³ if any such design they have. I believe you must leave them for a time to their own res(oluti)ons, and think only on dear Mamma, u(nless) you can spare a moment for, Madam, Your most humble Servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

1. "He [Dr. James] says we must purge her still more briskly, and when I urged her Inability to bear such rough Evacuation he only said that the Disease would weaken her still more than the Pills" (Hester Thrale to SJ, 9 Mar. 1773, ms: Rylands Library).

2. "My mother and he disliked one another extremely. . . . The domestic distresses of the year 1772 reconciled them" (*Johns. Misc.* 1.234–35).

3. ms: mutilated: bottom quarter of sheet missing; jagged tear along left-hand margin

Hester Thrale

MONDAY 15 MARCH 1773

PRINTED SOURCE: Chapman I.311-12.

Dear Madam: March 15, 1773

I am likewise sincerely glad of the prolongation of a life so dear on any terms. Dear, dear Lady. Methinks I should gladly see her again.

When the accumulated matter is discharged that which comes away through open orifices as fast as it is formed, will, I believe, be less fetid.¹

Mr. Hector says, that a poultice of rasped carrots is very powerful to abate any offensive smell.² I think the London Chirurgeons use it.

May the poor Lady's pain and your cares end in happiness. I am, Madam, Your most humble Servant,

SAM. JOHNSON

1. A liquid discharge from the cancerous sore was thought to be one of the effects of purgatives (Robert James, *Medicinal Dictionary*, 1745, [2F1r]; *Ante To Hester Thrale*, 12 Mar. 1773, n. 1).

2. "A poultice of the root of garden carrot has been successfully used to cancerous . . . ulcers, the factor of which it has not failed very speedily to remove, and generally with a great amendment of the state of the sore" (William Lewis, *Materia Medica*, 3d ed., 1784, p. 272).

Hester Thrale

TUESDAY 16 MARCH 1773

PRINTED SOURCE: Chapman I.312.

Dear Madam: March 16, 1773

You are very kind in sending me such punctual accounts, though my solicitude for the dear Lady may almost presume to deserve them. All the advice that I can give is that by all means she allure herself to take nourishment. If the cough ceases, I hope she will be able to sleep, and if she could eat and

To HESTER THRALE, 16 *March* 1773

sleep, we may hope for her continuance among us. I hope to morrow will be a good day.

My Master did not wish my stay, so I soon went away. But we totally forgot Eyles and Alexander as if they were out of Being.¹ Mr. Perkins says that the Customers are much pleased with their beer.² That is good news, and Perkins is always a credible witness. I am, Dear Lady, Your most obedient,

SAM. JOHNSON

1. *Ante* To Hester Thrale, 9 Mar. 1773, n. 5.

2. John Perkins (c. 1730–1812), manager of the Thrale brewery, went on to become a partner after Henry Thrale's death in 1781 (Peter Mathias, *The Brewing Industry in England, 1700–1830*, 1959, pp. 31, 272–73). The success of the beer came as a particular relief, for the previous year's supply had been entirely spoiled by Thrale's misguided attempts to brew without hops (Clifford, 1952, p. 93).

Hester Thrale

WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH 1773

ms: Hyde Collection.

Dear Madam:

March 17, 1773

To tell you that I am sorry both for the poor Lady and for you is useless. I cannot help either of you. The weakness of mind is perhaps only a casual interruption or¹ intermission of the attention, such as we all suffer when some weighty care or urgent calamity has possession of the mind. She will compose herself. She is unwilling to dye, and the first conviction of approaching death raised great perturbation. I think she has but very lately thought death close at hand. She will compose herself to do that as well as she² can, which must at last be done. May she not want the Divine Assistance.

You, Madam, will have a great loss, a greater than is common in the loss of a parent. Fill your mind with hope of her happiness, and turn your thoughts first to Him who gives and takes away in whose presence the Living and Dead are stand-

1. MS: "or" written above "of" del.

2. MS: "she" repeated as catchword