

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

SOME FURTHER LETTERS OF WILLIAM STRAHAN, PRINTER

William Strahan was the most eminent and successful English printer of his day. He was the intimate friend of Samuel Johnson, Edward Gibbon, David Hume, Benjamin Franklin, and other eighteenth century literary and political lights. Dr. Johnson, whose *Dictionary* he printed, called his shop "the greatest printing-house in London." To him, as their printer-publisher, Hume, Robertson, Blackstone, Johnson, Adam Smith and others were indebted for sound business advice. Gibbon, for example, wrote that only five hundred copies of the *Decline and Fall* would have been published had it not been for "the prophetic taste of Mr. Strahan."

Strahan, "being enchanted with the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees," as Dr. Johnson so aptly put it, took the high road to London in 1736. He was then twenty-one years of age. His rise was rapid, his achievements many. In brief, in addition to a large private business, he obtained an interest in the King's Printing and the Law Printing; he was a Master of the Stationers' Company, a member of Parliament, and owner-publisher, in part, of the *Public Advertiser* and the *London Chronicle*. His affluence—for at his death in 1785 he left an estate valued at £95,000—prompted Dr. Johnson to observe that he kept a coach "that was a credit to literature." Franklin delighted in a remark of Strahan's, for he repeated it, "that no two journeymen printers within my knowledge have met with such success in the world as ourselves."

Franklin's correspondence with Strahan began about 1743 and their business relationship developed rapidly into friendship that proved lifelong. In 1744 Franklin wrote, "I have long wanted a friend in London whose judgement I could depend on, to send me from time to time such new pamphlets that are worth reading on any subject (religious controversy excepted) for there is no depending on titles and advertisements. This favour I take the freedom to beg of you." These two canny gentlemen actually contemplated the marriage of

Strahan's son and Franklin's daughter when both were mere children. Their correspondence dealt increasingly with political matters, for Strahan with a wide acquaintance was able to keep Franklin posted upon the devious political currents of London. In 1764 Franklin wrote, "You cannot conceive the satisfaction and pleasure you give your friends here by your political letters. Nothing is wanting to give us a more perfect knowledge of your public affairs. . . . If I were King (which God in mercy to us all prevent) I should certainly make you the historiographer of my reign." Governor William Franklin in 1769 wrote in a like vein: "Your Letters of political Intelligence, which Mr. Hall generally publishes in his Paper, afford us, from time to time, the best Information we receive of what is doing in Parliament."

David Hall, who became partner in Franklin's printing business in 1748, was a devoted friend of Strahan's. Their intimacy, which began when the two were printer's devils in Edinburgh, was severed only at Hall's death in 1772. Indeed Strahan's first correspondence with Franklin had to do with recommending Hall as a first-class journeyman printer to the latter. So successful was Hall that in 1766, with the retirement of Franklin from the partnership, he became sole owner of the business and, with it, of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Strahan aided Hall in several ways; he acted as his purchasing agent in London, he chose him as sole agent for his publications in the colonies, and, of great historical importance, he sent him at frequent intervals for many years an intimate resumé of political happenings in London which Hall utilized for the columns of the *Gazette*. "Dear Davie," to Strahan's lasting disappointment, never returned to London; indeed Hall himself could echo Strahan's boast that he, too, was "upon a very desirable Footing with many of the greatest Names here."

Strahan's correspondence has never been assembled; consequently no biography of him can be written.* From widely scattered sources,

* The most scholarly account of Strahan's activities is that of R. A. Austen Leigh: "William Strahan and his Ledgers," published in the *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society: The Library*, 4th ser., III (1923). Additional notices may be found in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and in *The Letters of David Hume to William Strahan*, edited by G. Birbeck Hill, 1888. The letters published in this magazine are to be found in Vols. X-XIII, *passim*.

from time to time, have appeared portions of his remarkable correspondence. To this magazine belongs the credit for having published the largest number of letters written by Strahan. A number of Strahan's letters are printed as footnotes in *The Letters of David Hume to William Strahan*, edited by G. Birbeck Hill, and published in 1888. They deal principally with Strahan's career as a printer-publisher. Miscellaneous and incidental letters cannot be mentioned here. It is interesting to note that there are allusions to Strahan in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Gibbon's *Memoir*, Walpole's *Letters*, and Franklin's *Life and Writings*. An enterprising American bookseller in 1905 printed a series—quite incomplete, however—of *Letters of Dr. Benjamin Franklin and William Franklin to William Strahan*, part of the sale of the Governor Samuel W. Pennypacker Library.

The editor of the Strahan-Hall correspondence published in volumes X–XII of this journal observed that those letters (1763–1777) which were presented to the Society by Dr. John J. Sinnickson comprised almost all the letters in the Strahan-Hall series. Through the courtesy of Mr. Andrew Sinnickson Grey the remaining letters in the original Sinnickson Collection are now published. The Librarian of the Society has contributed a number of Strahan letters, hitherto unpublished, which were found among the Society's collections. These documents (*post*) show that the Strahan-Hall exchanges began at least as early as 1750, thus revealing a serious hiatus, principally during the years 1753–1762. Needless to say they provide significant materials for the student of American printing and publishing, and in the broad field of the transit of civilization. Taken in conjunction with the Strahan correspondence previously published in this journal, it is a fair claim to state that here is a corpus of political intelligence which no serious student of the causes of the American Revolution can afford to neglect.

The singularly valuable letter dated October 7, 1769, is in the William L. Clements Library at Ann Arbor, Michigan, and is reproduced here through the courtesy of the Director, Dr. Randolph G. Adams.

Princeton University

J. E. POMFRET

TO DAVID HALL

London February 13. 1750/1.

Dear Davie

Since my last to you of August 31. and Sep^r. 14. I have received yours of July 27. by Capt. Slupart, which was chiefly a Duplicate of yours of July 7. It inclosed 3 Bills, one of £45. one of £10. and another of £20. in all £75. which are all paid and placed to your Credit.

I have also yours of August 18. Capt. North, inclosing two Bills, one of £15 and the other of £20. which are also paid and placed to your Credit.

Yours also of Sep^t. 27. by Capt. Auchterlony is come to hand, inclosing a Bill for £60. which I have likewise given you Credit for. In that Letter you advise me of the Arrival of Budden. The Vocabularies are wrong charged. They should be only 10^s p Doz. I have credit you for 10^s the Difference in the 5 Doz. I have had no Remittance yet from M^r Smith of Antigua, nor heard from him this 18 Months; but I find he deals with another Bookseller here, from whom he has had several Parcels of Books since he had any from me, and actually paid him for two of them. This is very strange Usage; for surely I had a Right, at least, to be *first* paid. What he can say for himself I cant divine, but I have wrote to him three Months ago, acquainting him with what I have heard, and desiring he would write to me.

This Letter also brings the Melancholy News of the Loss of your eldest Daughter, in which my Wife and I most sincerely sympathise with you and M^{rs}. Hall. Your Loss to be sure is very cutting. But as you are not now to learn that we hold all our earthly Comforts by a most precarious Tenure, I hope that after having *felt* it like a Man, you will be enabled to *bear* it like one, and trust in the Giver of all Things that he will either repair this Breach in your Family, or dispose you patiently to submit to it.

I have wrote to M^r Watkins several times to ship your Bibles by the first Ship for Boston; but have hitherto had no advice from him that they are yet actually shipt.

I have yours also of Oct^r. 16. by Capt. Richie, which as it is only a Duplicate of your former of Sep^r. 27. is answered in the last Paragraphs.

I next had yours of Oct^r. 31. by Capt. Flint, inclosing a Bill for £60. out of which I paid Bloss and Johnson £30:16:0 and have given you Credit for £29:4:0 as you desired.

I am favoured also with yours of Nov 21. by Capt. Budden acknowledging the Receipt of mine by Mesnard, and inclosing two Bills, Value £30:12:4 which are also placed to your Credit. I have credit your Account also for £42:12: the Amount of the Letter, and transferred it to M^r F.'s Account. I am very much obliged to you for remembring my Affair with J. Read. He has wrote me indeed, but nothing to the Purpose, as you will see (a Copy of it being inclosed). I do not find I am a whit nearer my Money than ever; nor do I know what to do in it. Pray can you advise me? It is very hard I should lie out of so much Money for so many Years; and very Strange, that in all this time he has not been able to pay it, or any part of it. I wish some Method could be fallen upon to get him

to discharge it by periodical Payments, if they were ever so small. In short, what makes me more uneasy about it than I should otherwise be, is that I do not like his Character nor Management; for when a Man is disposed to make People his Enemies, no wonder if he finds it difficult to succeed in the World. If you could therefore hit upon any Scheme to put an End to this disagreeable Affair, you would do me a most acceptable Piece of Service. And if you can, I am sure you will. For which Reason I will trouble you no more, at present, upon this disagreeable Subject.

You will no doubt hear by this Ship (if you have not heard it before) that Elias Bland has broke some time ago for an immense Sum! no less than Fifty five thousand Pounds. He has, he says, Debts owing him to the same Amount. But as he had little or nothing to begin with, his launching out to such an exorbitant Depth is considered as a very high Act of Imprudence, tho' I believe he is intentionally a very honest Man. He owes me above £150 and it is not supposed he will (notwithstanding what he says) be able to pay above 15 Shillings in the Pound, and that not in less than four Years—So that must turn out a bad Job for me.

As you have no Prospect of selling the Statutes at large, send them back by the first Opportunity, and I will get them exchanged for such other Law Books as you want upon the best Terms possible

Lastly, I have received yours of Dec^r. 6. by Mesnard, inclosing a Bill for £100 half of which is paid to M^r Bloss, and the other placed to your Acc^t. All which Payments (which you have made with the utmost Punctuality) you will see at one View by the inclosed Duplicate of our Acc^t. to this Day as it stands in my Book.

With this comes all you have hitherto wrote for, a very few Things excepted, which are out of print at present, amounting to £133:12:3 which I hope you will find right.

And now, I think, I have nothing further to say of Business. I hope your little Girl will either escape the Small Pox, or get well over them, and that I shall soon hear of your having a pretty Boy too; for indeed, I look upon Children as no inconsiderable Part of our Comforts here: All your old Friends are in their Ordinary, and remember you affectionately. My family are all in perfect Health (except two of the Children ill of the Hooping-Cough, which is now almost gone) and above Stairs we are exceedingly busy. Four or five Presses constantly; and could get almost twice as much, had I Room and Hands to do it. You see how times have altered with [me]. My House is exceedingly commodious; and in short I have every thing almost to my Wish. Old M^{rs}. Elphinston died last Sep^r. She was bedrid for Several Years; so that her Death was indeed a Deliverance to her. My Wife writes to M^{rs} Hall. Remember me most kindly to her. I wish some Scheme could be fallen upon to bring you nearer me. Mean while I am with unalterable Regard and Esteem

Dear Davie

Your affectionate Friend & Servant

WILL: STRAHAN

P. S. Dear Davie, I cannot he[lp] being concerned at the small Prospect there is, at present, of our meeting again in Britain. To be sure it is a difficult thing to get into a way of Living in this world, and therefore when once one is fixed, it is generally highly imprudent to attempt any Alteration. This I think fit to premise to what I am going to say, which is this: I have for some time past perceived with Pleasure, that the Printing Trade grows daily better in this Place, and that the Increase of Business would really bear an Increase of Masters. I have then thought how comfortable it would be for us both, if you were settled here. This Hint I give, that if you think of coming over to Britain (tho' ever so remotely) you may let me know, that I may give a Look out for some agreeable Settlement for you, which I by no means think impracticable. And I assure you, I would prefer the having you upon the Spot, to any Adva[n]tage that could possibly attend our Separation. This perhaps, you will look upon as one of my flights; but believe me I am in good Earnest, and have really had it in my Thoughts for two Years past, during which time I have never once had occasion to alter my Opinion of it. Let me therefore recommend it to your serious Consideration. Adieu.

TO DAVID HALL

Edin^r. July 27 1751

Dear Davie

Since my last of may 25 by Mesnard, I have rec^d. yours of March 28 by Cap^t Stamper, inclosing a Bill of £30 on Mess^{rs} Hanbury & another of £79—on M^r. Colombe, both which are accepted & plac'd to your Credit as you'll see by the inclosed acco^t Curr^t. between us. I have also yours of May 3 by Cap^t Lee to the same purport; and an Order for some books in both, which are herewith sent you. I hope Watkins's bibles have reach'd you long 'ere now, and turn out well. My wife was safely deliverd of a Daughter on the 6 of June Named after herself and both are quite well. you see my Family encreases apace & they are all hopefull Children.

I had also yours of May 25 by Cap^t Rankin just as I left London informing me of the Arrival of Smith, As also of mine by the Beulah. I had also a letter from M^r. Read which I've sent for your Perusall and must say I think him a very Strange man. I never said any thing of him to any body that I wou'd not have said to his face, nor indeed any thing more than what I wrote to himself; Nay I question if ever I said so much to any body. if you'll be so good you may tell him I care not for Answering his Ironical Lett^{rs}., but when he condescends to write seriously and like a Gentleman, he may depend on an answer, which if he has a mind to think reasonably and Calmly, will give him satisfaction. Mean time I cannot help thinking I've the greatest reason to Complain; but as he threatens me very hard with discharging all acco^t & Obligations soon I shall say no more about it. I have a few days ago rec^d. a £50 Bill from M^r. Smith of Antigua & wrote to him And M^r. Carters Books & types were all Shipt long ago on board Cap^t Deane it was Caslons fault alone that he was in any degree disapointed: And as he appears to be a very Honest fellow I shall be very particularly Attentive to his intrest for the future; so that you shall have no farther Complaints

from that quarter. And I return you a thousand thanks for your kind and Friendly Caution and Advice which is a particular confirmation of that Sincere & Honest disposition I always discoverd & experienced in you. I've rec^d. Just now yours of April 16 by M^r Miclwane which it seems he left with M^r. Daniels, but the letter of Business you mention to have put in the Cap^t. Bag has not yett reachd me. However, whatever it is I've left directions at Home that whatever you write for during my Absence shall be sent by the 1st opp^{ty} and if any Mistake should be committed it shall be rectified on my Return.

The Bearer of this M^r. Walter Sterling I would recommend to your Friendship during his Stay with you, in the most Particular manner. When I tell you, there is no man in Great Britain I more value or have a Higher Esteem for, from a long Intimacy and Close intercourse of Friendly Offices; I imagine it wou'd be needless for me to use a multitude of words to enforce my request; I shall therefore say no more but leave you to discover what a Valuable man he is, and how worthy he is of your regard which you'll soon be able to do. He comes over about settling some concerns he has in your Country; the particulars of which I leave to himself to communicate to you upon his Arrival.

It remains now that I shou'd relieve you from the surprise you will be under at seeing a letter from me dated from this Place, the Reason in Short is this, M^r Hitch and a Friend of His wanting to see Scotl^d pressed me most immoderately to Acom^y them and he having lately done me several Oblidging good Offices, it was not in my Power to refuse him; M^r Sterling will tell you the particulars; However I left my Business in good Order under the inspection of M^r Hamilton who is prodigious carefull I left London the 7 of this month, have been here just a week & in a week more shall sett out on my return by Sterling Glasgow Carlisle &c^a so that I shall be absent about two months. My being thus dissapated is by no means Agreeable to me, but at present there is no Help for it and therefore endeavour to make it as tolerable as I can; we meet with a very Friendly reception everywhere, are intertaind by the best of People, and see every thing that is to [be seen ?] M^r Elphinston is lately married here to a very Agreeable pretty sort of Girl with whom he had some money & has a House of his Own in Black fryars Wynd. All your Friends that I know of are dead except some of the Geds & Freebairns; so that this wou'd be a Strange place to you as indeed it is to me; tho' I know a good many People in it. I leave my Wife to add any thing which she may find necessary as she is left at Home, and only add that I am with my Compliments to M^r. Franklin & your Wife Your Affectionate Friend &c^a
Endorsed: Copy of the Original by Cap^t Sterling

TO DAVID HALL

[July, 1751]

Dear Davie

I herewith inclose the Invoice and Bill of Lading for your last Order in which I think I have forgot nothing, unless the Copper-plate Slips, and the Monthly Review Vol^s. 30, 31, 32, 33, which I shall send next Opportunity. I have included the Printing Letter, Printing Ink, and Magazines sent since my last Invoice, and as far as I can recollect have omitted nothing, tho' I cannot be cer-

tain. You will set me right if you discover any thing wrong. I have ventured to send you a pretty little Assortment of Pockett Books and Etwees, without Order, which being priced very low I dare say will find a ready Sale. I have likewise, (in order to serve a worthy Young Friend of mine) sent you a few low-priced Silver Watches, with some Watch Springs. I know not whether it will suit you to dispose of them yourself, or whether you will be obliged to sell them to a Watchmaker with you. You will best know that : But if you can dispose of them at the Prices put upon them, which the Maker tells me are very low, I shall be very well satisfied. If not, both them and the Pockett. Books are far from being bulky, and may be returned without much Charge. I mention this (tho' I hope there will be no Occasion for it) that you may not think I want to incommode you in the least, or expect any Returns for them, until you have actually disposed of them ; which I hope you will not only be able to do but likewise have occasion to order more of both Articles.

Yesterday I received yours of the 31st. March both by the Hamet Packett, and via Dublin by Capt. Bowes, inclosing a Bill on Nesbitt, Drummond and Franks for £295. which I doubt not will be accepted ; and herewith I send you a Copy of our Account Current, including that Bill, as it stands in my Books, balanced up to this Day, which agrees entirely with yours as far as it goes ; so that hitherto there is no Mistake, that I know of, on either Side except that I have omitted 10/9 Postage of Letters to Mess^{rs}. Whitehuld and Romaine, which I shall carry over to next Account. Upon the face of it, it is impossible to help observing how exceedingly punctual you are, and indeed have always been, in your Remittances : insomuch that for ought I know, you have not your equal on your Side the Ocean. If the Generality of Dealers were possessed of half your Integrity, it would be happier for themselves and those they are connected with. Most cordially do I repeat my Thanks to you upon this Account.

You will observe that by Mistake the February Mag's have been sent you twice by W^m Nicol, which you will return by the first convenient Occasion. They are only charged to you once. Fordyce's Sermons to Young Women sell much here. They are really well written. The Character of Isabella, (Vol 2^d. page 289.) was taken from my poor Rachel ; with whom he was intimately acquainted ; from whence you may see what Reason I and all that were concerned in her have to regret her Loss.

I am truly sorry to find by Your Last Letter, that you run some Risque of losing the Assembly's Business, which, as it was handsomely paid for, must be of real Detriment to you. This is the natural Consequence, however, of setting up another Printer from Party Motives. Those who encouraged him to settle with you, and who may perhaps be personally interested in his Success, will of course leave no Stone unturned to serve him, and promote his Interest, and this without regard to, or ill-will against, any other Printer. From the Success of his Paper I think you have nothing to apprehend ; but the Depriving you of the Publick Business will be a Loss indeed ; which yet nevertheless as Matters now stand, you cannot possibly prevent perhaps. Upon this Subject I have little to add to what I said in my last ; but that I am wholly ignorant of the Provocation they

had to set up a new Paper with you (for I find it has been intended for some time past) for that you refused to do equal Justice to both Parties in your Paper I cannot believe: And yet I find this is the Reason they assign; nothing on the *popular* Side of the Question being for many Years past admitted by you, without the utmost Difficulty; and most frequently absolutely refused; which laid that Party under an invincible Necessity of setting up another public Paper. It is peculiarly unlucky that G——r F. and his father are so deeply engaged in a different System of Politics, from what you seem to lean to, otherwise I think nothing could have induc'd either of them to have afforded the least Countenance or Protection to any Person in Opposition to your Interest, as you have so long been so intimately connected together, to your mutual Satisfaction; a Satisfaction which D^r. Fr. never fails to express to me upon all Occasions. What Pity it is, that your Party Disputes should exist so long, and are still likely to last much longer. I think they might be adjusted without much Difficulty; Nay, I look upon them as so very clear, that I am vain enough to imagine that were they referred to me, I could undertake to settle them to the Contentment of both Sides, on Penalty, in case of Failure, of being hanged up upon the next Sign. Post. But I am, at the same time sensible that People at [a] Distance from the Scene of Dispute, must necessarily be very incompetent Judges.

I had a Letter from M^r Clement Biddle some little time ago inclosing a Bill of Exchange; with an Order for a few Books (amounting to £41) for the Union Library Company, which I have sent by this Ship. I did not know they were used to have their Books by you, till I received y^{rs} yesterday, tho' I might have recollected you had formerly mentioned that Society in one your former Orders, which I chanced to cast my Eye upon just now. By what Means they came to apply to me I know not, for I desire not to deal with any other Person in America except yourself. They are sent to M^r Biddle in one Trunk, in which there is a small Parcel for you, which I desired him to deliver as soon as it arrived, containing 8 Monthly Review Vol. 35th and 6 Tales of the Genii, 2 vol. both belonging to your Order, which you will enquire after, in case they are not sent you. My Letter was sent off two Days ago, else I had declined their future Orders, on account of their being your Customers. But, if you please, you may shew them what I say upon this Head. My Politics (which shall always be *only* sent to you) you have in a separate Letter. We are all [pure] well here. I am thinking of taking a Trip to Scotland next July along with my Wife and Peggy. Whether I shall be able to make it out I cannot yet say. Our best Loves and Respects to M^{rs}. Hall and the Children I remain unalterably

Dear Davie

Yours most affectionately

WILL: STRAHAN

TO DAVID HALL

[circa 1752]

Dear Davie

My last to you was dated Febry 6. since which I have been favoured with yours of Dec^r. 15. and January 16. viâ New York, inclosing a Bill of £150 which

is accepted and placed to your Credit; containing also some additions to the Order sent by Mesnard, which are herewith sent amounting to £223:15:2

I have also yours of Feby 4. by M^e Ilrooney inclosing five Bills to the Value of £123. which are all accepted save one of £13 on Will: Bodgani Esq^r. which will nevertheless be paid, I doubt not, either by him, or M^r Bland, when due. I am indeed greatly obliged to you for your speedy Remittances, which I should be much to blame not to acknowledge. I am also singularly bound to you for your Offer to J. Read concerning my Account. You may perceive by my last Letter to him how painful it has been to me to drop Correspondence with him; but I am now hopeful that thro' your good Offices, and good Advice, he will be put in a Way to discharge my Debt soon, which you'll please observe to him (including 6^s 7^d for Charges on Ainsworth's Dictionary sent to M^r F.) amounts to £132.3.1. and is now of *Six Years* standing, for which if he allows me not Interest, he must be sensible that even after the Principal is paid, I must be a considerable Loser by him.

I have also yours of Feby 16 by the Crown Capt James, to the same Purport with the former, and inclosing Duplicates of the Bills sent before. I thought I had sent some of the first Vols of Clarissa as they were published, else had sent complete Setts before; but shall for the future be more careful of sending all new Books. And as to Ink Powder, and any thing else you may want which came so dear before, I have now got into the best Method of buying them, and can supply you at the lowest Rate.

I have also yours of March 2. by Capt. Young inclosing the first Copies of a Bill of £45 and another of £10. both which are accepted and placed to your Credit.

Yours also of March 13. by Captain Muir is just come to hand, inclosing the first Copy of a Bill for £34. If any Charges are incurred worth mentioning, by the Bills on the Out ports, shall let you know. But in the mean while you need make manner of Apology for sending whatever Bills you can most easily purchase. I am only afraid your great Anxiety to be, I think *over punctual* in remitting, may be an Inconvenience to you, which I should be very sorry for, and which you know it would give me great Pain if I thought was the Case.

I take it very kindly your mentioning the Difference you have observed between M^r Hitch's Prices and mine. I cannot indeed say how that happens; but I assure you, as I told you in my last, that you shall have every thing at the cheapest Rate

I have transmitted your Letters to Adrian Watkins, have told him my Opinion of you, and for his additional Security have engaged for the Payment of whatever he may send you. I have not yet received his answer.

The Price of Psalters is £3 p Gross ready Money at Stationers Hall, at which Rate you shall have as many as you please; and Spelling-books at various Prices from 5^s. p Doz. (of which Price I have sent you 12 of Several) to 9^s. When you write for any you shall have them at the lowest; I have sent also all that I could get which could be comprehended in your Schoolmaster's Order You have here [the remainder of the manuscript is missing]

TO DAVID HALL

London August 26. 1752.

Dear Davie

I have now before me yours of June 20th. by Rogers and Mesnard, inclosing a Bill on Christopher Kilby Esq^r. for £50, which is not accepted, tho' it may perhaps be paid when it becomes due, of which you shall hear further in my next. I find there is a particular Account transmitted of your damaged Goods among the rest in the Beulah. When the Insurers have settld it, I shall receive your proportion and give you credit for it

As to what you write about M^r Chew's Prices of Books from M^r Shuckburgh, I really don't know what to say, nor can I devine from what Motive, or by what means he is induced to sell him so much under the known Retale Price here. Pare Williams may easily be accounted for, as Tho^s. Osborne of Gray's Inn, whose sole Property it is, sells them sometimes cheaper sometimes dearer, just as he happens to want Money, and often just as the Whim takes him; but that M^r Chew should have some Books cheaper and all as cheap as you have from me, I own surprises me. Nor can I say any thing to it but this, that I have taken all due pains, and have now sufficient Experience, so that I am sure I neither am, nor am liable to be imposed on my self; and am no ways inclined to impose upon you; that I have seen the Invoices of most Booksellers here to their Correspondents in America, which exactly agree with mine, and to any of which that you may be able to procure, I dare freely appeal; that there must be something particular in M^r Chew's Case, or else he could never be served with Books at so great a Distance so much cheaper than every Gentleman pays in Ready Money upon the Spot. This is certainly very plain. As to Books formerly charged 2/6 that are now charged 2/9. I have looked over all your Invoices, and can find no one Instance of it, and I am persuaded if you will look once more, you will find you are mistaken. However, I shall pay all due Regard to this Hint, and be more and more assiduous in serving you in the best Manner. I am sure it is my Inclination to do you at least Justice in every thing.

Inclosed is the Invoice of what you last wrote for, amounting to £72:7:0. I do not recollect to have omitted any thing, but the 4 Dozen Weak Ink, which is also sent, and Charged below. I have wrote you separately concerning the Books from Scotland (By the bye I have heard nothing from Watkins yet) to which I would add that if amongst the Books I have from time to time sent you without order, there are any which yet stick on hand, I would have you ship them on board Captain Stirling, and give him the best Directions you can how to sell them in Jamaica, and failing that to return them to me; for I would have nothing of that kind to lie as an Incumbrance upon you, as it would be highly unreasonable between Man and Man, much more between one Friend and another.

M^r Stirling, poor Man, has been greatly unfortunate, and I have had my Share in his Misfortunes; for about a Year and a half ago I lent him £300 (and indeed borrowed to lend him) for which I must now accept of a Crown in the Pound, amongst the rest of his Creditors. This is a considerable Pull back to me, which I little dreamt of, as I thought him as safe as the Bank. And yet I impeach

not his Honesty in the least, tho' I think I have some Reason to arraign his Prudence. I shall never mention what you injoin me to keep secret about the Money you lent him; but it was the first Thing almost which he told me upon his Arrival, as well as your other Civilities to him, of which I shall only say that they are like yourself. The Race, you see, is not always to the Swift; for he came out of Scotland five or six Years ago with a fortune of clear £2400 (which is not the Case of many Scots Men;) and yet you see how soon its squandered by the Ignorance and Folly of those he has been unhappily connected with. He has given up his All, which amounts only to 5^s. in the Pound, as I told you before: And what he will do next I own I am at a Loss to conjecture. I assure you I am more concerned for him than myself; tho' the Loss of so considerable a Sum is a very serious Matter with me.

But to turn from so melancholy a Subject—Pray how's a' wi you? How does my Son Billie do? How goes every Thing that concerns you? And how does the Good Wife? Lord, what a pleasant Day should we have, were we met in Britain! The very Thought of it almost fuddles me. The Accounts M^r Stirling gave me of your prosperous Business, but above all of the Esteem you were held in by all who knew you, gave me a Pleasure not to be described, and was a Cordial to my very Heart. Heigh, Man, I partake of your Good Fortune, by hearing of it, tho' at so great a Distance. And yet as poor Jack Stilton used to say, the Sea that runs up to Philadelphia also runs up the River Thames. O how keenly I can feel for those I have a Regard for! whether happy, or the Reverse. As for myself, notwithstanding, several Rubs I have of late Years met with, I am doing wondrous well. My Business encreases so fast, that in this large House I am already cramped for Room, and must verily very soon have another added to it, and have fixed my Eye on the adjoining one. I don't tell you this out of Vanity, but that you may rejoice with me. In short, notwithstanding my large and encreasing Family, I shall by and bye have enough for us both, and then I shall send a Mandamus for you to return home; whereof I give you this timely Information, that you may have it in your Eye, and regulate your Affairs accordingly. Remember me most kindly to your Spouse and all your Family, and Connexions. Particularly to M^r Franklin and his. I received a Letter from M^r Read by M^r Stirling, which was very genteely wrote. To this I have returned the inclosed Answer, which I desire you would shew M^r F. and read yourself, and then seal it, and send it him, without letting him know you have seen it. I am hopeful he is now of a better Way of thinking than he has been for some time past. Nay, I would charitably hope that I have thought worse of him than he deserves: for you know straitned Circumstances often drives a Person to do what otherwise their Soul abhors. Of this I have known several Instances.

You will now think I am never like to be done; nor should I for a great while yet, were I to unfold my Heart to you, and tell you, or rather to transcribe from thence, what is there indelibly written to your Advantage. But I will content myself at present with barely assuring you, in common form, that I am

Dear Davie's affectionate Friend and Servant

WILL: STRAHAN

TO JAMES READ

Dear Sir

I am favoured with yours of the 15th of October and Dec^r. and am extremely glad to hear from you that the Clouds of Affliction are beginning to dissipate, and I give you Joy. I hope you have not been so long a Disciple in the School of Adversity without profiting a good deal; for there many useful Lessons may be learnt which may be of notable Service in our Conduct through Life. Indeed it shall always give me Pleasure to hear of your Success and Happiness; and that you improve the present favourable Disposition of Affairs to your lasting Advantage and the Satisfaction of all who wish you well.

I give you hearty Thanks for the friendly Manner in which you express yourself with respect to me. As I have no doubt of your Sincerity, I must place it to the Account of your Partiality for me that you talk of me in a way, which I am afraid very few Deserve. But however short I may fall of the Character you give me, I shall always endeavour to mean well, as I am persuaded honest M^r Whitefield does, and always did. I am pleased to hear he is so cordially received among you.

As to what you promise respecting the Discharge of my Debt, I dare say you will be as good as your Word, and I depend upon it. The Supply will come very seasonably; for the Encrease of my Business, and my building an additional House, the Consequence of it, has drained me of Money to a Degree, that often makes the Wheels of Business drag heavily, and render irksome what I otherwise take pleasure in.

I should oftener write you, but that some how or other my time is so filled up that I can scarcely find enough to dispatch my necessary Affairs. But my good will towards you is nothing theless. I hope your Wife and Family are well. As to what concerns mine, your honest worthy Friend David can inform you, whom you now know, by long Experience, to be an Israelite indeed: And I would earnestly recommend it to you, in general, to take his Advice and follow his Example, because I know he wishes you well. I am persuaded good Oeconomy and a perseverance in Industry will raise you above all your Difficulties, which that you may quickly get the better of, is my sincere Wish, not less for your own Sake than for that of

Dear Sir

Your affectionate Friend and Ser^t.

London March 3. 1755.

WILL: STRAHAN

TO DAVID HALL

London June 26. 1756.

Dear Davie

I wrote you the 3^d Instant by Cap^t. French, and therein acknowledged the Receipt of yours of March 3^d and 4th with a Bill on Thomlinson for £100 which shall be paid to Job Johnson, and his Account settled and discharged, as soon as he comes to town, for he is now in the Country.

I have since received yours of April 23^d by Cap^t. Rankin, inclosing 3 Bills, amounting to £250, which are all accepted and placed to your Credit. The Account you have transmitted agrees with that which I sent you by Reeve, excepting two small Articles in your Favour, one of 13^{sh}/6^d, the other of 10^s. as you will see on comparing them. No times, I perceive, however troublesome or distracted, prevent you from remitting with your usual Punctuality, which tho' particularly seasonable to me at this Juncture, I should be extremely sorry if I thought it was attended with any Inconvenience to yourself. I shall write to you again by next Ship to Philadelphia, which, they say, will sail soon; and hope to send you therewith the Flowers, &c. from Caslon, as mentioned in my last. By the Gazette of this Night you'll see our last Accounts from Mahon, which are not so favourable as we could wish, occasioned, as is supposed, by the Cowardice of Admiral Byng; and yet I hope the French will not be able, after all, to take that place. You'll also see the French King's Declaration of War, which is really a very poor Performance. We are in hopes to have good News from America, as the Summer advances. God grant it: And that the Disturbances in your Country may be speedily composed. Remember me affectionately to M^{rs} Hall and the Young ones; I hope they are quite recovered of that troublesome Distemper. My kind Service to M^r Franklin and his Fireside. I long to hear from him. My Wife is now in the Country for the Establishment of her Health; and all the Children are bravely. I am, as ever Dear Davie

Most sincerely Yours

WILL: STRAHAN

TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Dear Sir

I had the favour of yours of June 28th from New York last Friday. Next Morning I set out for Salisbury, where I had a little Business, & yesterday came from thence to this Place, where my Wife has been these Six Weeks for her health, & I thank God not without Effect, for I found her greatly recruited. Here I propose to stay a few days, & leave her some Weeks longer, as the Waters agree so well with her. In the mean time, as there are two Ships to sail next Week for Philadelphia I take the first Opportunity of writing to you, & telling you all the News that at present occurs to me, that you may receive all the Satisfaction that is in my power to give you.

You have seen, in general, by the Public Papers, what a Cry is raised against the Peace, & how unpopular it has rendered Lord Bute. I wish I cou'd say, that making this Peace was Lord B's only fault, for I agree with you in thinking it a very good one. But I am sorry to tell you, that my Countryman has shewn himself altogether unequal to his high Station. Never did a Ministry, in our Memory, discover so much Weakness. They seem to have neither Spirit, Courage, Sense, nor Activity, and are a Rope of Sand. Of course the essential Interests of the Nation are neglected. Lord Bute, with even an enthusiastic Desire to promote the Glory & Prosperity of this Country, can never more take the Lead.

He continues to see nobody, & seems vastly pleased that he has shaken off that Burden to which his Shoulders was so unequal. But that he had any Intention of giving up, to my Certain Knowledge is not true, tho' it was given out by his Friends: and the last Speech he made in the House of Peers, which I heard, demonstrated beyond all doubt, that he had then no Thoughts of Resigning. But that Speech appears since to have proceeded from Pride, & not from true Strength of Mind, in which he is, it seems, remarkably deficient, being subject to a very great Inequality of Spirits. From all this you may easily conceive, we are in a very unaccountable & untoward Situation. Here is a Young, virtuous *British* King, who can have no Interest separate from that of his People, & who, tho' not possessed of any striking Talents, or any great Degree of Sagacity, yet having much Good Nature, & a Disposition to please, rendered, in the beginning of his Reign, singularly unpopular; and a Minister, hating Corruption, abhorring Hypocrisy, and having the Prosperity of his Country really at heart, the Object of universal Disgust. If you ask me how this comes about? The Reason is obvious. The Number of Places, & of Candidates for them, are very unequal. of course, it requires great knowledge of Men in the Minister of this Country, to balance Parties, & keep things quiet. Of this Knowledge Lord Bute is totally destitute, & was his temper suitable; which it is not, it is too late for him to learn. This Ignorance of the world, with a Timidity altogether inexcusable, has encouraged the Opposition to go lengths hitherto unprecedented. You see with what a high hand M^r Pitt carries it with his Constituents, for presuming to differ from him their Representative, in regard to the Peace. Did you ever before hear of such an Instance of Arrogance? And what are we to expect, think you, if we again come under the Dominion of the imperious Tribune of the People. His Clodius Wilkes, the most profligate of Men, is in high Spirits since the Trial of the Messengers, which I was not present at. I expected no pleasure from that Transaction, having no desire to be a Witness of that Incendiary's temporary Triumph. In this Light only I considered it, for as to the liberty of the Press, I never thought it in any Danger, but from it's too great Licentiousness. The Judge acted throughout the whole of these Trials, with a Partiality which I little expected from one of his Ability & Integrity. He is carried away with the popularity this behaviour brings him; but I am much mistaken if he will not some time hence, be ashamed of the Part he has taken on this Occasion. The Damages given by the Jury were enormous, & seem intended to mark in the strongest Manner their Contempt of the Government.

The Opening of next Session of Parliament will certainly be attended with much Confusion and Embarrassment, & during the Convulsion, the Power will devolve into some other hands; probably into M^r Pitts, if some other Leader, whom we do not now dream of, does not start up. But I believe you will agree with me in thinking it extremely dangerous to the Interest of this Country, to have M^r Pitt, or any one Person, trusted with so unbounded a Sway, as coming in in this manner must necessarily give him; more especially Pitt, of whose honesty I entertain no good Opinion, & whom I strongly suspect to be a secret Abettor & Fomenter of the present unreasonable Discontents, & of that Con-

tempt with which the King & his Government hath of late been treated. The Opposition are very busy gathering their Strength together & are really formidable. On Behalf of the Ministry, if it may be called one, which is entirely without form, nothing is going forward. They seem to console themselves with the Distance of the danger, & I suppose do not mean to stand their ground. In this Situation, are you not under some Apprehensions for the King, unless some able & honest Men step forth, in the critical moment, & rescue him from the Jaws of Faction? In my mind the danger is greater than most People seem to apprehend; and I wish from my heart something may interpose to divert the Storm. Unhappily for us, as well as for himself, his Majesty discovers no Talents that give us Room to hope he will ever make a shining Figure, or be able long to preserve his own Independency, amidst contending Factions, & 'tis a great Pity; for nobody can possibly mean better. To give you a Trait by the bye, of the Sagacity of Lord Bute in regard to him. T'other day, I was at Mr Adam's the Architect, when he shewed me his Dedication to the King to be prefixed to his Ruins of *Dioclesian's Palace*, in which he praises his Majesty for his Knowledge in the art of drawing. To this I objected as a Fact very improper to tell the World, since a Prince ought certainly to be better employ'd, than in such trifling Amusements But I was told both the King & Lord Bute had already seen it, & highly approved of it, as expression of just praise without Flattery. Such are the Effects of a Prince being educated, under a Man who is himself ignorant of the World. Lord Bute's Brother Mr Stewart Mackenzie is Viceroy of Scotland, & is at present there: He too is a weak timid Man, & is suffering the Affairs of [that] Kingdom to run into the greatest Confusion, which the late Duke of Argyle used to manage with the greatest facility. John Home is made Conservator of the Scot's Privileges in Holland, a Sinecure of £300 a Year, which gives universal Disgust, as that place was always in use to be bestowed on some eminent Merchants. Lord Bute's Resignation has thoroughly disconcerted his Friends there, & inspired his Enemys every where with fresh Courage & can you believe it, he is more unpopular in Scotland than here. Before I have done with John Home, I wou'd just observe how very strange & singular it is, for so inconsiderable a man (and a Worthy Man too) to have had it in his power to do so much Mischief. From this Man did Lord Bute take his Opinion too frequently of Men & things. I say, from this Man, as ignorant of the World, & the ways of Business, as a new born Infant. Dr Robertson was in Town lately He is made Historiographer to the King, with a Salary of £200 a Year for Life He is to quit his Church (not his Principality) & as soon as he has finished his History of Charles the 1st, is to set about writing the History of England, for doing which he is to be assisted with all the Public Records & every other help that can be procured, at the public Expence. This makes Robertsons Fortune & he deserves it, for he has much true Merit, both as a Man & a Writer.

Major General Bechwith (who is married, you know, to a Daughter of Dr. Wisharts) is now here, & tells me the Hereditary Prince, who is to have our Princess Augusta, is by far the most accomplished Gentleman of his Years, he

ever saw. Beckwith is very sensible. & seems to know the State of Affairs on the Continent extremely well. He tells me the King of Prussia (in whose Service you know he is) is in every Shape in a better Plight, than at the Commencement of the War, that his Army is 200,000 Strong, that his Finances are in excellent Order, & that his own Subjects have suffered very little, his Army having all along consisted chiefly of Forreigners. He gave me a long Detail of the excellent Oeconomy of his Government, shewed me with what care he collected his Revenues, by appropriating such a District, for the payment of such a Number of Troops &c.; which is done almost [torn]

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 Remonstrance against pa []
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 the first thing Lord North []
 of the Chancellor for so doing []
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 the Liberty & Happiness of []
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as well as men, to possess no Happiness without Alloy. By the Bye, has not our Constitution undergone some unperceived Alteration, when a Minister cannot keep his ground, even with a Majority of three to one, in the House of Commons? Does this arise from the great Increase of Power & Property without Doors, or from what other Cause?

I wrote to the Governor & M^r Hall, just before I left London. Remember me most kindly to them both, & be so good as shew this to M^r Hall, as he likes Politics, & tell him I have just now received his Letter of July 6th., by the Mary & Elisabeth Hardie, inclosing a bill of loading for Two Thousand Dollars, which I shall answer by the next Ship. All his former letters I have already acknowledged the Receipt of.

I hope I have now made some Amends for my late Silence, as I have told you every thing I can recollect. Not an hour have I spent on Cribbige, since you left us, nor shall it cost me one till you return, which I hope you still *seriously* think of. If the Arguments I have formerly adduced have no Weight, I am sorry for it, for I think they are strong & unanswerable. I not only wish your own health, ease, & happiness, but that of all you are concerned in. I see with Particular Pleasure how well received your Son is in his Government, the Continuance of which I am satisfied he has Sagacity enough, with your Assistance, to deserve & Secure. My wife Joins me in most Affectionate Compliments to you & M^{rs} Fr: M^r & M^{rs} Hall & all Friends. I am my Dear Sir with unalterable Esteem

Your most Obedient Servant

Bath August 18, 1763.

WILL: STRAHAN

P. S. A new Indian War, is really terrible, but I hope proper measures will be taken, most effectually to extinguish it, & to prevent such dissagreeable Interruptions, to the Encrease & prosperity of our Colonies for the future—

TO DAVID HALL

London Oct^r 7 1769

Dear Davie

I wrote you by last Packett (Sep^r 6) a pretty long Letter; and by the Dutches of Gordon Capt Winn, via New York, I sent you a Trunk. with part of your last order, which I could not get ready time enough to send by Sparks, amounting to £27:5:6. My Letter by him was dated Sep^r 7.

I have since received yours of August 10. by the Harriot Packett, inclosing two Bills; one for £240 on Mess^{rs} Caldwell, Vance, and Caldwell Merchants in Londonderry; the other for £200 on Edward Burn Esq; both which are accepted, and placed to your Credit. When paid, shall be sure to acquaint you. In this Letter you acknowledge the Receipt of mine of May 22. by the Honer Davis, and that of June 7. by the Packett.

With regard to Business, I have nothing now to say. Every thing hitherto ordered has been sent you, except 12 of the 40th Volume of the Monthly Review, and the last Volume of the London Chronicle which are ready to be sent by the first Opportunity.—By the Packett (July 5.) I sent you a State of our Account as it stands in my Book, by which you will find all Mistakes rectified and adjusted. If I have forgot any Particular you will of course let me know. But, at present, I think all is right.

I am very sorry your Good Woman, as well as mine, is so often deprived of that best of Blessings, Health. But it is so far happy that we can procure them every Relief this World affords; and I hope they will in the End prove effectual. Your Daughter's being siezed with a Stroke of ye Palsy, would doubtless alarm you all very much; as we were here when my Son William was taken in the same way, as you may remember I wrote you. But he has been very well for a great while; and as they are both young, it is highly probable they may never more feel any bad Effects from it. This is an Ailment, by the bye, we never till of late heard young People were subject to. It was incident to Old Age only. I hope the Evils attending Mortality are not upon the Increase.

I note what you say of Munday. You will take no farther notice of so worthless a Fellow. His Sisters will not remit him one Shilling more. I have given you Credit for the 5 Guineas you paid him at my Request, and for which you transmitted me his Receipt.

To the Politicks I sent you by last Packett, I have only to add, that our Domestic Malcontents are very industrious, in different Parts of the Country, to promote the sending up Petitions to the King to dissolve the Parliament, on pretence of their invading the Right of Election in the Case of Wilkes. All this I am convinced can have no Effect, and yet I will not pretend to say, after what has against all probability already happened, what will be the final Consequence of all this Bustle. The Livery of London, a Body of Men in general much above the Mob, have also caught the Contagion; and in the Choice of Mayor for the ensuing Year have set aside Sir Henry Banks, the next in turn, to make Room for Trevithick or Beckford, who are more to their mind, being both violent Opposers of the present Ministry. Whether the Court of Aldermen will be able

to find Means to disappoint them I cannot yet say. But the Spirit of Opposition, I plainly see, runs so high (absolutely without just Ground as far as I can judge) that at next St. Thomas's Day, when the Common Council are re-elected, the moderate Members of that Body will be turned out, and then we may expect the Corporation of London will run into all the Madness and Folly and Rage of *Petitioning* which has broke out of late in other Parts of the Kingdom. And yet, notwithstanding all you see in the Papers upon this Subject, I do assure you this Flame is kindled and kept alive by a very inconsiderable Junto, from whom no Good whatever can be expected. Unhappy Country! which amidst the Enjoyment of more earthly Blessings than ever before fell to the Share of any one Nation; endeavour, now they have just humbled their Foreign Enemies, in the mere Wantonness of Luxury, to tear in pieces the best Fabric for the Security of human Liberty and Happiness which was ever yet erected. There seems to me to be a Sort of Fatality attendant upon Kingdoms, as well as upon private Families and Individuals, that when they have reached the Summit of Glory and Prosperity, they sometimes by slow Degrees, but more frequently with great Rapidity, sink back again into their original Slavery, Poverty and Barbarity; and this too from Causes the most unaccountable and extraordinary, which no human Foresight could foresee; and of course could not guard against. I trust this is not yet our Case, tho' I am not wholly without apprehension, when I see such a Spirit of Sedition and Discontent raised among the lower Class of People from the most trifling Provocation on the Part of their Superiors.

With regard to your Affairs in North America, I can at present have nothing material to write you. I see, every Day, more Difficulties and Obstructions to a Settlement of them, than ever. Some on your Part, and others on ours. If the present Ministry promote a Repeal of the Laws complained of by you, I already perceive the Opposition (of whom you know the Author of the Stamp Act is one) will make a Handle of that to say they debase the Honour of their Country, and tamely give up her Right of Dominion and Sovereignty over her Colonies. If Things are left as they are between us, till one Side of the Water is forced to yield to the other, or till a thorough Breach is effected, as I have before observed, both will be great Sufferers. I perceive what Care hath been taken with you to enforce the Resolutions of Non-importation; You are a much more capable Judge than I can be how far and how long this Plan of Conduct can be followed. But I am apt to think, not so far as you imagine; for as various Sorts of European Goods are necessary to the comfortable Subsistence of the great Majority of the Colonists, and as no inconsiderable Number of Individuals subsist by the Traffick the Importation of them occasions, I am humbly of Opinion, that if some Method is not speedily fallen upon to put an End to this Stagnation, you may come to fall out among yourselves upon that Head, and then the Affair is at an End, in a way which men of truly patriotic Principles with you do not now dream of.—In truth, my good Friend, honest men, who have no View but the Good of the Community, have abundant Reason to be apprehensive till these Differences are composed. Those who have nothing to lose, and who are of factious and restless Dispositions, naturally rejoice in times of Distraction.

I thank you for your Congratulations on the Success of my Letter, which I see you have inserted, with a little Variation, in your Paper. You may assure yourself I continue to do what I am able to serve you, tho' I cannot always tell you by what Means. All I can say is, that I recommend Moderation and Firmness on your Part, as the most likely and effectual Means of obtaining your Wishes. I *know*, that there is not the least Intention in the Legislature to hurt or enslave you; and I *know*, that our Interests are inseparably the same.—Let no man therefore be listened to who promotes Measures which tend to perpetuate our Differences, or to bring on a final Separation, which must ultimately end in our Ruin first, and at length in that of the Mother Country.

Lord Chatham is now in high Health and Spirits, and will endeavour, no doubt, to force himself into Power next Winter, in conjunction with his Brothers Lord Temple and George Grenville, who are all, at present, as they declare, very good Friends. They, as far as I can find, stand by themselves, and are no way united with Lord Rockingham and what are called his Party. If, therefore, they could effect a Demolition of the present Ministry, they must immediately go by the Ears one with another, while the Business of the nation is wholly neglected. This is no very comfortable Prospect to look forward to: But these are Evils inseparable, it should seem, from the very nature of our Free Constitution.

By very late Advices from the East Indies, Things there remain in the same State they have been in for some time past. Heider Ali is still in the Field, and continues to threaten Madras; but they are there very able to withstand him; and as the Supervisors are already sailed, with a considerable naval Force, it may reasonably be expected they will, soon after their arrival, be able to compose Matters, by a good and solid Peace.

So much for Public Affairs.—I forgot to tell you that the two Cases sent by Cap^t. Sparkes contain some Paper Moulds for Captain Falconer which he could not get ready time enough to carry along with him. He will call upon you for them, I suppose, on their arrival.—My Son William is now about setting up separately by himself, has got a very good House on Snow hill, and will be able to get into it in a few Days. I do not recollect whether I mentioned this to you before. He and I did not altogether agree in some Particulars; for which Reason, and because I thought it best for him to be settled by himself, I judged it right for both that he should carry on Business alone. I give him Two thousand Pounds to begin with, and from his own Ability and Industry, as well as from my Interest in the Trade which is not inconsiderable, he will not want Plenty of Business.—As I wrote you last Month, I begin upon the Employment of King's Printer next January. M^r. Eyre and I have agreed to purchase the whole of M^r. Baskett's Materials, so we have only to remove them from Blackfriars to a New House we have built for the Purpose adjoining to mine. I shall reckon myself particularly happy, if among the first Acts of Parliament I print is one for redressing all your Grievances. With regard to Bibles, &c. I wrote you a separate Letter dated Sep^r. 1st—My Wife, after a severe Fit of the Gout in her Right Hand

(the use of which she has not yet entirely recovered) is at present . . . * well, as are all the rest of my Family, who unite in kindest Remembrance of you and yours. I am as ever, with all possible Cordiality and Attachment

Dear Davie Most affectionately

Yours

WILL: STRAHAN

London April 7. 1770.

Dear Davie

My last to you was dated March 19. by Cap^t. Sparks, by whom I sent to the Amount of £433:18:11. which I hope will reach you safe. Besides several Articles out of print or reprinting, and the Slates, which the Captain would not take on board, and which were not charged, there were omitted some of the Prayer-books which were charged, and which shall be forwarded with the next Order.

I am since favoured with yours of the 6th. and 20th. of February by the Packett, inclosing a Bill on M^r. Minoch for £251:8:1. which he refuses Acceptance of, (as he says) for want of Advice. So I have noted it, and shall keep it till it becomes due, and if not then paid, as I suppose it will not (for he gave no Hopes of his then paying it) I shall protest, and return it to you. I hope you have altered your Book to mine, and settled the Balance, as I did, on the 5th. of July, which was £962:4:5. all Mistakes up to that Date being rectified in my Letter of that Day. When the above mentioned Bill is either paid, or returned, I shall send you a farther State of our Account Current, to prevent Confusion. I believe I did not before mention that the Bill of £240 on Mes^{rs}. Caldwell and C^o. was duly paid.

What you say in regard to the Sale of Bibles and Prayerbooks with you, and the low Prices of those which have any considerable Vent in America, I suspected to be the Case. However, when I have got any thing ready for the Market that I imagine may suit you, I will send you a few (and, as you desire, only a few) for a Trial. The Truth is, as the two Universities here have the Privilege of printing Bibles, &c. as well as the King's Printer, and as they now, more than ever, avail themselves of that Privilege, I have little Dependence upon that Branch of the Patent. The Acts of Parliament, Speeches, Addresses, and other public Papers, which no body else can meddle with, are what I chiefly rely on, and are profitable Articles, being punctually paid for by the Government. And yet I shall certainly attempt several Schemes in the Bible way, as I have as good a Chance for a Sale here, as the Universities; but still three Shops instead of one make a vast Difference in a Species of Business, where the Prices are so low, and the Profit depends solely upon the large Consumption.

I shall probably write you again in a few Days by M^r. Curtis Brett, who worked with me for some Months before you left me. I know not if I ever before mentioned him to you; but he tells me he wrote to you himself some Years

* Illegible.

ago from Jamaica, where he went to settle about the Year 1750. He hath since, by Trade in that Place, cleared about £10,000, with which he came home last Year; intending to settle in England. He has a Wife and one Child, and is not likely to have more; and nothing very tempting offering to him here, he hath taken the Resolution to settle for the rest of his Life in your Neighbourhood, thinking, perhaps very justly, that with such a Capital he is more likely to procure an eligible and permanent Settlement for his Child, than is now to be had in Britain, where Land falls at an enormous Price, and where the Expence of Living is greatly enhanced. If you can do him any Service, by your Advice or otherwise, you will greatly oblige me; for he is an honest and worthy Man, whom, upon farther Acquaintance, you must greatly esteem and value. It will be particularly in your Power to prevent him from making bad Connections with you, a Matter of no little Importance to a well-meaning and inoffensive Character, such as he is. For farther Particulars regarding his Views and Intentions, I refer you to himself. I most heartily recommend him to your Acquaintance, and doubt not you will be fast Friends as long as you live.

Mr Coombe, whom you recommended so warmly to me some time ago, more than Answers the good Character you gave him. I see him often, and he is much esteemed here; so much, that I have little doubt of his soon acquiring such a Settlement as may prevent his Return to America. Indeed that he should have an Eye to settling here was my Opinion at his first Coming over; and I am pleased to find, that by his general good Behaviour, as well as by his singular Merit as a Preacher, he is daily acquiring so many Friends as to render my early Advice to him very salutary.

What you order in your last Letter shall be forwarded as soon as possible, together with the Articles of the last Order, which could not then be had, and are now reprinted.

As for Politicks, I have not much to add since my last. You see what has been done by the Parliament respecting the *Remonstrance* of the Livery of London, which turned out just as I expected. The Singularity of the Case called for a much severer Censure. However, the Matter has had this very good Effect, that it has discovered the secret Designs of the turbulent Party, and opened the Eyes of the Country Gentlemen in the House of Commons, and indeed all over the Kingdom, who had joined the Opposition upon the usual Grounds, never dreaming that Things would be carried such outrageous Lengths. So that the Party (notwithstanding the Remonstrance voted by a parcel of Ragamuffins in Westminster-hall, assuming the Name of the Inhabitants of Westminster, and another from a Meeting equally respectable at Mile-End of the Middlesex Freeholders) is now dwindling fast to nothing, and all is, at present, very quiet. What Bustle may be occasioned by Wilkes's Enlargement the 18th. instant (if his Debts are really paid, and he regains his Liberty that Day) I will not pretend to say. But I have, in my own Mind, no Apprehensions from that Quarter. The Faction have, in all Appearances done their worst, and are now at Bay not knowing which way to turn themselves. The Ministry, tho' they have by no means answered the reasonable Expectations of the sober Part of the Publick,

and have on many Occasions shewn Marks of Timidity, Irresolution, and want of Concert among themselves, will yet, as far as I can see, or have been able to discover, are likely enough to hold their Ground, till some extraordinary Event (such as a foreign War, or a domestic Insurrection) of which there is at present not the least Apprehension. Lord Chatham is still endeavouring to raise a Ferment, but hither to without Success, or any Prospect of Success. He indeed told the House the other Day, that after the Holidays he should make a Motion to bring in a Bill to set aside those *infamous* Resolutions of the Commons respecting the Middlesex Election. But this will avail nothing. The Session is near a Conclusion, People are quite tired of the Subject, and many of the most respectable Members of both Houses are gone or going to their Country Seats; so that you need not expect to hear of any thing remarkable till their next Meeting.

I told you in my last, that all the American Duties would be repealed, that on Tea excepted; which I can now (with *Certainty* I think) assure you will not be taken off at all, at least this Year. I find the Ministry, from the best Information, are clearly of Opinion that the Americans must and will submit, and one of them told me the other Day, that had it not been for the *hasty Promise* (so he called it) made them last Year by Lord Hillsborough, the other Duties would not have been repealed.* The Truth is, whatever Appearance Things have with you the Exports from this Country to America in general are not at all; or but very little diminished; at least, not so far as to be any where, or among any Species of Manufacturers, sensibly felt. Had that been the Case, in this Petitioning and Remonstrating Age, we should have had Shoals of Complaints to Parliament from all Quarters. Instead of that, you see *Want of Trade* is never once mentioned among the List of our *Grievances* and *Apprehensions*, in those indecent Applications to the King.

It seems, and indeed the Thing speaks for itself, that tho' the Exports to Boston, New York, and Philadelphia have been considerably diminished during this Contest, those to Rhode Island, Quebec, and other Places, have proportionably increased, and that the Goods there imported find their Way to the other Provinces by the Back Settlements, or by some Means or other. Of the Truth and Practicability of this you are a better Judge than I can be. But to me, I must own, the *Silence* of all our Manufacturers, is *Demonstration itself*, that my Fears expressed in my Letter of last Year above mentioned, were by no Means so well founded, as I then thought they were: It is not easy, I well know, for People to reason coolly, when Matters of great Moment, in which they are deeply interested, are agitated. But for my own Part, I think I have all along considered the Affair with the utmost Impartiality: And I am still of the same Mind I was in, when I told you, in a former Letter, that I thought *neither Party should stand out*

* You see plainly by this, (though it is a Circumstance not fit to be put into your Newspaper) that you are more obliged to my Letter of last April which occasioned that Promise, than to all other applications on your Behalf put together. I wish it had had the full Effect I intended it should, and then this Matter had not now been the Subject of Litigation between us, as it is now likely to be for some time longer. The more the Pity.

upon Trifles and Punctilio's. Whatever, therefore, your other Friends and Correspondents may advise; I am strongly of Opinion, that as the Affair is now circumstanced, the best way for you to act, is to acquiesce in this same Tea Duty, which, laying aside the *Principle* of the Tax, is not worth mentioning; and to trust, with some Degree of Confidence, in the Justice and the Wisdom of Parliament for future Relief from that, and other more considerable Obstructions under which several Branches of your Trade now labours. It cannot be, I must insist upon it, it cannot be but that they will, in due time, grant you every Indulgence that is proper, or that you could wish for. It is their *Interest*, It is their *Duty* so to do; tho' a variety of Accidents and Circumstances may now prevent them from fully entering into and discussing your particular Concerns. Look round, I pray you, upon your various Wants, which cannot be supplied from your own internal Resources, and consider if you can really subsist and thrive without the Protection and Manufactures of Great Britain. For my part, I would always have America considered, both by themselves, and by us, as a Part, or as so many different Counties, of England—at least, as far as it is practicable so to consider it. Nor do I see any thing in the *Principle* of this Tax (so much dreaded and detested in your Side the Water) repugnant to this Idea.

I am sensible, that what I have just now advanced, differs widely from the Opinion of our worthy Friend D^r. Franklin. As I most highly esteem him, I am sorry for it. And the Disparity of our Judgements and Means of Information is sufficiently obvious. But may I not be allowed to suppose that his warm and strenuous Attachment to his native Country, and to his Friends there; hath in some degree, byassed his sound and perfect and manly Understanding, upon which, on other Occasions, I could securely depend. Nay, I will venture to tell you (for I always speak my Mind to you; as I have done in political Matters to some of the greatest Names here) that I really think him rather to partial to you, and perhaps too much hurt (tho' not altogether without Cause) with the Behaviour of the Mother Country to her Children. Having said thus much, I will now leave it to Time to determine which of us is in the right. It will be no wonder, and I shall myself be heartily glad, if I am found to have been mistaken.

I must now conclude. If any thing new occurs before M^r Brett sails, who goes by New York next Week, I shall write it by him. Alderman Frecothick intends making a Motion in the House next Monday for the Repeal of the Tea Duty; but I believe, by their Rules it cannot be again resumed this Session.

I am very sorry your honest Woman still continues poorly. My Wife and Family are all pretty well just now, and join me in kind Remembrance of you and yours. I see M^r Wharton and Major Trent frequently, who are both sensible good Sort of Men. D^r. Fr. is pure well, as I suppose he writes his Friends by this Packett. I am, with wonted Esteem and Regard

Dear Davie

Your affectionate Friend and Ser^t.

WILL: STRAHAN

TO DAVID HALL

London May 23. 1770.

Dear Davie

Since my last of April 7th. Mr. Minock hath accepted the Bill drawn on him for £251:8:1, which he had before refused.

As for Politicks, I have not much to add to what you will find in the Papers. Wilkes is now enlarged, and sworn in one of our Aldermen at Guildhall, without any Bustle whatever. I should gladly hope his Reign is nearly at an End, tho' he hath impudently endeavoured to revive his drooping Cause by his Addresses to the Freeholders of Middlesex, and his Constituents of the Ward of Farringdon Without, since his Enlargement. How he will be able to subsist, now he is at Liberty, I know not. For there is still above £3000 of his Debts unsatisfied, which the Party are either unable or unwilling to discharge. The Committee of the Society for Support of the Bill of Rights continue to advertise you see; and it doth not a little expose their Weakness, that they did not, at least, clear their Champion from all Incumbrances at his Enlargement. The Consequence is, that he hath since been several Times arrested; so that unless something effectual is done for him very quickly, he will not be able to live in this Country.

I have been pretty much, of late, in both Houses of Parliament. In the Upper, Lord Chatham hath again and again endeavoured to raise a Ferment about the old Story of the Middlesex Election, but without the least Effect. It would be tedious for me to write, or you to read, a particular Detail of those frivolous Debates, which he might easily know must come to nothing, and were intended by him, solely, to make way for his getting into Power, which, were he to accomplish, it is impossible to say, what a Scene of Confusion would ensue. In Peace, he could make no Figure as a Minister; his first Business would therefore be to plunge us in a War, upon some foolish Pretence or other, a Measure utterly inconsistent with our Interest as a trading People.

In the House of Commons the most remarkable Transaction since I wrote last, was the opening the Budget, as it is called, which Lord North did, in my Opinion, with great Ability, Perspicuity, and Precision, which I own it gave me particular Satisfaction to hear.

The Ways and Means he enumerated, as usual, Article by Article, which he made amount to 7,370,708:4:1½

The Supplies voted this Session to 5,788,951:9:7½

And with the Overplus 1,581,756:14:5½
he proposed to pay off £1,500,000 of our National Debt, bearing 3½ p C^t. Interest, which is redeemable by Parliament next February. The odd £81,756, he said, would serve to make up any Deficiencies that might arise in this Year[s] Funds, or be applied towards the Supplies of the next.

He then proposed a Lottery of 50,000 Ticketts (10,000 less in Number than that of last Year) thinking it right that the Publick should avail themselves of this voluntary Tax, by which they would clear £200,000. That as there were Twenty Millions of the national Debt bearing 4 p C^t. Interest, which

fell to be reduced to 3. about ten Years hence, he proposed that every Proprietor of that Stock, subscribing £100 of it at 3 p C^t. should have two Ticketts at £14 each, and have a Receipt for £8 in part; which £8 was a Compensation for the deducted one per C^t. upon their Capital Stock for the time above mentioned. That as it would require Subscribers to the Amount only of £2,500,000 to fill the Lottery in this Manner, he had little Doubt of its Success. That no Preference was intended to any Person, but every one to be admitted as they applied till the whole was subscribed.

So here will be £1,500,000 of our Debt bearing $3\frac{1}{2}$ p C^t. clearly paid off; £2,500,000 bearing 4 p C^t. for ten Years immediately reduced to 3. and an Overplus of £81,756 to make good accidental Deficiencies, if any. In spite of all our *Grievances* and *Apprehensions*, a most comfortable Situation!

He then proceeded to compare the State of France with our own, and enumerated the various Steps they had lately taken to bring their Peace Establishment somewhat near their Income, by which they had broke all Faith with their Subjects, and had utterly ruined their Credit; that nothing could so incontestably demonstrate the Wretchedness of their Situation in that respect, than that they were not able to fill a Lottery lately set on Foot there, though they gave a Premium of 600,000 Livres, and though the Prizes were to be paid in Life Annuities, the only Species of Stock they had not yet invaded. He proceeded to observe, that were he disposed to render himself popular at the Expence of the Publick, he might propose taking off some of those Taxes which most nearly affected the Poor, and seemed to bear hardest upon the Necessaries of Life; such as the Duties on Soap, Candles, and Strong Beer. But as the advanced Price of the two first Articles did not arise solely from the Duty, but from those General Causes which enhanced the Prices of every thing else, he imagined that the abolishing these Duties, which brought in above £180,000, yearly, would very little reduce their Price; that besides, as these Duties were of old Date, and People felt but little those Burdens to which they had been long accustomed, he did not choose, by such Means, to reduce the Produce of the Sinking Fund, and thereby to throw additional Difficulties in the Way of his Successors in Office, in the Time of any future War. The same Reasoning, he said might be applied to the Tax on Beer, which brought in a Revenue of about £480,000.

He concluded his excellent Speech with observing, that notwithstanding the various Efforts of Faction, notwithstanding the Ill-humours within Doors and without, notwithstanding the Weakness of Men successively in Office, notwithstanding the too frequent Change of Ministries, and if they pleased to add, the Want of Abilities in the present Ministry, the Trade and Finances of this Country were still in a most flourishing Condition; that our public Revenue was in such a Train of Improvement, that supposing we should remain in a State of Peace for ten or twelve Years, which, in his Opinion, was not improbable, our Sinking Fund would, of itself, enable us to defray the Expence of a *reasonable War* (these were his Words) tho' not of so expensive a one as our last.

This is the Substance, as far as I can recollect it, of his most comfortable Speech, which lasted full two Hours, and which shews us to be in a most re-

spectable Situation. Grenville endeavoured to find Fault a little, (but without the least Shadow of Reason) with the Terms of the Ticketts, as if the Purchasers would have too good a Bargain, which is plainly not the Case, and indeed turned out so in the Event, for only half of them were subscribed for by the Holders of the 4 p C^t. Stock; so they had the Remainder; that is, 4 instead of 2 Ticketts for each £100, at £14, which is a most unreasonable Price for Ticketts that are intrinsically worth only £10. But such is the Madness of People in the Way of Gaming, and such the Thirst of throwing themselves in Fortune's Way, as it is called. Grenville had the Assurance likewise to throw out some general Reflexions on the Ministry, as if they had given no Attention to our foreign Alliances, or to the many internal Improvements at home, which required the Aid of Government. To which Lord North very properly replied, That while the Opposition for the time being endeavoured to thwart every Measure proposed by the King's Servants, and to cut out so much Work for them in that Place, it was morally impossible for them to bestow that Time and Attention on more essential Matters, which the Public had reason to expect, and which it would otherwise be their Duty to do; so that the Fault lay on the other Side of the House, not with them, who were sincerely disposed to exert themselves in the public Service to their utmost.

Nothing hath since happened in either House of Parliament worth mentioning, unless that Lord Chatham hath moved once and again in the House of Lords; First, to know who advised his Majesty's Answer to the City Remonstrance, and 2^{dly}. to dissolve the Parliament; both which were treated with Disregard by the Ministry, and were rejected by a great Majority. The Parliament is now prorogued; so that the farther Consideration of American Affairs in general, and of the unhappy Disturbances at Boston in particular, must now lie over till next Year. My Opinion respecting our Disputes you have in my last, which I yet see no Reason to alter. What Time may produce I know not. However, before next Session of Parliament, both Sides will have had farther Opportunities of seeing in what Manner our present Situation operates with regard to the Interest or Conveniency of either, and till then I do not see what we can say farther upon the Subject.

At Home, we are all in perfect Tranquility. Our Mayor and Common Council, indeed, at the Instigation of Lord Chatham, have preferred another Remonstrance to the King, in order to keep up the Ball of Contention, but it can have no Effect. The notorious Intention of the Opposition is to get into Power; but this Country hath been so often duped by Changing of Hands only, that it is to be hoped they will at last see through this stale Artifice, and discourage this eternal Scramble for Places, by which their real Interests must continually suffer, or rather be totally neglected. Nothing can more incontestably shew the Weakness and Futility of the discontented Party (which in reality consists only of a few Individuals) than that tho' they have repeatedly advertised in the Papers, and have sent Letters to almost every County and Borough in the Kingdom, soliciting Subscriptions to *compound* only, not to *pay* Wilkes's Debts, they have not yet been able to raise that trifling Sum. Had the Grievances they

complain of been, in any Degree, generally felt, do you think it possible, that John Bull would have suffered the great Champion in his Cause, to have remained so long in a State of Beggary, and after having suffered a tedious Imprisonment in Defence of his Liberties, to be still liable to Arrests for poultry Debts, which he now is; and he hath actually since his Enlargement been several times arrested. I am the more particular upon this Subject, that People at a Distance may not be deceived by our public Papers into a Notion, that all is Confusion and Discontent and Murmuring, and that we are in a Manner ripe for a general Insurrection whereas nothing can be farther from it. All our Complaints are only to be *read* in our Newspapers; they are not to be *heard*, unless among the very lowest of the Mob, when they are artfully assembled by public Advertisement to see the Company come to a Lord Mayor's Feast, or to attend a most unprecedentedly impudent Remonstrance to the Throne. But the People of Middle Rank, and reasonable dispassionate Men of all Ranks, are contented and happy: And what is singular, the Kingdom of Scotland are, to a Man, perfectly well affected, not only to the Royal Family, but to the present Administration; so that were Things to come to Extremities, (which is far from being the Case) the King might expect ready and effectual Assistance from that Part of his Dominions. All this, however, is needless Speculation. The King is a good Man, means well, has no Species of Interest distinct from that of his Subjects, is a Native of Britain, and tho' possessed of considerable Domains in Germany, has no Predilection or Partiality to Countries which he never saw, is a Lover of Peace; a State best adapted to the Prosperity of a commercial Nation, is by Nature humane; tender. hearted, and benevolent. What can we wish for more? Would we have a King of Prussia to govern us, and to subdue those restless Spirits with a Rod of Iron, who wantonly endeavour to distress the best of Princes?

Herewith you have the Invoice and Bill of Lading for your last Order, which I have completed as far as I am able. What can still be got shall be sent with next Parcel. Those now sent amount to £212:3:5.

I have been extremely busy of late; but you see I find time, notwithstanding, to write you a long Letter, which I imagine you will have hardly Patience to read. I have nothing farther to add, that I can recollect, just now. My Wife is at present very poorly, and must, as soon as she is able, have recourse, once more, to the Bath Water. All the rest of my Family are purely [*sic*]. I hope M^{rs} Hall is better than when you wrote last. We all join in kindest Respects to you and her. I am ever,

Dear Davie

Most affectionately Yours

WILL: STRAHAN

TO DAVID HALL

Mr. David Hall of Philadelphia bought of W^m Strahan

(Shipt on board the Dolphin Capt. Stevenson, June 28. 1770.
in a Box, marked Samuel Gale, Stores.)

	£	s	d
1 London Magazine for 1737. 1739. 1749. 1754. 1755. 1764. 1765. 1766. 1767. 1768 and 1769. 11 Vols half Bound and lettered	3	11	6
75 Fisher's Companion			
48 Gentleman's Magazine for May	1	0	0
42 London D°. for D°.	0	17	6
16 Universal D°. for D°.	0	6	8
2 Monthly Review for D°.	0	1	8
Box, Cord, and Shipping Charges	0	6	6
	<hr/> £12: 3:10 <hr/>		

London July 7. 1770.

Dear Davie

I wrote you the 26th. of last Month, by the above Vessel, along with M^r. Gale, to which I refer, by whom I sent you as above as p the Receipt inclosed.

I wrote so lately, y^t. I have nothing new to add. As I told you in my last, you have, besides that Letter, mine of Janry 11. Feby 17. March 19. April 7. and May 23. to acknowlege the Receipt of. I was told the other Day, that our Ministry had under Consideration a Plan or Proposal from Lord Hillsborough for settling American Affairs. I do not say this with Certainty. Mean while, the Stagnation of our Trade to the Colonies makes no sensible Difference to the British Manufacturers. They either find other Markets for their Goods, from whence they are transmitted to you; or else they are smuggled in upon you directly from hence—which last is most likely to be the Case, as, by the Custom-house Books, our Exports to America in General, are yet very little, if any thing, lessened.

D^r. Franklin is well and happy. My Wife is still at Bath. My Daughter is on a Visit to Oxford. So I am left almost alone. But I am always

Dear Davie

Most affectionately Yours

WILL: STRAHAN

TO THOMAS WHARTON

Copy

London Jan. 18 1771.

Sir

At the Recommendation of your Brother M^r Samuel now here, I trouble you with the enclosed Letter of Attorney, to recover for me a Debt long, very long since due to me from M^r James Read. Many Years ago my worthy Friend D^r Franklin took his Bond for it, which when he last set out for Britain, he left

with his Wife. About three Years since I was recommended to John Morris Esq; Jun^r. for his Assistance to procure Payment of the Debt, when M^{rs}. Franklin delivered the Bond into his Hands. But, from what Reason I am unable to guess, he has done nothing in it to this Hour.

As M^r Read is well known to be in a *Capacity* to pay me, it is very hard I have not yet been able to fall upon a Way to make him *willing*. This good Office, however, I am confident, you will easily accomplish for me. And I entreat you would, without Delay, call upon M^r Morris, in my Name, for the Bond, and if he has incurred any Expence on my Account to discharge it, which I shall cheerfully repay to your Order on Demand. I leave it to yourself, and to what your Brother shall write you upon the Subject, in what way to manage this Matter. I want not to distress him, or to force him to make immediate Payment; but I want, without losing an Hour, ample Security that I shall be paid, with Interest, in a reasonable Time. This, which I know it is in his Power to give, I have not the least Doubt but you will soon procure me.

I have the Satisfaction to tell you that your Brother's principal Business here, in which I hold a Share, is in a very promising Way, and will certainly be brought to a happy Conclusion soon; tho' from the Variety of Business which our Ministry have now upon their Hands, he may, on that Account, be obliged to stay here somewhat longer than you and his other Friends would wish.

I shall hope for the Pleasure of hearing from you as soon as convenient, and am

Sir Your most obedient Servant

WILL: STRAHAN

The original Debt was in May 1745 £131:16:4. *Twenty five Years ago!* The exact Time D^r Franklin took his Bond for it I have forgot, but the Bond will speak for itself.

February 11, 1771.

Sir

The above is a Copy of my Letter by Falconer. I have only to repeat my Request that you would use your utmost Endeavours to secure M^r Read's Debt for me:

I embrace this Opportunity to acquaint you also that through your Brother's active, spirited, and sensible Prosecution of his Grand Scheme with the *first* Personages of this Country, (to many of whom he is well known, and in high Estimation) it is now in a certain Train of being soon completed to his Heart's Content. Indeed some of the most leading Men here are interested in its Success. My Reasons for writing *now* thus positively I dare not commit to Paper; but from the best Authority, and from my *own* certain Knowledge I am sure the Affair will soon be concluded I am very happy in being able, upon such good Grounds to tell you this, as I dare say it will give the sincerest Pleasure to M^{rs} Wharton, and to those concerned on your Side the Water. The Partners here, *who are in the Secret* are I assure you in high Spirits. I am

Sir Your obedient humble Ser^t.

WILL: STRAHAN

TO DAVID HALL

London August 19. 1771.

Dear Davie

My last was dated the 15th. of July, wherein I acknowledged the Receipt of yours of May 24th. by Marshall. Your Lottery Ticket I bought after I wrote that Letter, but I sent the Number of it by the Captain, (viz. 3384.) I did not till then know they were issued. It cost £13:10:6 which I have put to your Account.

I have since received yours of July 6th. by Osborne, inclosing a Bill of Lading for 1500 Dollars, which I shall endeavour to sell at the best Price, and give you Credit for the Amount. It also contained a Copy of our Account as it stands in your Book, which I cannot now examine, as I am this Instant going to the Country for a few Days, and write this before I go, lest Captain Falconer, by whom I send the few Articles now ordered, should sail before my Return. If he does not, I shall add a Postscript. I have likewise received the Box with the returned Articles, which I shall also settle, and send you an Account of in my next. All Omissions will be supplied in the Parcel that comes along with this, the Invoice of which I must defer till my next Letter. The Magazines and Reviews shall come more frequently in future; as well as New Books and Pamphlets. I very seldom send an Old Book but what is ordered. Hardly ever. You mention *The History of the Devil*, of which I sent you 25, tho' you had not ordered one. Here you will find you are mistaken; for in your Letter of Nov^r. 25. 1769. you order 6 and in your Letter of Feby 6. 1770. you order 12 more. The Book was then out of print; as you will see by my Invoices of March 17. and May 23. 1770. when these Orders were sent. Now as you had wrote for 18 so long ago, I thought there could be no harm in sending 25 when it was reprinted. Indeed your repeatedly sending for them made me reprint the Book, having a considerable Share of it. I only mention this, that you may see I am not so far to blame in this Article as you imagined I was

I am very glad M^{rs} Hall begins to pick up again. Going to the Bristol Waters must be of great Service to her. The Country Air, the Waters themselves, but above all the *Changing the Scene*, must, at this time; be peculiarly servicable to her. My Wife and Daughter are just now in the Country. My Son George is now in Town, and preached last Thursday (for the first Time in London) before the Company of Stationers from these Words, *Let brotherly Love continue*, which he handled extremely well, and delivered most gracefully, to the complete Satisfaction of the Audience. I see clearly he will make a very good Figure in the Pulpit; for his Heart is in it, he has a melodious Voice, and a graceful Person; add to this, that he is a very good Scholar, and of a very amiable Disposition. He will reside chiefly at Oxford for some time, and till I can procure a good Living for him, which I am now looking out for.

I have not a single Word of Politicks to add to what I gave you in my last. Our Papers are stuffed with a deal of Abuse, in which the King himself is not spared; tho' there is not in reality a better, an honester, or a more amiable Man in

all his Dominions. The Licence of the Papers is now so great, that nobody minds what they contain. Now and then I write a little in the Papers (but seldom) such as the inclosed Letter signed *Britannicus*, in answer to a very impudent one indeed signed *Brunswick* in the *Public Advertiser* a few Days before; by which, as well as by all my Letters to you, you will see my Sense of our present Opposition and pretended Grievances.

If Falconer does not sail before my Return from the Country (as I said before) I will add a P. S. and send you the Invoice of what is now sent. If not, you shall be sure to hear from me by the next Packett. In the mean time I remain, with kindest Respects to good M^{rs} Hall;

Dear Davie

Your ever affectionate Friend

and Servant

WILL: STRAHAN

P. S.

August 24. 1771.

I am just returned from the Country, and herewith inclose the Invoice. The Dollars are not yet landed; so I have nothing farther to add. Before my next I shall examine our Account

Adieu

TO DAVID HALL

London March 19. 1772.

Dear Davie

In my last of Febry 10th. I acknowleged Rec^t. yours of Dec^r. 21st. I have since had the Duplicate of D^o. with a few Lines dated Dec^r. 30. yours also of Janry 4. and Febry 1st. which I now set down to answer.

What you say about the Dollars is extremely just. I ought to have mentioned the Particulars of the Sale, which I now do, and you will perceive they were sold at the very best Market Price

	oz.	dw	s	d	
The first 1500 weighed	1299:	10	@	5:	5 $\frac{3}{4}$ per Ounce.....
					356: 0:3.
					Freight one p Cent. and Porter &.....
					3:11:8

Neat Produce 352: 8:7

	oz.	s	d	
The Second 1500 weighed	1300	@	5.	7
				362:18:4
				Freight one p Cent.....
				3:12:7

Neat Produce 359: 5:9

So much for that Matter. I have now finished your Order to the very utmost of my Power, and as complete as possible for the Time. Luckily Caslon had a Fount of English ready cast ; so I eagerly got hold of it, as you seem to have been in particular Haste for it. The other Founts you wrote for are also sent herewith ; so that so far you are very fortunate, as many have reason to complain, who had applied before I did. As I thought you would want Composing Sticks, and there is now but one Man in Town who makes them, and he a very idle Fellow, I have borrowed 5 very good ones of my Men, to repay them as soon as they can be made, which may be a Year or two first. They are full as good as new ones. Binding continues still monstrous high, and indeed Sheeps Leather is not to be had in sufficient Quantities at any Price, which makes it necessary to cover some of all our Small Books with Cloth. By many Articles in your late Orders I have lost considerably, being unwilling to raise the Prices, in hopes the Leather would fall. I have only in this Invoice charged an Advance on Dilworth's Books, which will hardly ever be lowered ; but many others I shall pass unnoticed. There are not many New Books of any Consequence. You have here some of the best of them, and only one of a Sort, so that they cannot hurt you. The Articles not sent are either quite out of print, or reprinting, as marked against each of them. I am not sure there are no Mistakes in this Invoice, as the Books, &c. have been got together in much Hurry, but you will note them, if there are any, and point them out in your next. The whole I make amount to £572:3:0. The chief Article wanting is the Brass Rule, which I could not procure soon enough to be packed up and sent herewith, but it shall follow quickly. By the bye, the Composing Sticks are in a small Parcel by themselves directed to you, which the Captain promised to take care of. I shall always make as much Dispatch as I am able, but you often write for Things to come by the next Ship, which it is altogether impossible to get ready for several Weeks, and sometimes even Months ; so that for the future I could wish you would write for things rather a little before you are near run out of them, that you may not suffer in your Trade by necessary and unavoidable Delay. I have nothing farther to say, as far as I can recollect in regard to Business. If I have forgot any thing you will remind me in your next.

To the Politicks I lately sent you I have little or nothing to add : The Parliament have been wholly taken up of late with the Act for limiting the Marriages of the Royal Family, which hath given a Handle to the Opposition, and they have not failed to lay hold of it ; but the Ministry will certainly carry it, and sure I am no bad use will be made of any Sort of Power delegated to the present King, whatever his Successors may do. The Bill itself will best explain the Meaning and Tendency of it ; but there is no saying with Certainty what it is till it is actually past ; for it has been greatly altered by both Houses since it was brought in. No certain News from Denmark yet—The Princess Dowager is almost forgot already. Not a single Character of her has appeared any where, except that I wrote you in my last, and afterwards inserted in the Chronicle ; every Word of which was strictly true—We may hence learn the Futility and

Instability of all human Greatness. I remember when she was adored by all Ranks.

I have been, and am likely to continue to be extremely busy with one Thing or other. The Accounts and Direction of the Kings Printing, Law Printing, besides my own private Business, lye now solely upon me: and my other avocations are innumerable, some of which it would do me Honour to mention but it would savour strongly of Vanity if they came from me. Suffice it to say, I am upon a very desirable Footing with many of the greatest Names here.

We are all well at present, and I am very happy to hear by your last, that M^{rs} Hall is better than could well be expected, considering her late Troubles. I hope her Health will soon be farther confirmed, and that you may long enjoy together what your persevering Industry has so justly entitled you to.

It is now near two in the Morning. The Capt takes away his Letters at Mid-day; but had I left this to be written tomorrow, I should possibly have been prevented by my usual Interruptions, to which there is really no End.

I am ever with the warmest Esteem and affection

Dear Davie

Your faithful Friend and Servant

WILL: STRAHAN

TO WILLIAM HALL

Dear Sir

Inclosed is the Receit for the Magazines for Dec^r and Supplements. Capt. Falconer has besides taken the Care of three other Parcels, containing the Mags. for January, and a Parcel of new Pamphlets and Plays, which he will deliver to you. What I have to say in the political Way I have written in a long Letter to Gov^r. Franklin, part of which I have desired him to insert in your Paper, if he thinks fit; for I have not a Moment's Leisure to transcribe it. I wanted to have send Mrs. Hall's Bible with this Opportunity; but the Captain said he could not take it. I hope these Obstructions to our Intercourse will not be lasting, as they must be of Prejudice to both Countries. But above all things it is necessary that our Differences should be *properly* and *fully* adjusted.

My Family are all well and join me in affectionate Remembrance of you and yours.

I am

Dear Sir

Your faithful and obedient Ser^t

WILL: STRAHAN

London

Febry 6. 1775.

The Maps and Pamphlets now sent shall be, along with others not yet charged, inserted in my next Invoice.

TO WILLIAM HALL

January 1. 1777.

Dear Sir

I take the Opportunity of the Packett to send you a Copy of my last to you of June 11. in case it should not have reached you, and to tell you that I long very much to hear of the Welfare of you and your Family, as I have heard nothing from you since June 2, 1775. neither have I heard any thing of you from any other Quarter. I beg therefore you will be so kind to drop me a Line by the first Packett, or other Opportunity, that I may have the Pleasure to know at least; that, in the midst of these troublesome Days, you are safe and well. I hope in God a little Time will terminate all our Differences to the complete Satisfaction of both Parties, whose mutual Interest it most undoubtedly is to live in eternal Friendship and Concord. I beg you will remember me and my Family to your worthy Mother and M^{rs} Hall, wishing you all many happy Returns of this Season, and that Peace and Plenty may quickly be restored to your at present distracted Country.

I am, with great Regard

Dear Sir, Your affectionate humble Serv^t

WILL: STRAHAN

TO MRS. DAVID HALL

London April 7. 1778.

Dear Madam

Not having heard from your Son for a great while before, I wrote to our mutual Friend D^r. Franklin the beginning of last Year, to know how you all did. In his answer, dated Paris Feby 4. 1777. he writes as follows:

"M^{rs} Hall and her Sons, whom you enquire after, were well when I left Philadelphia. I was too much employed while there to be often with them; but I heard that their Trade goes on as successfully as ever."

This, you may be sure, I was very happy to learn from such good Authority. I now write you by a very particular and most worthy Friend of mine Lieut. John Inglis, who has promised to deliver this into your own Hands, and who can tell you that he left me and my Family all well.

I have written to your Son M^r. William by the same Bearer, concerning a Balance still due to me of £363 which I dare say the Circumstances of the Times alone hath hindered him from remitting to me long ere now.

I beg to hear from you very particularly of all your Family, and am with the most sincere Regard

Dear Madam

Your affectionate humble Servant

WILL: STRAHAN