

#### Choice 4

### Walpole's Three "Common Place Books," Two "Books of Materials," "Miscellany," and Pocket Book

These seven manuscripts are being saved on the generous principle that permits the rescue of an entire set and not just its first volume. If the Almighty objects, "This is going *too far!*", I'll choose the earliest one, for which Walpole wrote a title-page, "Verses, Stories, Characters, Letters, etc. etc. with some particular memoirs of a certain Parcel of People. 1740."

The three vellum-bound folio Common Place Books were left by Walpole to the Waldegrave family and stayed at Strawberry Hill. They were kept out of the 1842 sale, but were sold the following year to Richard Bentley the publisher (not to be confused with Gray's and Walpole's Bentley), along with the manuscripts I talk about in Choices 1 and 15. Grandfather Bentley sold back the Common Place Books in 1865 to the widow of the seventh Earl, Frances Lady Waldegrave, who restored the splendors of Strawberry by two later brilliant marriages and her own social gusto. In 1942 when I was in London on O.S.S. business the present Lord Waldegrave sold the three Common Place Books to me. During the flight home they were in jeopardy when the wheels of my plane were locked for what seemed quite a long time over Shannon. I see the crew now in their shirts, sweating with fright despite the cold, while we circled round and round the airport and they jabbed madly with long red spanners at the entrails of the plane that had been exposed beside my seat. Fortunately, they got the wheels down and so the "Verses, Stories, Characters, Letters, etc., etc." were saved, after all.

Walpole added an epigraph to the title-page of the earliest book, "Ole, quid ad te? Mart." "Oleus, what is it to you? Martial." He was saying that what he put into his commonplace book was his own affair. He began keeping it while he and Gray were staying with Horace Mann at Florence

1740.

A Common Place Book  
of Verses, Stories, Characters, Letters &c &c.  
with some particular Memoirs of a certain Parcel of People.

Ole, quid ad Ic? .... Mart.

Epiq. VII. 10

last entry (p. 90) dated 1753 - but single additions of later date as e.g. at page 66 - 1761, p. 86 in 1767  
pagination in pencil, by me, March 1934. blank pp. numbered [except at end: 90 is last page with  
writing. 42 blank sheets follow]  
R. Ture

There are 13 unused, blank pp. included in the 90 = 77 pp written in



on their Grand Tour. Among the very miscellaneous entries are examples of the popular eighteenth-century diversion, *Sortes Virgilianae*. A man was named, Virgil was opened at random, and a phrase pinpointed that would be applied to him, a game rather beyond most of us today. The first "fates" in the book are those for the King, Prince of Wales, the Old and Young Pretenders, Sir Robert Walpole, and after several more Horace Walpole himself. His lot was *Accipe daque fidem*. "Take and give friendship," and we can see the company smiling and nodding approval because Horace Walpole was a friendly young man.

He and his closest friends at Eton loved the classics. "Why," Walpole wrote from Cambridge to Richard West at Oxford, "mayn't we hold a classical correspondence? I can never forget the many agreeable hours we have passed in reading Horace and Virgil, and I think they are topics will never grow stale." They wrote Latin verses for the fun of it and had the pleasure of seeing them printed in *Musae Etonenses* and the *Gratulatio Academiae Cantabrigiensis* on the marriage of Frederick Prince of Wales. There were some 250 volumes of classics in the Strawberry Hill library; thirteen editions of Virgil, eleven of Horace, and nine each of Ovid and Juvenal. My favorite among them is the tiny Sedani edition of Horace, 1627, in which Walpole wrote his name and "1733," the year he bought it, and added Greek and Latin quotations on its fly-leaves. Seventy-six volumes of the classics bound in red morocco were given him by the Duke of Brunswick, as we learn from the Duke's inscription to *Horatio, Roberti filio*, in the first volume, Caesar's *Commentaries*, 1713, which, by great good luck A. N. L. Munby found and kindly let me have. The Duke had suppressed a will of George I in consideration of a handsome English pension negotiated by Sir Robert's administration. One wonders if he met the twelve-year-old Horace in London or had merely heard that Sir Robert's youngest son was precocious. In any event, he must have believed that his gift would please the Prime Minister. Six others of the books have come to Farmington. They have suffered from wear and rebinding, but one can see how splendid they must have looked stretched across the fourth shelf in presses L and M.

A Strawberry book of special interest among the sixty-odd in Latin at Farmington is Herman Moll's *Geographia Antiqua Latinorum et Graecorum*, 1726. Walpole wrote "H. Walpole 1731" on the inside cover when he was aged thirteen or fourteen at Eton. Later he kept it in the Glass Closet at Strawberry Hill with his most personal books. He covered the fly-leaves and backs of many maps with notes; his fondness for genealogical

charts appears on the first four pages with extra bits of information such as that Roxana, Alexander's wife, was sawn in two by order of Porisia, a biographical point not mentioned in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. There is no schoolboy drudgery in these notes, quite the contrary. On a rear fly-leaf below two genealogical charts is a quatrain in French:

Ah! que Renaud me plaît!  
 Qu' Armide avoit de grace!  
 Le Tasse s'en scandalisait;  
 Mais je suis Serviteur au Tasse.

Several of the later entries in the first Common Place Book have been printed as appendices in the Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence. Among them are "Particular Memoirs on a Certain Parcel of People," that include "Anecdotes relating to Dr Conyers Middleton," "Some Anecdotes relating to Sir Charles Hanbury Williams and his Works," "Mr Thomas Gray," "Pieces Written by Mr Bentley, only son to Dr Bentley," "Suite of Mr Ashton." One section illustrates Walpole's lifelong enjoyment of the odd that Macaulay noted, "Instances of extraordinary Avarice and Economy," which leads off with, "Sir Robert Brown computed and found that in his life he had saved two hundred pounds by never having an orange or lemon at his table."

The manuscript title-page of the second Common Place Book is "Poems and other Pieces by Horace Walpole youngest Son of Sir Robert Walpole Earl of Orford." The first poem, of 81 lines, is addressed "To the honorable Miss Lovelace/On the Death of Lord Lovelace/Her only Brother. 1736." Walpole later added a note, "The Author's age was 18 at Cambridge." The verses end:

So the young Phoenix, when the sickening Fire  
 Of vital warmth winks in his fading Sire,  
 Shakes off his "Mortal Coil," and from the tomb  
 Embalmed with fragrant spices and perfume,  
 (Fresh vigor bracing his eternal wings)  
 Renew'd with sublimated essence springs.

A note on the opposite page tells us that "Mortal Coil," is an "expression in Hamlet."

Miss Lovelace disappeared from his life and was succeeded by other young ladies with whom he had amiable friendships, twenty-two of which he celebrated in "The Beauties." All his life he depended on women



friends, concluding with the Berry sisters who were forty-odd years his junior, but he never married. It was said after his death that he offered to marry Mary Berry and when she refused him, her sister Agnes, yet he seems to have given little thought to marrying earlier. The arch references to Mme Grifoni at Florence in his correspondence with Mann and the portrait of her that he kept in his bedroom at Strawberry Hill suggest she was his mistress. Among the dozen-odd verses in these books that he did not print are two or three that escaped the vigilance of Elizabeth Laura Waldegrave. One of them, of 92 lines, is "Little Peggy/a/Prophetic Eclogue/In Imitation of Virgil's Pollio," with a note that "Peggy Lee, a whore of Lord Lincoln's, had a daughter by him whose birth was the subject of this eclogue," and is explicit enough to satisfy the most demanding connoisseurs of erotica today. Lord Edgcumbe thought that when his mistress left him she had passed into Walpole's keeping and made him trustee for her successor because, he said, Walpole had "more feeling and had given better advice about his mistresses than the rest of his acquaintance," yet Walpole wrote to Mann at the age of thirty-two that he "lay alone." Years later when Chatterton linked his name with Kitty Clive, the actress, in some verses, Walpole noted in his copy of them (Choice 19) that he had given her a house near Strawberry Hill, and that "on this foundation she was represented as his mistress, though they were both between fifty and sixty." He might have added that they appeared together in the *Town and Country Magazine* Tête à Tête series over the title "Mrs Heidelberg and Baron Otranto." Other actress friends were Mrs Abington, Mrs Pritchard, for whom he wrote an "Epilogue to Tamerlane on the Suppression of the Rebellion, spoken by Mrs Pritchard in the character of the tragic muse, Nov. 4, 1746" at Covent Garden and which he reported to Mann "succeeded to flatter me." Another actress friend whom he much admired was Eliza Farren, later Countess of Derby, whose presentation copy of his *Fugitive Pieces in Verse and Prose*, Strawberry Hill, 1758, is now at Farmington.

A charge was made some years ago that he was a homosexual on the basis of his youthful letters to Conway and Lord Lincoln; but extravagant letters written in the effusive style of the time are not proof of "overt behavior." The verses of a friend at Cambridge who described Walpole as "untossed by passion" fit him throughout his life if one means, as the writer did mean, sexual passion.

Walpole transcribed all the verses on the right-hand pages of the second

Common Place Book with glosses on the opposite pages that acknowledge their indebtedness to Dryden, Addison, Pope, Virgil, and Juvenal. The unprinted verses run to hundreds of lines. They are not in my *Horace Walpole's Fugitive Verses*, 1931, owing to a lapse of Paget Toynbee's customary generosity. I called on him at his house in Bucks whenever I was in England, taking with me my latest outstanding finds to show him. He looked at them with mixed feelings—pleasure for me, but regret that they would affect the value of his work. In 1927 we talked about my plans for an edition of Walpole's *Fugitive Verses*. "Oh," he said, "wouldn't you like to look in *there!*" and pointed to a cabinet that had, he said, his copies of the unpublished verses from the second Common Place Book. It was not until 1942 when I acquired the books that I saw how much had been kept from me. Perhaps the most notable prose piece in it is Walpole's "Speech in the House of Commons for an address to the King Jan'y 17th 1751," one of the few speeches he made during his twenty-six years in Parliament and the only one I know of in manuscript. The motion was carried 203 to 74, Prime Minister Pelham, Pitt, and Uncle Horace Walpole voting for it.

Walpole labelled his third Common Place Book "Political Papers." They were printed in the weeklies *Old England*, *The World*, *The Remembrancer*, *The Protester*. The "papers" are written on the right-hand pages; opposite them are voluminous notes such as, "Mr Pitt's fort [*sic*] was language. He dealt much in creation of words, such as Vicinage, Colonize, Whiggery, Desultoriness," a claim not confirmed by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which gives earlier uses of all of them. The forthcoming Yale Edition of Walpole's memoirs will be enriched by this Common Place Book.

In 1759 and 1771 Walpole began what he called "Books of Materials" in two green vellum quartos and in 1786 a "Miscellany" in a small red morocco notebook with silver clasps. For nearly forty years he wrote up his visits to country houses, thoughts on Shakespeare, notes for a fifth volume of the *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, and much besides. The first note in 1759 is on the death of Prince George of Denmark taken from the *Secret History of England*; the final note in the Miscellany was written in the last year of Walpole's life. It records that Murphy's *Portugal*, 1795, raises the possibility that "the fine Gothic church of Batalha was built after a design by Stephen Stephenson, an Englishman"; Walpole kept his interest in "Gothic" to the end. The Miscellany's epigraph is from Cibber's *Apology* and fits all the notebooks: "Such remaining scraps—as may not perhaps be worth the reader's notice: but if they are such as tempt



82.

Journey to Rousham, Ditchley, Blenheim, July 17<sup>th</sup> 1760.

Rousham, Mr Charles Cocherell's, was a small old indifferent house, built by a Dorner; much improved for General Dorner, by Kent, in four years; with the garden. Head of Is of Norfolk divorced for adultery; 2d by Mr Peter Lely, but finished smooth like Carlo Dolce. D. Johanna Dorner Duquesne de Sena, et. 25. The library, a good room, totally by Kent, a half kind of gothic; odd ceiling, does not seem to belong to the room; chimney with ionic pillars; fine pict. of Sen. Dorner by Rantow. good collection of books & prints. The garden of 25 acres; the best thing I have seen of Kent. Gothic buildings, arcade from ancient baths, temples, old bridge, palladian &c. river, slender stream winding in a stone channel thro grass walks in wood, cascades overgrown with ivy; grove of Venus of Medici. the whole, sweet. <sup>several portraits by Lely & Kneller.</sup>

Ditchley, 2d Litchfield, built by last Lord, very good house except salon, which too small, bad carved figures, painted olive; chimneys & a buffet, each in a corner. Fine Hall, bas-reliefs by Kent in mantle ornaments by Kent, ceiling & side pieces by him, not so bad as his common. Head of old Mr Henry Lee, with Dog who saved his life, by Corn. Jansen. the motto, more faithful than favoured. He was an Eliz<sup>th</sup> Knight for 30 yrs, by vow, & then resigned it to the Earl of Oxford. Four heads of old men, said to be his brothers - but I don't find he had any; they are good pictures. Mr Th. Kirk killed at Battle of Marston, good. Mr Chr. Hatton. Mr Hen. Lee, again, whole length; old fat man, with a stick & the garden, good. Anne of Lindsey, with an urn; by Mr P. Lely, good. J. & Is of York, types Mary & Anne, children, 3 yrs. The Duke's head & one hand by Lely, good; all the best by some wretched scholar of his.

Blenheim. execrable within, without, & almost all round. Most of the tubens' spoiled by the sun. a fine lively head by Holbein. Is Stafford & Leer. a copy. a pict. called Is of Norfolk & her gowns, is a copy of a picture at Wilton of Mrs Norton



me to write them, why may not I hope that in this wide world there may be many an idle soul no wiser than myself who may be equally tempted to read them?" Hands across the ages.

The "Conversations with Lady Suffolk" and "Journeys to Country Houses" that Walpole wrote in the Common Place Books were edited by Paget Toynbee; the notes for contemporary painters in the Books of Materials were published by F. W. Hilles and P. B. Daghljan as the fifth volume of *Anecdotes of Painting in England*; Lars Troide has edited the entire Miscellany; I printed privately the notes on Shakespeare.

The unpublished notes include "Streets of London," which was to be the English equivalent of Saint-Foix's book on the streets of Paris. Many pages headed "Miscellaneous" are extracts from Walpole's reading. A sample is:

"In Earl of Northumb's declar. ag. Hen. IV. He affirms  
that Richard II was starved. Parl. Hist. 2.74.

Best laws under kings of worst titles. 105.

Piked shoes tied up with chains. Act ag. them. 327.

Card. Wolsey goes to Commons to demand a subsidy. Speaker falls on  
his knees, abashed at the presence of so great a personage. 30."

As Walpole remembered and repeated what he read his reputation for brilliant and erudite conversation is not surprising.

My seventh notebook is small enough to be carried in a pocket. Walpole kept it from 1780 to 1783. Its notes range from *A Discourse of Husbandrie used in Brabant and Flanders*, 1650, to George Washington's Royalist ancestors. Walpole thought so highly of one of his own bon mots in it, "Man is an Aurivorous Animal," that he included it among his "Detached Pieces" in his posthumous *Works*. The history of this pocket notebook is lost until it re-emerged in the Red Cross Sale at Sotheby's in 1917. Then it passed into the R. B. Adam library in Buffalo and when that library was sold in 1926 Dr Rosenbach bought it for me. The Walpole Press at Mount Vernon, New York, brought out a facsimile of it in 1927 with notes by me that foreshadow the Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence, which I began six years later.

The Books of Materials, 1759 and 1771, and the Miscellany, were taken by Mrs Damer as part of her share of Walpole's manuscripts. She bequeathed them to her Twickenham neighbor Sir Wathen Waller, 1st Baronet, in whose family they remained until they were sold at Sotheby's in 1921 by the then Sir Wathen Waller of Woodcote near Warwick. This



was three years before I began to collect Walpole. A sale of manuscripts is like the wind that rushed into the Sibyl's cave and blew the leaves all over the world and I began getting lots from the Waller Sale far from Sotheby's. De Ricci in Paris gave me six letters to Walpole, a few had reached New York, fifty-four were owned by a plasterer in Chicago (who was kindly reported to me by Arundell Esdaile, Secretary of the British Museum), two by Dr Frank Pleadwell, U.S.N. retired, in Honolulu, and two by a dealer in Dunedin, New Zealand, reported by Humphrey Milford. The "Books of Materials," Miscellany, and some letters had got to the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington; Mr Percival Merritt of Boston acquired the "Paris Journals" and the Book of Visitors to Strawberry Hill, which he bequeathed to Harvard. I presently bought in London the "Journal of the Printing Office" (Choice 7) and a few other pieces from the Waller Sale.

In 1933 when I showed my priced copy of its catalogue with the names of the purchasers to Seymour de Ricci in Paris he saw at once that several of the alleged buyers were fictitious. The use of such names is sanctioned by British practice for lots bought in by the owner. Nearly two-fifths of the Waller sale had such names and were presumably still in the possession of Sir Wathen Waller. In reply to my letter he answered that he did own them and volunteered that they were not for sale. A year later I wrote him again and this time he asked me down to Woodcote for a night to see the manuscripts and letters he had bought in at Sotheby's. While sitting in the railway carriage at Paddington, I realized that I had come away without pajamas, a circumstance made the more awkward by its being Thursday, an "early closing day" at Leamington where I was met. Fortunately, the Waller chauffeur was a man of resource who knew how to knock on a back window of a certain draper's shop. It was a relief to think, as we swept up the drive at Woodcote, that the bootleg pajamas had completed my wardrobe. The Wallers were waiting on the terrace with visible apprehension. Lady Waller later confessed that they were braced for an elderly professor with a beard, but they were relieved by the story of the pajamas. The day was fine, just the day for an extended tour of the gardens; Walpole could wait. At tea a somewhat rustic footman appeared and asked, trying to preserve his decorum, which shoes would I wear at dinner? I had put in one evening shoe and one golf shoe, both lefts. My friendship with the Wallers had begun.

After dinner the Walpoliana were spread out on the billiard table, a ritual repeated in the following summers when my wife and I went down

for visits at Woodcote. On my initial visit I said nothing about the possibility of Sir Wathen's sending the manuscripts to the British Museum to be photostated, but he willingly consented to do so the next year. He and I also began the searches in the attics and storerooms that furnish a collector's best stories when, as at Woodcote, we "found" and brought our discoveries to the billiard-room cupboard. Their history was known straight back to Mrs Damer and Walpole.

Sir Wathen died just after the war. Lady Waller sent to Christie's the new manuscripts we had found about the house as well as those bought in at the earlier sale, and I was able to get all but two of them. Later a lacquered snuff-box that had been Walpole's arrived as a present from Lady Waller. During the war it had been slightly damaged by a land mine that fell near the bank in Coventry where the Wallers had transferred various objects for safe-keeping, a circumstance that would have given its original owner, who liked to think of Strawberry's contents in the glorious future, cause for reflection.

One hundred and eighty-two of the leaves blown round the world in the 1921 Waller Sale have been swept up and brought to Farmington. Among them are the Books of Materials and Miscellany that, owing to the good offices of Joseph Q. Adams and Louis B. Wright, came to Farmington from the Folger Shakespeare Library as related in my *Collector's Progress* and Choice 13. Photostats of thirty-two manuscripts from the first Waller Sale in other hands are also at Farmington; only forty-one are still missing. Doubtless some of them will turn up sooner or later in unexpected places. I discovered this may be so when one day I opened my copy of Joseph Spence's *Polymetis*. A letter from Spence dated 27 October, 1757, slid out. It is mostly about Richard I. The address is missing and the recipient might have been any antiquary but for Spence's closing wish, "May the press at Strawberry Hill ever flourish and abound," an unpublished letter that I had forgotten Maggs bought in the first Waller Sale and sold me in 1927. Missing Walpoliana may be anywhere.