

Sir,

I am just now honored with Your Royal Highness's  
letter of the 3<sup>d</sup>. and rejoice exceedingly to find that Your Royal Highness is so  
happily united in brotherly friendship and regard with the Duke of York; for  
the most solid advantages arise from the bands of Family connection being strongly  
linked together. Whosoever a person writes out to pleasure, he passes  
his time very agreeably; for a proper division of the twenty four hours, to  
study or business; amuse ment & rest, tends to constitute the greatest  
possible happiness; though I fear it would be very difficult to convince  
the younger part of mankind of the truth of this axiom; however, Sir, we  
must take the world as we find it; & when solid good cannot be obtained,  
we must admit partial evil - when we cannot get at Brandy, Champagne,  
and Opera; we must content ourselves with Wild bow, Snake tobacco & play of  
Shuffles; and Tristram Shandy, from the oddity of the composition, may sometimes  
afford as much amusement as even Pope or Swift - I will take the liberty to  
quote a passage from the former, & then drop this theme -



"Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,  
 "Were there all harmony, all virtue here;  
 "That never air or ocean felt the wind;  
 "That never passion discompos'd the mind;  
 "But all subsists by elemental strife;  
 "And passions are the elements of life.  
 "The great order since the whole began,  
 "Is kept in nature, and is kept in Man.

Philosophers may deal out their precepts, but mankind will attend to them  
 as it suits their situation or convenience - for tho' the Passions are a little  
 cooled, they are much more powerful than reason. Pope seems to have  
 understood the construction of the human frame, and I should imagine,  
 that there is a constant elemental strife between the little French girl &  
 Christian Handy, when if I were to give my opinion freely, I should suppose  
 that the former proved more powerful than the latter. And now, Sir, if you please  
 I will proceed to more serious matter -

The generality of people here, appear to be totally unacquainted  
 with foreign politics, and I can only class myself amongst the vulgar;  
 yet, if the faculties be a little exerted, I apprehend it possible to draw  
 some conclusions, which might not be very far wide from the truth. On  
 the subject of foreign alliance, I shall suppose the interests of England  
 and France; a third of Austria & Prussia opposed to each other; that  
 Holland, by its indolence and inactivity, is incapable of supporting itself.



and must therefore be dependant on some of the surrounding great powers  
for protection: That Prussia, though it appears at present to be a loose  
and desultory government, guided more by caprice than system, yet  
is of infinite weight & importance, from her situation and power to  
assist or annoy the Emperor or King of Prussia: Thus, by seeing the  
changes on these great states, we might form many political connections,  
though few that would perfectly accord. I believe it is the opinion of  
some politicians, that as the Dutch have thrown themselves into the arms of  
France, it would be a wise policy in us, to use every means to disturb  
their commerce, in order to lower their maritime strength, & thereby prevent  
the increase of naval force to the House of Bourbon; and in order to promote  
this political plan, the Emperors favorite project of becoming a  
commercial & maritime state, should be encouraged; and when once brought  
into action, France must be involved in a continental war in support  
of the Dutch, which would break in upon her present system as  
opposed to Britain: In this idea also, the Russians were then  
engaged in treaty with the Emperor, to keep the King of Prussia  
in check; and to oppose her naval force against that of Holland: But  
such a political connection is derided by another description of  
politicians; because, it would be directly opposed to the system of  
Prussia; & we should be naturally involved in the contest to protect



Hanover and its dependancies; and knowing our present situation to be  
 unequal to vigorous exertions, we against any avowed political sentiment  
 connection whatever; but we for sowing the seeds of discord, that we may reap  
 some advantages from the folly of others. I am not sufficiently learned to  
 decide on these different principles of policy; at the same time, as the affair  
 stands at present; I am humbly of opinion, that the King of Prussia will  
 not quietly submit to an increase of power to the Emperor, without he were  
 to obtain an adequate advantage for himself; That France, under the  
 faith of recent treaty, cannot readily give up her new ally; because, even if  
 the idea of a partition of Holland existed, she would not reap so many advantages  
 from her proportion in the division, as she has the effect from her alliance;  
 And if Prussia should not give her support to the Emperor, he must be obliged to  
 relinquish his project on the Scheldt, or being engaged in an unequal combat. Thus  
 you see, Sir, for my poor sentiments on continental politics, they are in a very  
 fluctuating state, as your Royal Highness observes, & it is very difficult to  
 say what will be the issue of the dispute. My last mail, I had a letter from  
 Paris, which says, "Reports here of war & peace, change with the wind; but it  
 is most probable the latter will be the case; however, all Officers have orders to  
 join their regiments, and to be ready to march the 15<sup>th</sup> of next month - two  
 armies are talked of to oppose the Emperor; one in Flanders, the other in  
 "Altogether; it is likewise said, that a third is to be formed in Piedmont, to



"join the King of Sardinia to act against the Milanese." There is a maxim  
of De Pute, which implies, "that people never go so far, as when they know  
not where they are going." and as the actions of men are often guided by  
chance than reason, I think it probable this affair may not terminate without  
blood. The Court of Rome have sent a proclamation to the Emperor,  
declaring, that it cannot suffer the Dutch, its ally, to be dismembered of any of its <sup>possessions</sup>  
<sup>or to be</sup> oppressed; and the French Minister has had orders to show it to our Court, and  
to request its mediation to prevent war in the continent. Some of the  
Foreign ministers said yesterday, that the Emperor was arrived incognito at  
Paris. It was reported that Comice Scavini was dead, but I do not find  
that it is authenticated. We must wait patiently for events, which will be  
more satisfactory than speculation.

As to home politics, Your Royal Highness may remember  
my former sentiments on that subject. What the issue is determined to be  
either, I do not see that any opposition to that system, can be effectual; &  
the more especially, since from the moment of Lord Rockingham's death,  
party connection was totally destroyed; and as no wants are likely to arise  
to trouble the ordinary course of government; I think the present administration  
have a propensity not to be shaken.

I am sorry to inform Your Royal Highness, that the Comice of



Walter has been much indisposed - His Royal Highness caught cold by sleeping  
in wet cloaths in his Chair after hunting, which brought on a fever &  
terminated by a violent eruption, that still confines His Royal Highness  
to the house -

The common occurrence of this place are scarcely worth  
Your Royal Highness's notice. I shall therefore enclose with inclosed  
wishes for Your Royal Highness will find a happyish, and with the  
utmost respect I have the honor to be Sir

Your Royal Highness's

Most devoted

and

Most faithful Servant

W<sup>m</sup> DeWyndham

London Dec<sup>r</sup> 17: 1784

(Sir)