

## From GRAY, ca Tuesday 16 April 1734

Printed from MS in Waller Collection.

Dated by the postmark, the address (see note below), and the reference to 'Passion Week' (see below). The letter was written in answer to HW's missing letter to Gray ca 12 April 1734. Gray was in the country, possibly with his uncle, William Antrobus, at Everdon, Northants, or with his aunt, Mrs Jonathan Rogers, at Cants-hill, in Britwell, near Burnham, Bucks (see *post* Aug. 1736, and 9 Sept. 1747).

The date shown in eighteenth-century postmarks on letters sent to or through London is invariably that of arrival in London; the use of date stamps was confined to the General Post Office and no provincial date stamps appeared until 1798 (John G. Hendy, *History of the Early Postmarks of the British Isles*, 1905, p. 5; C. F. Dendy Marshall, *British Post Office*, 1926, p. 209). This fact, together with the fact that until 1741 mail 'for all parts of England' left London on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and arrived on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (John Chamberlayne, *Magnæ Britannia Notitia*, 1735, pt i. 260-3; GM 1741, xi. 330), is taken into consideration in the conjectural dating of some of Gray's and Walpole's early letters.

*Address:* To the Honourable Mr Horatio <Wal>pole at the house of th<e Right> Honourable Sir Robert W<alpole> in St James's Square,<sup>1</sup> London.

*Postmark:* [?] 17 AP.

[ca April 16, 1734.]

< ><sup>2</sup>

I BELIEVE by your not making me happy in a longer letter than that<sup>3</sup> I have just received, you had a design to prevent my tiring you with a tedious one; but in revenge for your neglect I'm resolved to send you one five times as long. Sir, do you think, that I'll be fobbed off<sup>4</sup> with eleven lines and a half after waiting this week in continual expectation and proposing to myself all the pleasure that you, if you would, might give me? Gadsbud!<sup>5</sup> I am provoked into a fermentation! When I see you next, I'll firke you, I'll rattle you with a *certiorari*.<sup>6</sup> Let me tell you I am at present as full of wrath and choler as—as—you are of wit and good-nature; though I begin to doubt your title to the last of them,

1. From 1732 to 1735 Sir Robert Walpole lived in Lord Ashburnham's house (known since 1771 as London House) on the east side of St James's Square. After the completion of alterations he removed to Downing Street 22 Sept. 1735. See *Daily Adv.* 25 Oct., 27 Nov. 1732; *London Daily Post* 23 Sept. 1735; A. I. Dasent, *History of St James's Square*, 1895, pp. 155, 220.

2. Piece cut away. Probably 'My dearest Celadon': see *post* 14 Jan. 1735.

3. Missing.

4. Mistress Quickly in 2 *Henry IV* II. i. Gray repeats this passage *post* 25 Feb. 1735 and refers to Mistress Quickly.

5. Sir Paul Plyant in Congreve's *Double Dealer* II. iv: 'Gadsbud! I am provoked into a fermentation, as my Lady Froth says.'

6. Sir Paul Plyant (*ibid.* II. iv): 'Pray, your Ladyship, give me leave to be angry. I'll rattle him up, I warrant you, I'll firke him with a *certiorari*.'