

when I was very young. Poor West put a stop to that tragic torrent⁶ he saw breaking in upon him—have a care, I warn you, not to set open the flood-gate again, lest it drown you and me and the bishop⁷ and all.

I am very sorry to hear you treat philosophy and her followers like a parcel of monks and hermits, and think myself obliged to vindicate a profession I honour, *bien que je n'en tiennne pas boutique*⁸ (as Madame Sévigné says). The first man⁹ that ever bore the name,¹⁰ if you remember, used to say that life was like the Olympic games (the greatest public assembly of his age and country), where some came to show their strength and agility of body, as the champions; others, as the musicians, orators, poets and historians, to show their excellence in those arts; the traders, to get money; and the better sort, to enjoy the spectacle, and judge of all these. They did not then run away from society for fear of its temptations; they passed their days in the midst of it; conversation was their business; they cultivated the arts of persuasion on purpose to show men it was their interest as well as their duty not to be foolish, and false, and unjust; and that too in many instances with success; which is not very strange, for they showed by their life that their lessons were not impracticable, and that pleasures were no temptations but to such as wanted a clear perception of the pains annexed to them. But I have done preaching *à la grecque*. Mr Ratcliffe¹¹ made a shift to behave very rationally without their instructions, at a season which they took a great deal of pains to fortify themselves and others against; one would not desire to lose one's head with a better grace. I am particularly satisfied with the humanity of that last embrace to all the

6. *Ante* 15 Dec. 1746, n. 12.

7. Ashton, the prospective 'Lord Bishop of Killaloe' (see *ante* 15 Dec. 1746; *Gray's Corr.* i. 262, n. 5).

8. Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan 21 Sept. 1689: '. . . moi, qui ne lève point boutique de philosophie . . .' (*Lettres*, ed. Louis-Jean-Nicolas de Monmerqué, Paris, 1862-6, ix. 220).

9. The passage 'The first man . . . annexed to them' is a paraphrase of Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* v. 3, similar to a passage which occurs in Diogenes Laertius.

10. Pythagoras (Cicero, *loc. cit.*; Diogenes Laertius, *Vitæ Philosophorum* viii. 8).

11. Charles Radclyffe (1693-1746), who but for the attainder would have been 5th E. of Derwentwater, was sentenced to death after the rebellion of 1715, but escaped;

was captured in Nov. 1745, and was beheaded 8 Dec. 1746 in the Tower. 'He ascended the scaffold about ten minutes before twelve. . . . He took leave of his friends with great serenity of mind, and having spoke a few words to the executioner and put on a damask cap, knelt down to prayers, and continued so about seven minutes, all the attendants joining with him. Prayers over, he pulled off his clothes, and having fitted his face to the block, gave the executioner ten guineas, and directed him not to wait for any signal but to strike as soon as his head was on the block, which was accordingly done, and his head severed from his body at one blow' (*Old England: or, The Broadbottom Journal* 13 Dec. 1746; see also *GM* 1746, xvi. 666, and *Daily Adv.* 9 Dec. 1746).