

A genius big with system,¹ slighting rules!
 Gall he had none, but boundless scorn of fools.
 Ambition lent her flambeau to his hand,²
 And Bacchus sprinkled fuel on the brand.
 His wish to counsel monarchs or control;
 His only means—the ardour of his soul!
 Down came at once the fabric of his pride,³
 Yet slightly-built diffused no ruin wide;
 Unhurt, undaunted, undisturbed, he fell,
 Could laugh the same, and the same stories tell:
 Though headlong from his airy scaffold hurled,⁴
 He held his bottle fast, and dropped the world.⁵

I make no excuses for the four lines I have omitted.⁶ There are two more⁷ I could not find in my heart to omit (good reason why!) and yet think it would be better, if they were not there.

TO GRAY, ca September 1763

Missing. Probably written at SH. Answered *post* 12 Sept. 1763.

FROM GRAY, Monday 12 September 1763

Printed from MS in Waller Collection.

Gray's notes below were, with a few exceptions, inserted by HW in his edition of *The Life of Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury, written by himself*, Strawberry Hill, 1764, the printing of which was begun 23 Sept. 1763 (200 copies) and finished 27 Jan. 1764 (*Journal of the Printing-Office* 12). The MS was lent to HW by Lady Hertford, who borrowed it from Lady Powis (wife of Lord Herbert of Cherbury's great-great-grandson). HW and Gray read it together at SH during Lady Waldegrave's visit there 9–18 April 1763 (MONTAGU ii. 59, 67, 129–30).

1. In the rough draft: 'systems.'
2. Gray first wrote in his rough draft: 'Ambition's flambeau sparkled in his hand.'
3. Gray first wrote: 'Soon fell the airy scaffold of his pride.'
4. Gray first wrote: 'And headlong from his airy scaffold hurled.'
5. Besides the final version of this line, with 'Still' interlined over 'He,' Gray wrote another version in his rough draft: 'He hugged his bottle, though he dropped the world.'

6. In the printed version of the 'Portrait' a few of Gray's corrections were adopted, but for the most part HW adhered to what he had written. HW 'printed about 30 copies' at his private press on 10 Jan. See *Journal of the Printing-Office* 10, 41; *Horace Walpole's Fugitive Verses*, ed. W. S. Lewis, New York, 1931, pp. 51–2; Hazen, *SH Bibliography* 175–8.
7. Probably the couplet beginning 'Unhurt, undaunted,' which, in the MS, is marked with crosses.