

HORACE WALPOLE'S CORRESPONDENCE

From MANN, Monday 3 January 1780

The fifth paragraph was printed in Doran ii. 367-8.

Florence, January 3d 1780.

THIS is the first letter I write for England in 1780, during which and a long *suite* I most ardently wish you the enjoyment of better health and more satisfaction than you have had of late. I was grieved to see by your last letter that you had wrote it in so much pain. I might say that I am the more obliged to you for it, but I renounce that idea and would willingly forego all the satisfaction and instruction that your letters give me, rather than occasion you the least inconvenience. I am persuaded that the ensuing months will be fertile of events at home, and I wish that those abroad may be such as may calm the opposition there while the present situation subsists, that our enemies may not take advantage of our divisions and of the publication to the world of many facts which they give occasion to. The French has given us some hints of an unfavourable event that has happened to them at the Savannah. That minister here owns that d'Estaing had made *une tentative malheureuse* there, and was returned to France with his own ship¹ only, to be the first to give his own account of it, lest the multitude of his officers who were following him with many ships of his squadron² should propagate an opinion which he seemed to dread. This precaution seems to prognosticate something more to our advantage than England was informed of when the post of the 16th December sat off. That post has brought the comforting hopes of a perfect reconciliation with Ireland. The concessions seem to be all they wished for, so that I hope that nothing will intervene to prevent the completion of it, and that all motives of jealousy being removed, the two sisters will be more cordial friends than ever.

What a strange story has been told of Lord Lyttleton's death!³ The

1. The *Languedoc*, which arrived 7 Dec. at Brest according to the *Gazette de Leyde* 21 Dec., *sub* Brest 7 Dec.

2. 11 ships of the line sailed from Savannah for France (Capt. Henry to the Admiralty, Savannah, 8 Nov., in *London Gazette* No. 12041, 18-21 Dec.). By 3 Jan. only *Le Tonnant* of 80 guns remained unreported (*Gazette de Leyde* 14 Jan. 1780,

sub Paris, 3 Jan.; for the arrival of the other vessels at various ports, see *ibid.* 21 Dec. 1779; 4, 7, and 14 Jan. 1780).

3. For Lyttleton's dream the night of 24-5 Nov., foretelling his death three days later, see the account drawn up by his uncle 'some ten weeks' after the event (*MASON* i. 487, n. 15; other versions were current).