

TO HORACE MANN the Younger,
Thursday 12 February 1789

Berkeley Square, Feb. 12, 1789.

I NOW do believe that the K[ing] is coming to *himself*—not, in the language of the courtiers, to his senses, but from their proof, viz, that he is returned to his *what! what! what!* which he used to prefix to every sentence, and which is, coming to his nonsense. I am corroborated in this opinion by his having said much more sensible things in his lunacy,² than he did when he was reckoned sane, which I do not believe he has been for some years.

Well!—now, how will this new change of scene operate? I fancy, if anyone could win access to him who would tell him the truth,³

1. In the fourteenth week of his 'disorder' (*Daily Adv.* 8 Nov. 1788). 'The physicians' report of yesterday is by far the most favourable . . . since his Majesty's indisposition' (ibid. 11 Feb. 1789). The report in the *London Gazette* No. 13067, 7–10 Feb., *sub* Kew, 10 Feb., read: 'His Majesty passed yesterday in a state of composure, had four hours of sleep, and has more than usual recollection this morning.' On 10 Feb., the King 'continued in the state of composure'; 'walked in Kew and Richmond Gardens near two hours'; and asked for and was visited by Lord Camden. On the 11th he saw Pitt, and on the 12th he was reported by his physicians 'in a progressive state of amendment' (ibid. No. 13068, 10–14 Feb.; *Daily Adv.* 11, 12, 13 Feb.; 'The Royal Recovery' in C. C. Trench, *The Royal Malady*, 1964, pp. 167–79 and notes p. 217). For George III's illness see 'Minutes of the Daily Progress of his Majesty's Indisposition' from 17 Oct. 1788 to 26 Feb. 1789 in *GM* 1788, lviii pt ii. 1025, 1118; 1789, lix pt i. 83, 175, based on the daily medical bulletins in the newspapers and the *London Gazette*. See also *Report from the Committee appointed to Examine the Physicians who attended his Majesty, during his Illness* . . . 1788, 32 pp. and 1789, 259 pp.

(HW's copy of the 1788 *Report*, now WSL, is Hazen, *Cat. of HW's Lib.*, 1609:51:1).

2. Now diagnosed as 'acute intermittent porphyria' (Dr Ida Macalpine and Dr Richard Hunter, 'The "Insanity" of King George III: a Classic Case of Porphyria,' reprinted from the *British Medical Journal*, 8 Jan. 1966, in *Porphyria—a Royal Malady*, 1966, p. 14, published by the British Medical Association). On the basis of new medical evidence discovered (ibid. 1–2) and the re-examination of the daily bulletins, reports, and contemporary correspondence, relating to 'his Majesty's disorder' the authors conclude 'that George III's malady was not "mental" in the accepted sense, in whatever old or modern terms it may be couched'; that the 'clinical picture revealed by the physicians' daily record makes the diagnosis of manic-depressive psychosis untenable'; that 'by the triad alone of abdominal symptoms, polyneuritis and mental disturbance . . . the symptomatology and course of the royal malady reads like the description of a textbook case [of 'acute intermittent porphyria']. This theory is opposed by many authorities (see Geoffrey Dean's letter in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 29 Jan. 1970, pp. 110–11).

3. About the passage in the House of