

## MANUSCRIPTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

**W**ALPOLE'S correspondence with Mason consists of 217 letters written by Walpole and 116 written by Mason. Five of Mason's letters and one of Walpole's—the unsent letter of 5 May 1783—are here printed for the first time.<sup>1</sup> All the letters but these and seven others (which were printed by Miss Berry, Cunningham, or Toynbee) first appeared in *The Correspondence of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, and the Rev. William Mason*, edited by the Rev. John Mitford and published by Richard Bentley in 1851. Since the originals of Walpole's letters to Mason have not been found, our text of them is necessarily derived from Mitford's, emended by Croker, Cunningham, and Toynbee; further emendation has been provided by Dr Chapman and Mr Ketton-Cremer. Mason's letters are printed from the original manuscripts, which Mr Lewis bought in 1935 from Richard Bentley the younger.

Walpole died 2 March 1797 and Mason the following 7 April, before Walpole's executors, Mrs Damer and Lord Frederick Campbell, had sent back Mason's letters, in accordance with Walpole's testamentary request that letters to him from living correspondents be returned to them at his death. Two years later one of the trustees of Mason's estate, the Rev. John Dixon, was still trying to recover the letters,<sup>2</sup> but he failed to do so. They remained among Walpole's papers that passed to the Waldegrave family, and 'formed part of the collection of manuscripts purchased of the [5th] Duke of Grafton, as executor of the late Earl of Waldegrave.'<sup>3</sup> The purchaser, Richard Bentley, acquired the collection some time between October 1846 and March 1848. Mason's letters to Walpole were passed on to John Mitford, a clergyman and writer who had edited Gray and other poets for

1. See List of Letters, *post* pp. xlvii–lvi.

2. Letter from Dixon to Malone de-

scribed in Sir James Prior, *Life of Edmond Malone*, 1860, p. 307.

3. Mitford's Preface, i. p. vii.