

fireworks and sky-rockets. The Birthday exceeded the splendour of Haroun Alraschid, and the Arabian Nights, when people had nothing to do but to scour a lanthorn, and send a genie for a hamper of diamonds and rubies.¹⁰ Do you remember one of those stories, where a Prince has eight statues of diamonds, which he overlooks, because he fancies he wants a ninth—and to his great surprise the ninth proves to be pure flesh and blood, which he never thought of?¹¹ Somehow or other Lady Sarah Lenox¹² is the ninth statue; and you will allow has better white and red, than if she was made of pearls and rubies. Lord Besborough has made some verses on her not knowing the meaning of the expression, *save one's bacon*.¹³ I have not got them, nor are they very excellent. Oh! I forgot, I was telling you of the Birthday: my Lord Pomfret¹⁴ had drunk the King's health so often at dinner, that at the ball, he took Mrs Lane¹⁵ for a beautiful woman, and, as she says, *made an improper use of his hands*. The proper use of hers, she thought, was to give him a box on the ear, though within the verge of the Court¹⁶—he returned it by a push, and she tumbled off the end of the bench, which his Majesty has accepted as sufficient punishment, and she is not to lose her right hand.

10. 'There never was a more brilliant Court on any occasion. Such an amazing number of jewels as the ladies wore for nose-gays in their bosoms, etc. was scarce ever before collected at one time. Most of their clothes were gold and silver brocades' (*London Chronicle* 4-6 June, ix. 537).

11. The story of King Zeyn Alasnm. HW's copy of *The Arabian Night's Entertainment Consisting of One Thousand and One Stories*, 1736, is Hazen, *Cat. of HW's Lib.*, No. 1552.

12. (1745-1826), dau. of Charles, 2d D. of Richmond. The King was in love with her, but on the advice of Bute began 'looking in the New Berlin Almanack for Princesses' (*Letters from George III to Lord Bute 1756-1766*, ed. Sedgwick, 1939, pp. 37-40). He continued, however, to pay her marked attention, most recently at the Birthday ball, when he had conversed with her nearly to the exclusion of the other guests, so much so that the announcement on 8 July of his impending marriage caused consternation among her relatives; see particularly Lord Holland's 'Memoir' in *The Life and Letters of Lady*

Sarah Lennox, ed. Lady Ilchester and Lord Stavordale, 1902, i. 26-31, 47-51; *Mem. Geo. III* i. 49-52; Lord Ilchester, *Henry Fox*, 1920, ii. 130-7; MANN v. 517, n. 14. It is possible that Henry Fox, Lady Sarah's brother-in-law, as a means of ingratiating himself with the King had encouraged Lady Sarah to play up to George with a view of becoming his mistress; see John Brooke, *King George III*, New York, 1972, pp. 95-7.

13. 'To escape injury to one's body, to keep oneself from harm' (OED 5a).

14. George Fermor (1722-85), 2d E. of Pomfret.

15. Perhaps Hon. Harriet Benson (1705-71), m. (1731) George Fox (after 1751, Fox Lane), cr. (1762) Bn Bingley.

16. Chamberlayne says 'Of Offences committed within the Verge of the King's Court': 'If any man presume to strike another within the palace where the King's royal person resideth, and by such a stroke only draw blood, his right hand shall be struck off, and he committed to perpetual imprisonment, and fined' (*Magna Britannia Notitia*, 1755, Pt I, Bk II, p. 109).