

first objects? Oh, Harry! if you knew what I have felt and am feeling about you, would you charge me with neglect? If I have seen a person since you went, to whom my first question has not been, 'What do you hear of the peace?' you would have reason to blame me. You say I write very seldom: I will tell you what, I should almost be sorry to have you see the anxiety I have expressed about you in letters to everybody else.¹ No; I must except Lady A., and there is not another on earth who loves you so well and is so attentive to whatever relates to you.

With regard to writing this is exactly the case: I had nothing to tell you; nothing has happened; and where you are, I was cautious of writing. Having neither hopes nor fears, I always write the thoughts of the moment, and even laugh to divert the person I am writing to, without any ill will on the subjects I mention. But in your situation that frankness might be prejudicial to you: and to write grave unmeaning letters, I trusted you was too secure of me either to like them or desire them. I knew no news, nor could I: I have lived quite alone at Strawberry; am connected with no court, ministers, or party; consequently heard nothing, and events there have been none. I have not even for this month heard my Lady Townshend's extempore gazette. All the morning I play with my workmen or animals, go regularly every evening to the meadows with Mrs Clive, or sit with my Lady Suffolk,² and at night scribble my painters³—What a journal to send you! I write more trifling letters than any man living; am ashamed of them, and yet they are expected of me. You, my Lady A., your brother, Sir Horace Mann, George Montagu, Lord Strafford—all expect I should write—Of what? I live less and less in the world, care for it less and less, and yet am thus obliged to inquire what it is doing. Do make these allowances for me, and remember half your letters go to my Lady A. I writ to her of the King's marriage,⁴ concluding she would send it to you: tiresome as it would be, I will copy my own letters, if you expect it; for I will do anything rather than disoblige you. I will send you a diary of the Duke of York's balls and Ranelaghs, inform you

1. See, for example, HW to Strafford 5 July (CHUTE 308), HW to Montagu 10 July (MONTAGU i. 377).

2. Henrietta Hobart, Countess of Suffolk, then living at Marble Hill (HW).

3. HW was working on the third volume of the *Anecdotes of Painting*; he completed it 22 Aug. ('Short Notes,' GRAY i. 36-7).

4. Announced 8 July in a *London Gazette Extraordinary*.