

artificial improvements impose on the integrity of your nature. One may add to the treasures of one's head, but for our virtue and honesty we have nothing to do but to watch that they are not perverted. You see, my Lord, how little I value all that is to be *acquired*, and therefore may believe me when I assure you I am far from vain of anything of that kind. Fame and parts are agreeable amusements, but indeed they are no more. I am not young enough to make a rash judgment, nor old and morose enough to speak from mortification and humour: my philosophy, you know, is not very severe, and therefore I don't believe there is a more persuasive witness, than one who generally laughs, and yet assures you there is little satisfaction but in the goodness of one's heart. You have the best in the world by nature and inheritance; if you had not, you would be exceedingly tired of this letter, the sole drift of which is to tell you, that I prefer your friendship even to your commendations. Adieu! my dear Lord.

Yours most faithfully,

HOR. WALPOLE

TO LADY AILESBUURY, Monday 15 March 1762

Printed from the MS now wsl; first printed, with omissions, *Works* v. 562-3. For the history of the MS see *ante* 23 Aug. 1760.

The letter is misdated 'Strawberry Hill, March 5th' by HW. In a letter to Montagu, 'Arlington Street, March 9th' (MONTAGU ii. 20-1), HW wrote, 'I have not been at Strawberry above a month,' so that the present letter could not have been written on the 5th; also, the earliest assurances of an eventual victory at Martinique, alluded to in the letter, apparently did not reach London until 9 March (see n. 5 below). Since the postscript is dated 'Tuesday, 6th,' but 6 March 1762 fell on a Saturday, HW apparently miswrote '5th' and '6th' for '15th' and '16th', dates which fell on Monday and Tuesday, respectively.

Strawberry Hill, March [1]5th, 1762.

Madam,

ONE of your slaves, a fine young officer,¹ brought me two days ago a very pretty medal² from your Ladyship. Amidst all your triumphs you do not I see forget your English friends, and it makes

1. Not identified.

medals, various, in white metal,' sold SH

2. Possibly one of the 36 'German x. 84 for £1.8s.