

APPENDIX 2

WALPOLE'S 'TO ZELINDA, FROM FLORENCE'

Printed for the first time from the copy in HW's *MS Poems*, formerly Waldegrave, now WSL, pp. 30–2. See Conway to HW ca 30 Nov. 1740 OS.

La foule des beaux arts, dont je veux tour à tour
Remplir le vide de moi-même,
N'est point encore assez pour remplacer l'amour.

Voltaire¹

Hear, thou inconstant, how each various art
I tried, to blot thy image from my heart:
Hear too, how ineffectual all have prov'd
To touch the object that so well I lov'd.

How thro' the paths of beauty I have stray'd,
Court'd each fair one, ev'ry blooming maid,
Need I repeat?—my coquetry you knew,
And smil'd, as knowing I could love but you.
I fled you; seas I cross'd, o'er mountains rang'd,
But found my country, not my heart was chang'd.
I dress'd; the livery of Courts I wore,
And learn'd a language I had scorn'd before:
I tried to be ambitious, sought to please,
And flatter'd princes, as I thought, with ease—
But oh! mistaken! when my soothing tongue
Their prowess or their vices should have sung;
I prais'd their lips, their eyes, their easy move,
And found 'twas not my court I made—but love.
Or if the blind ones with such praise were caught,
If I attain'd the favour I had sought;
How little was I pleas'd with my success!
How did each honour, how each grace oppress!
Where was Zelinda, at whose shrine her slave
Might offer ev'ry honour monarchs gave?
Had they bestow'd their crowns, e'en crowns were vain,
Unless to bind her brow, and bid Zelinda reign.

1. 'A Une Dame, ou soi-disant telle,' ll. 59–61; printed *Mercur de France*, Sept. 1732, p. 1891; Voltaire's *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Moland, 1877–85, x. 276.