

## TO PRINCESS AMELIA, Friday 16 June 1786

Printed from a photostat of the MS in the possession of Mr Robert H. Taylor, Princeton, New Jersey. The MS is probably HW's copy of the verses he sent to Princess Amelia. HW quoted the verses in his letters to Conway 18 June (CONWAY iii. 441-2) and to Lady Ossory 5 July (OSSORY ii. 517); the verses are reprinted in *Horace Walpole's Fugitive Verses*, ed. W. S. Lewis, 1931, p. 181. The MS was formerly in the Penzance Library; later acquired by Paul C. Richards, Brookline, Mass., who sold it to Hofmann and Freeman, May 1970; sold by them to Mr Taylor, Sept. 1970.

To her Royal Highness the Princess Amelia commanding me  
to write something in praise of Gunnersbury<sup>1</sup> June 16, 1786<sup>2</sup>

## 1.

In deathless odes for ever green  
Augustus' laurels blow;  
Nor e'er was grateful duty seen  
In warmer strains to flow.

## 2.

Oh! Why is Flaccus<sup>3</sup> not alive  
Your fav'rite scene to sing?  
To Gunnersbury's charms could give  
His lyre immortal spring.

## 3.

As warm as his my zeal for you,  
Great Princess, could I show it:  
But though you have a Horace too,  
Ah! Madam, he's no poet.

1. Princess Amelia's summer residence at Ealing, Middlesex.

2. HW wrote Conway 18 June 1786: 'I was sent for again to dine at Gunnersbury on Friday [16 June]. . . . The Princess, Lady Barrymore, and the rest of us, played three pools at commerce till ten. I am afraid I was tired and gaped. While we were at the dairy, the Princess insisted on my making some verses on Gunnersbury. I pleaded being superannuated. She would not excuse me. I promised she

should have an ode on her next birthday; which diverted the Prince [of Wales]—but all would not do—so, as I came home, I made the following stanzas, and sent them to her breakfast next morning. . . . If they are but poor verses, consider I am sixty-nine, was half asleep, and made them almost extempore—and by command! However, they succeeded, and I received this gracious answer' (CONWAY iii. 441-2). See following letter.

3. Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus).