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MEMOIRS OF THE REIGN
OF
KING GEORGE THE THIRD
IN FOUR VOLUMES
VOL. I.

Seven Hundred and Forty Copies printed for England
Two Hundred and Sixty for America

No......



John Zoffany R.A. Pinxt.

W. Adair de Brouckell Ph. Sc.

George III.

HORACE WALPOLE

MEMOIRS OF THE REIGN OF
KING GEORGE THE THIRD

FIRST PUBLISHED BY SIR
DENIS LE MARCHANT BART.

AND NOW RE-EDITED BY
G. F. RUSSELL BARKER

WITH SIXTEEN PORTRAITS

VOLUME I



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

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PREFACE

HORACE¹ WALPOLE, the author of these *Memoirs*, was the third son of the famous Minister, Sir Robert Walpole, afterwards created Earl of Orford, by his first wife, Catherine, eldest daughter of John Shorter of Bybrook, near Ashford, in Kent, a Norway timber merchant. The statement that he was generally supposed to be the son of Carr, Lord Hervey, rests mainly on the authority of Lady Louisa Stuart.² Though there would seem to be a certain amount of evidence in support of this scandal, it is perfectly clear that no suspicion of his parentage ever crossed the mind of Horace Walpole, and it is equally clear that no further evidence on this delicate question can be looked for.

Horace was born in Arlington Street, Piccadilly,³

¹ He was christened '*Horatio*,' but always called himself '*Horace*.' 'The name *Horatio* I dislike. It is theatrical; and not English. I have, ever since I was a youth, written and subscribed *Horace* as an English name for an English man. In all books (and perhaps you will think of the *numerosus Horatius*) I so spell my name.'—Pinkerton's *Walpoliana*, vol. i. p. 62.

² See Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montague (1837), vol. i. pp. 33-5. It is also 'to be found asserted as a current story in the *Note Books* (unpublished) of the Duchess of Portland.' See Mr. Austin Dobson's *Horace Walpole* (1890), p. 14, note.

³ Sir Robert Walpole became a resident in Arlington Street in 1716. His house was on the west side of the street, next door to the Earl of Bath's.

on 24th September 1717 (o.s.), and on 26th April 1727 was sent to Eton, where he remained for more than seven years. While at school he was entered at Lincoln's Inn (27th May 1731), but though his father intended him for the law he 'never went thither, not caring for the profession.'¹ On 11th March 1735 he was admitted to King's College, Cambridge, where he resided at intervals until the end of 1738, but did not graduate. In 1737 he was appointed by his father to the sinecure post of Inspector of the Imports and Exports at the Custom House, a post which he resigned on being made Chief Usher of the Exchequer on 29th January 1738. As soon as he came of age Walpole tells us that he 'took possession of two other little patent places in the Exchequer, called Comptroller of the Pipe, and Clerk of the Estreats.'² In March 1739 he set out for a Continental tour with his friend Gray, whose acquaintance he had made at Eton, and renewed at Cambridge. Walpole remained abroad until September 1741. During his absence from England he was returned to the House of Commons for the borough of Callington in Cornwall, which he continued to represent until the dissolution of Parliament in April 1754. He spoke in the House for the first

Here Horace Walpole was born. On leaving Downing Street, Sir Robert removed to No. 5 (on the east side of) Arlington Street, where he died. After his father's death, No. 5 became Horace Walpole's London residence until his removal to Berkeley Square in 1779. It is now distinguished by one of the familiar tablets of the Society of Arts.

¹ 'Short Notes of my Life.' See *Walpole's Letters* (1857), vol. i. p. lxii.

² *Ibid.*

time on 23rd March 1742, when he opposed the motion for a Secret Committee on his father.¹ In spite of his partiality for politics, Walpole was unsuited for parliamentary life, and but rarely took any part in the debates. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1746, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1753. In the latter year he was appointed a trustee of the Sloane (afterwards British) Museum. Walpole represented Castle Rising in the House of Commons from April 1754 to February 1757, when he vacated his seat in order to succeed his cousin in the representation of King's Lynn, the corporation of which revered 'his father's memory so much that they will not bear distant relations while he has sons living.'² He was again returned for King's Lynn without opposition at the General Election in March 1761. Having become somewhat tired of parliamentary life, and being threatened with a contested election, Walpole retired from the House of Commons at the dissolution in March 1768. In 1765 he made the first of several visits to Paris, where he became well acquainted with the secret history of the Court of France. On the death of his nephew, George, third Earl of Orford, in December 1791, Walpole succeeded to the peerage, but he never took his seat in the House of Lords. He died in London, at No. 11 Berkeley Square on 2nd March 1797, aged 79,

¹ A copy of his maiden speech is preserved in his letter to Sir Horace Mann, dated 24th March 1742. See *Walpole's Letters*, vol. i. pp. 147-8.

² *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 62.

and was buried at Houghton in Norfolk. With him the male line of Sir Robert Walpole terminated, and the barony of Houghton, the Viscounty of Walpole and the Earldom of Orford became extinct. He was succeeded in the Barony of Walpole of Walpole by his first cousin Horatio, second Baron Walpole of Wolterton, while the Houghton Estate descended to George, fourth Marquis of Cholmondeley, the grandson of his sister Mary. Walpole left some £91,000 in the three per cents. He bequeathed a legacy of £10,000 to his niece the Duchess of Gloucester, and legacies of £4000 each to his friends Mary and Agnes Berry, to whom also he left for their lives 'Little Strawberry Hill,' formerly the abode of Kitty Clive.

Strawberry Hill, Walpole's famous residence at Twickenham, was originally a cottage belonging to Mrs. Chenerix 'the noted toy-woman,'¹ from whom he purchased the remainder of the lease in May 1747. In 1749 he bought the freehold by Act of Parliament, and by slow degrees transformed the cottage into a 'Gothic Castle' of fantastic shape, where he gradually amassed a huge collection of curiosities of every description. Here also in 1757 he established a private printing press, whence were issued some thirty-nine books and pamphlets, all of which have become scarce, and fetch high prices.² Walpole left

¹ *Walpole's Collected Works* (1798), vol. ii. p. 399.

² The first work printed was '*Odes by Mr. Gray*' (1757, 4to). For a list of books printed at the Strawberry Hill press see the Appendix to Mr. Austin Dobson's *Horace Walpole*.

Strawberry Hill and its contents to the Hon. Mrs. Anne Damer, the only daughter of his friend Conway, for life, together with a sum of money to keep it in repair. She resigned it in 1811 to the Countess Dowager Waldegrave, in whom the remainder was vested. It subsequently passed into the possession of George, seventh Earl Waldegrave, who sold the contents by public auction in 1842. The sale lasted thirty-two days and realised £33,453.¹ On the death of Lord Waldegrave in September 1846, Strawberry Hill became the property of his widow Frances, Countess Waldegrave, who married in 1863 Mr. Chichester Fortescue, the present Lord Carlingford. After her death, in July 1879, the house and grounds were offered for sale,² and in August 1883 Strawberry Hill was purchased by the late Baron Stern, in the possession of whose family it still remains.

Walpole was a fastidious and capricious man, full of whims and fancies, with affected manners, a lively wit, and an almost feminine fondness for mischief and gossip. He was a charming correspondent, but a touchy companion. Though too much of a trifler, both by nature and education, for real work either in politics or literature, his political sagacity was considerable, and his powers of observation were keen. In his earlier days he was a staunch

¹ See *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1842, part ii. pp. 16-24, 147-156, 257-265, 377-381, 474-480, 599-610.

² A sale of the pictures, china, etc., including many of the items not disposed of in the previous sale of 1842 took place in July 1883.

Whig, but 'in his old and enfeebled age the horrors of the first French Revolution made him a Tory.'¹

Walpole was tall and slender in figure, with a high and pale forehead and bright and penetrating eyes. 'His entrance into a room was in that style of affected delicacy, which fashion had made almost natural, *chapeau bras* between his hands as if he wished to compress it, or under his arm; knees bent, and feet on tiptoe, as if afraid of a wet floor. His summer dress of ceremony was usually a lavender suit, the waistcoat embroidered with a little silver, or of white silk worked in the tambour, partridge silk stockings, gold buckles, ruffles, and lace frill. In winter he wore powder. He disliked hats, and in his grounds at Strawberry would even in winter walk without one. The same antipathy, Cole tells us, extended to a greatcoat. His appearance at the breakfast table was proclaimed, and attended, by a fat and favourite little dog, the legacy of Madame du Deffand; the dog and a favourite squirrel partook of his breakfast. He dined generally at four. . . . His dinner when at home was a chicken, pheasant, or any light food, of which he eat sparingly. Pastry he disliked, as difficult of digestion, though he would taste a morsel of venison pie. Iced water, then a London dislike, was his favourite drink. The scent of the dinner was removed, by a censer or pot of frank-

¹ Miss Mary Berry's Advertisement to the Letters addressed to the Misses Berry. See *Walpole's Letters*, vol. i. p. li.

incense. The wine that was drunk was drunk during dinner. After his coffee he would take a pinch of snuff, and nothing more that night.'¹

Though Walpole disavowed the character of an author, and frequently declared, with doubtful sincerity, that he had no ambition for literary fame, his pen was seldom idle. His principal works published in his lifetime were:—1. *A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England, with a List of their Works* (1758); 2. *Anecdotes of Painting in England, with some account of the principal Artists*, etc. (1762-71); 3. *A Catalogue of Engravers who have been born or resided in England*, etc. (1763); and 4. *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard the Third* (1768). His one romance, *The Castle of Otranto*, was published on 24th December 1764. It purported to be 'a story translated by William Marshal, Gent., from the original Italian of Onuphrio Muralto, Canon of the Church of St. Nicholas at Otranto,' and was written by Walpole in less than two months. It met with a brilliant success, but is now only remembered as the progenitor of Mrs. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and other thrilling works. His *Mysterious Mother*, which was pronounced by Lord Byron to be 'a tragedy of the highest order,' was printed at

¹ Mr. Peter Cunningham in his Preface to the *Letters of Horace Walpole*, vol. ix. p. xxii. For this description of Horace Walpole Mr. Cunningham is mainly indebted to the *Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches and Memoirs* of Miss E. M. Hawkins (1822), vol. i. pp. 105-6, and Pinkerton's *Walpoliana*, vol. i. pp. xl-xlv.

Strawberry Hill in 1768. Though Walpole wished to see it acted, it was too horrible for representation, and it has never been put on the stage. Walpole perfected a collective edition of his works in 1768. The first volume, and part of the second, were printed at the Strawberry Hill Press, but he proceeded no further with his task, leaving the completion of it to his friend Mr. Berry, to be given to the world after his death. This edition, which appeared in 1798 in five quarto volumes, contained several productions new to the public, including the admirable *Reminiscences* of the Courts of George the First and Second, and the first instalment of his incomparable Correspondence. A sixth quarto volume, containing Walpole's Letters to George Montagu, was published in 1818. Other collections of his Letters followed, all of which were superseded by Mr. Peter Cunningham's edition, in nine octavo volumes (1857-9), of what was then supposed to be the entire correspondence of Walpole, arranged in chronological order.

Walpole's most important historical works, viz. : *The Memoirs of the Reign of King George II.*, *The Memoirs of the Reign of King George III.*, and the *Journal of the Reign of King George III., from 1771 to 1783*, were not given to the world until many years after his death.

Among his papers at Strawberry Hill the following memorandum in an envelope, on which was written, 'Not to be opened until after my will,'

was found, 'In my Library at Strawberry Hill are two wainscot chests or boxes, the larger marked with an A, the lesser with a B. I desire, that as soon as I am dead, my Executor and Executrix will cord up strongly and seal the larger box, marked A, and deliver it to the Honourable Hugh Conway Seymour, to be kept by him unopened and unsealed till the eldest son of Lady Waldegrave, or whichever of her sons, being Earl of Waldegrave, shall attain the age of twenty-five years, when the said chest, with whatever it contains, shall be delivered to him for his own. And I beg that the Honourable Hugh Conway Seymour, when he shall receive the said chest, will give a promise in writing, signed by him, to Lady Waldegrave, that he or his representatives will deliver the said chest unopened and unsealed by my Executor and Executrix, to the first son of Lady Waldegrave who shall attain the age of twenty-five years. The key of the said chest is in one of the cupboards of the green closet, within the blue breakfast-room at Strawberry Hill, and that key, I desire, may be delivered to Laura, Lady Waldegrave, to be kept by her till her son shall receive the chest.

March 21st, 1790.

(Signed) HOR. WALPOLE, EARL OF ORFORD.

August 19th, 1796.'

In accordance with these directions 'the larger box marked A' was corded up and sealed with the

seals of Lord Frederick Campbell and the Hon. Mrs. Anne Damer, the executor and executrix of Horace Walpole's will, and delivered by them to Lord Hugh Seymour, by whose representatives it was handed over 'unopened and unsealed' to John, sixth Earl of Waldegrave, in 1818, on his attaining the age of twenty-five. Upon examination, the box was found to contain several bundles of letters, arranged for publication, and a number of ms. volumes entitled *Memoires*. These Memoirs were placed by Lord Waldegrave in the hands of Henry, third Lord Holland, who published the *Memoires of the last ten years of the Reign of King George the Second* in 1822. After his death in 1840 it was discovered that Lord Holland had never commenced the task of editing the *Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third*. Whereupon the Duke of Grafton (then Earl of Euston), as Lord Waldegrave's surviving executor, intrusted the editorship of these Memoirs to Sir Denis Le Marchant, by whom they were at length published in 1845 (London, 8vo, 4 vols.). The *Journal of the Reign of King George the Third from the year 1771 to 1783*, the last of Horace Walpole's works to appear, was edited by Dr. Doran in 1859.

In spite of Walpole's many prejudices and partialities, which he took little pains to disguise, the value of these posthumous Memoirs to the historical student can hardly be overrated. It should always be borne in mind when criticising their

obvious defects that Walpole neither claimed the title of historian, nor made any pretence to infallibility. In the very first chapter of this volume he is careful to remind his readers that 'these are memoirs, not history,' and goes on to add that 'the inequality, and perhaps even the contradictory opinions which may appear in them, from being written at different periods, forbid this work to aim at the regular march of history.'¹ While in his *Journal of the Reign of King George the Third*, after remarking that authentic papers would 'corroborate the authenticity of these memoirs,' he adds 'though in some things I may have been misinformed, and in others, from my own passions, I may have exaggerated faults.'² Notwithstanding Mr. Croker's solemn protests in the *Quarterly Review*,³ it may be safely said that no contemporary writer has thrown a stronger light upon the inner workings of the political world of his day. The brilliant and vivacious accounts which he gives of the parliamentary debates alone are a valuable addition to the history of the time, while the details of the endless negotiations between the various political factions, and the masterly descriptions of the men and manners of the last century add still further to the value of his Memoirs. Moreover, they have the additional merit of rarely ever being dull.

¹ See *infra*, p. 2.

² See vol. i, p. 278.

³ Vol. xxvii. pp. 178-215 and vol. lxxvii. pp. 253-298.

'Walpole's writings,' says Mr. Leslie Stephen, 'belong to the good old-fashioned type of history, which aspires to be nothing more than the quint-essence of contemporary gossip. If the opinion be pardonable in these days, history of that kind has not only its charm, but its serious value. If not very profound or comprehensive, it impresses upon us the fact—so often forgotten—that our grandfathers were human beings. The ordinary historian reduces them to mere mechanical mummies; in Walpole's pages they are still living flesh and blood. Turn over any of the proper decorous history books, mark every passage, where for a moment we seem to be transported to the past—to the thunders of Chatham, the drivellings of Newcastle, or the prosings of George Grenville, as they sounded in contemporary ears—and it will be safe to say that, on counting them up, a good half will turn out to be reflections from the illuminating flashes of Walpole. Excise all that comes from him, and the history sinks towards the level of the solid Arch-deacon Coxe; add his keen touches, and as in *The Castle of Otranto*, the portraits of our respectable old ancestors, which have been hanging in gloomy repose upon the wall, suddenly step from their frames, and for some brief space assume a spectral vitality.'

¹

Walpole commenced the task of writing *The Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third*

¹ See *Hours in a Library* (1876), 2d ser., pp. 155-6.

(from 1760 to 1772) on 18th August 1766, and finished them in 1772, 'intending for the future only to carry on a Journal.'¹ These Memoirs cover a period of the greatest political importance in our national history. During the reigns of George the First and George the Second, the Crown had leant upon the support of the Whig party. In 1760 the Whigs had been just forty-five years in office. George the Third had been trained to regard them as usurpers of the royal authority, and upon his accession to the throne he determined to break down the power of the great Whig families and to regain for the Crown the power which it had lost since the Revolution. By sowing dissensions among the Whigs, he broke up the strong Whig Ministry of Newcastle and Pitt, which had raised England from the depths of degradation to a commanding position in Europe. Bute, who was appointed First Lord of the Treasury in May 1762, succeeded in obtaining the peace for which he and his master were so eager, and on 10th February 1763 the Treaty of Paris was signed. Meanwhile, several of the Whig peers, who had disapproved of the preliminaries of peace, were deprived of their lord-lieutenancies, Whig placemen were dismissed for their votes in Parliament, and even inferior officials, who had owed their advancement to Whig patronage, were removed from their offices.

¹ *Short Notes of my Life*. See Walpole's *Letters*, vol. i. p. 76.

Bute, frightened by his unpopularity, suddenly resigned in April 1763, and was succeeded by George Grenville, whom the King regarded as one of Bute's followers. In this George soon found himself mistaken, for while Bute's object had been the furtherance of the King's authority, Grenville's aim was the absolutism of Parliament. The trial of John Wilkes, and the passing of the Stamp Act were the two most memorable events of Grenville's Ministry, which had been strengthened on Lord Egremont's death by the accession of the Duke of Bedford. Annoyed by the omission of his mother's name from the Regency Bill, and irritated beyond endurance by Grenville's lengthy lectures in the royal closet, George finally turned Grenville out of office in July 1765. The negotiations with Pitt having failed, the Marquis of Rockingham, a man of unblemished character, but of no great ability, was placed at the head of the Treasury. During Rockingham's shortlived Administration, which was distrusted by the King as being distinctly a Whig one, the American Stamp Act was repealed, and General Warrants were condemned as illegal by a resolution of the House of Commons. In July 1766, Rockingham was dismissed, and for the third time the King had recourse to Pitt, who at length consented to form a Government. The Duke of Grafton was appointed First Lord of the Treasury, Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Conway and Shelburne were the Secretaries of

State, while Pitt accepted a peerage with the title of the Earl of Chatham, and took the insignificant office of Lord Privy Seal.

In January 1767, Chatham's health gave way, and the Ministry, without its natural leader, fell into a state of weakness and division. During his absence, Townshend's reckless scheme for taxing American imports received the royal assent. Before the close of 1768 Chatham recovered his health, and formally resigned office. In 1769, Wilkes, who had been elected four times for Middlesex, was declared incapable of being returned, and Colonel Luttrell, the Ministerial nominee, was seated in his place. Grafton, whose unconstitutional actions had brought discontent to the verge of open outbreak, resigned in January 1770. He was succeeded by Lord North, who fully acquiesced in the King's policy, and was content to become a mere instrument of the King's will. At first North's tenure of office was exceedingly precarious, but the death of George Grenville in November 1770 relieved him of an able opponent, and the ranks of the Opposition became still more broken up. In 1771 the attempt of the House of Commons to prevent the publication of their debates, was foiled by the action of Wilkes and the city magistrates. In spite of this popular victory, however, North's Ministry continued to gain in strength, and George, at last, after a long and bitter struggle, achieved the object on which he had set his

heart. With the death of the Princess Dowager of Wales in February 1772, whose favourite exhortation, 'George, be a King,' had made such a deep impression on her son, Walpole fitly brings his *Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third* to a close.

The text of the present edition has been printed from Sir Denis le Marchant's edition of 1845, in the preface to which it is stated that the *Memoirs* were 'printed exactly as the author left them, except that it has been thought right to suppress a few passages of indecent tendency, and following the example of Lord Holland, "two or three passages, affecting the private characters of private persons, and nowise connected with any political event, or illustrative of any great public character, have been omitted."' ¹ Walpole's own annotations are throughout retained, and are given without any distinguishing mark. Many of Le Marchant's notes have been dispensed with. Those which remain are denoted by the initials L. M. Some of these I have silently corrected, where the alteration in the wording has been slight, or where, as very frequently happened, the quotations were faulty. In those cases where the ms. to which Le Marchant referred has since been printed, a reference to the printed copy has been given. The references to the old editions of Walpole's *Memoires of the Reign*

¹ The passage quoted by Sir Denis Le Marchant occurs in Lord Holland's Preface to the *Memoires of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of King George the Second* (1822), vol. i. p. xxxii.

of King George the Second, and of Walpole's *Letters* have been altered in every instance, and references to the second edition of the *Memoirs* (1847), and to Mr. Peter Cunningham's edition of the *Letters* (1857-9) have been substituted. It only remains for me to add that my own notes are distinguished from those of Walpole and Le Marchant by the letter E.

G. F. RUSSELL BARKER.

20 OLD BUILDINGS,
LINCOLN'S INN.

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