

Cambridge University Press
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CORRESPONDENCE OF RICHARDSON'S
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SR TO MARY WATTS, [1755]

SR to Mary Watts¹

[1755]²

MS: Rice, Richardson Family Papers, 1714–1802, MS 279.³

Printed source: McKillop, 191–3.

from Lisbon; to your Lucy, mention Clemmy.⁴

9. What you further say of Miss Clemy, of Miss M. & of your own generous Spirit in Defence of your insulted younger Brother, delights me. Never spare, I beseech you what you call your 'Historical Digressions.' But these are not Digressions neither; they serve to elucidate in the most beautiful & convincing Manner; your Argument of the Force of Education on the Minds & Manners of either Sex.

10. How just your Observation on both Parts of this Article!

11. You give me great Ease of Mind, for your own Sake, by what You assure me of in *this*. But be not afraid of the Words 'Teacher & Learner.' It must be so; it cannot be otherwise in the Correspondence between us. Are not the things *I* presumed to

¹ Mary Sherwin of Bristol (d. 1757) married James Watts, an English Merchant at Lisbon in 1737. She and her husband appear to have met SR in the summer of 1754, but the intimacy of this correspondence suggests an earlier acquaintance. Throughout the exchanges, SR refers to her as his honorary 'sister'. Mary Watts and her husband lived in Lisbon between 1738 and 1744, where she had four children, two of whom died in infancy. In England, the couple lived at Westcombe near Shepton Mallet, Somerset, the family home of James Watt (see Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 450–2). She died in childbirth in 1757 attended by SR's daughter Nancy (SR to Frances Sheridan, 11 May 1757). Only one prior letter is extant: SR to Mary Watts, 27 September 1754.

² In a note to his transcription, McKillop states 'From a transcript made for Richardson's files, and now in my possession. No date, but evidently of 1755' (p. 193, note 82). McKillop presumably dates this letter on the basis of SR's statements of his daughters' ages: Mary (Polly) (bap. 2 January 1735–83); Martha (Patty) (bap. 16 July 1736–85); Anne (Nancy) (bap. 16 August 1737–1803); and Sarah (Sally) (bap. on 17 July 1740–73). For his daughters to have been the ages he assigns them, Richardson must have been writing between 2 January 1755 and 17 July 1755.

³ The manuscript consists of a single leaf from a notebook, numbered pages 32 [recto] and 33 [verso] in the upper right corner. Although not attributed to Richardson, the content offers significant overlap with the pages transcribed by McKillop. The leaf contains twenty-three lines of text before the phrase 'Your Emily' begins the portion transcribed by McKillop. The text is parallel, with the exception of two sentences omitted by McKillop after 'contributed to her Death' and preceding 'In one Two Years'. McKillop's version ends at 'to the Heel', but the manuscript leaf continues with another thirteen lines of text before breaking off.

⁴ The surviving manuscript starts midsentence.

SR TO MARY WATTS, [1755]

address to younger & less experienced Minds, in Public? Your History & the Histories of your Friends cannot be convey'd but in your Letters. Have I not engag'd to be the sincere Friend when you give me Occasion? Have we not already had a friendly Debate or two? Is it amiss then to say, that in Return for many Vols: of Instruction to younger Minds, that the more enlighten'd shall be my Teachers in their Letters? I have been already drawn out in Print: Shall I not be allow'd to draw out for my own Edification, Confirmation, or Correction those who are so well able to instruct me? Have you not had great Opportunities that I have wanted. In a Word, I am known to you by my Writings: you must make yourself, my long-lost-Sister, in your Letters – and shall I not, of Course, be the Instructed?

Your kind notice of my Wife & your Nieces engages their Gratitude. They lament, that they had not the Happiness when you were in Town, to know as much of their dear Sister & Aunt, as they now know, by such Passages of your Letters as I Communicate to them, when I am at Leisure to give them my Company; which in Parliament-Time is not so often as at other; one Part of my Business arising from it's Session

Your Emily,⁵ you say, till you know her Name – Your Eldest Niece, my Dear Sister, is Your Name-Sake.⁶ A good-natur'd, honest hearted Girl, lively, modest, & bless'd with good Health: A generous disposition'd young Creature; rejoicing to hear her Sisters prais'd, & disclaiming any Pretensions herself to the Praise she occasionally hear given to them. Patty the 2d. Girl, has a Taste for Drawing⁷ – My Dear, said I to Polly, I have given a Master to Patty, to direct her in her Taste for Drawing – Don't think I would deny to my Elder Girl, what I allow to my Younger – Thank you, Sir – I delight in my Sister's Improvements, & in the Opportunities you give her for them – But I have no Genius – My Dear, replied I,

⁵ A reference to Emily Jervois, a young ward to Sir Charles Grandison. The letters occasionally attribute the names of fictional characters from SR's novels to actual people.

⁶ Mary Richardson (bap. 2 January 1735–83), nicknamed Polly, was SR's oldest surviving daughter by Elizabeth Leake. On 6 September 1757, she married Philip Ditcher, a surgeon of Bath and friend of Mrs Richardson's nephew James Leake.

⁷ Martha Richardson (bap. 16 July 1736–85), nicknamed 'Patty'.

SR TO MARY WATTS, [1755]

you have Qualities much more laudable than Genius, where Genius is destitute of them. Polly is just turn'd of twenty.

Patty has a pretty Universal Taste; Drawing, Music, Needle-Works, Writing Letters, one of which you have seen, & kindly approve. How happy a Girl will she be, if Miss Orme⁸ will condescend to receive her as a Correspondent! She is between 18 and 19.

Nancy⁹ is the good Girl to whom our dear Jeronymo¹⁰ is so partial. <xxxxx 1 sentence>.¹¹ She has a worthy a grateful Heart: Great Sensibility: A great Reader, & digests well, & remembers what she reads. We reckon her a fine Needle-Woman too: Has Patience, Perseverance; & when much Younger than she is, I saw the Seeds of Judgment begin to germinate, & have often to try her, desired her to give me her Opinion of Passages, which she has heard observ'd upon in my Writings, unbiased and free from partiality to a Father: & I have always had Reason to be pleas'd with her. She spells well, endites well: <xxxxx several words>¹² her Hand-writing bears no Proportion to her Sense. But as she is much better, I bless God, than she has been, I hope she will improve in that. She is between 17. and 18.

Sally is our youngest Child,¹³ a good-natur'd well inclin'd Girl, between 14. & 15. an inoffensive Rogue & Mimic: But not Overfond of Work; Yet had rather do little playful Mischiefs, than be quite idle, after she is up; for, after the Mother's Example (the only Fault your Sister has) they are all even shameful in their Love of their Beds in Mornings, the Pride of the Day, notwithstanding

⁸ Not identified. Possibly another coded reference to Miss Kitty Orme in *Grandison*. In the novel Miss Orme is sister to one of Harriet Byron's unsuccessful suitors, Mr Orme. She is liked by Harriet except for the fact that she continues to urge her brother's courtship, leading Harriet to describe her as the 'artlessly-artful Miss Orme' (*SCG*, I.vi.30).

⁹ Anne (bap. 16 August 1737–1803), nicknamed 'Nancy'.

¹⁰ Identified as John Lefevre by Eaves and Kimpel (p. 451). The nickname 'Jeronymo' was based on the brother of Lady Clementina in *Grandison*. He was an honorary younger brother to Mrs Watts and SR, and was left a mourning ring in Richardson's will (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 451). He is also discussed in SR to Hester Mulso, 21 August 1754, and SR to Watts, 9 April 1755.

¹¹ Two lines erased.

¹² A half line is erased.

¹³ Sarah (bap. 17 July 1740–73), nicknamed 'Sally', married Richard Crowther in 1763.

SR TO MARY WATTS, [1755]

my Expostulations & Example; for I was always an Early Riser. Polly has good Health & has no Excuse. Patty has been sometimes Hysterical, & at such times has a little. Nancy, we have indulg'd because of her heavy Maladies.¹⁴ Sally is sometimes (tho' the Picture of Health at others) unhappily afflicted with Rheumatic Disorders, which give her at such times also, a Title to some Indulgence.¹⁵ Yet I would fain persuade them all, that Early-Rising is a great Promoter of Health. But a Mothers Example – A good Woman too – How powerful! –

We have a Neice with us, the Daughter of an Unhappy Brother; a good Girl; for whom we intend to provide as Prudence mix'd with true Love shall direct.¹⁶

Behold your Neices, my dear Sister! Why should I mention my Losses? – Two other Girls, & by two Excellent Wives,¹⁷ a Train of Six very promising Boys;¹⁸ one of which a most delightful Child,

¹⁴ SR makes several general remarks on the 'heavy Maladies' suffered by 'Nancy' or Anne. He reports to Lady Bradshaigh that she was very ill in 1751: 'We are apprehensive of the worst. We indulge her in all her wishes, and even humours, as a valetudinarian' (24 March 1751). Again in 1752, he writes, 'I have long resolved by way of mitigating her sufferings to deny her nothing' (SR to Miss Hallows, 4 July 1752). Eaves and Kimpel note, however, that Anne 'outlived her sisters by a good many years', dying in 1803 (p. 483).

¹⁵ In 1761, three servants watched over Sally while she was 'confined with a rheumatic disorder' (SR to Fielding, 7 December 1756). SR makes a number of references to her health in his correspondence: to Lady Bradshaigh, 23 May 1758; to Mrs Chapone, 27 June 1758; to Mrs Scudamore, 1 September 1758.

¹⁶ After his brother Benjamin's death in August 1750, Richardson took in his youngest daughter, Susanna (nicknamed 'Sukey'), aged 14. Like Sally, Sukey suffered from rheumatic disorders (see SR to Isabella Sutton, 20 August 1750; SR to Mrs Watts, [August? 1754]) and the two shared a room during a time when both were incapacitated by the illness (SR to Fielding, 12 January 1757). SR remembered her in his will as one 'whom my Wife has in a manner adopted, and who has always been dutiful to her, and obliging to all her Cousins' (Eaves and Kimpel, p. 471; codicil dated April 1760).

¹⁷ SR married Martha Wilde (1698–1731) on 23 November 1721 and Elizabeth Leake (1697–1773) on 3 February 1733.

¹⁸ SR and his first wife, Martha Wilde, lost five sons and one daughter: John (7 October 1722 – buried 26 October 1722), Samuel (24 September 1723 – buried 24 December 1723), a second Samuel (18 August 1725 – buried 26 April 1726), William (15 February 1727 – buried 16 May 1730), Martha (bap. 4 April 1728 – buried 6 June 1728) and a third Samuel

SR TO MARY WATTS, [1755]

carried away his most worthy Mother, at least contributed to her Death. Give me, my dear Mrs. Watts as particular an Account of your beloved Family I should have ask'd You for it before now; but that I hoped to find it given in some of the Papers You from time to time favour'd me with; or, occasionally, in some of Your Letters to me. In one Two Years, I had Eleven Deaths that went near me. Hence my Nervous Maladies. Loss of Friends, my dear Sister, was my vulnerable Part. You'll allow, that the *Heart* wou'd not permit such to descend to the *Heel*.

But what shall I say to my Sister on her kind, her more than kind, her true Sisterly Request, so urgently, so pathetically press'd, in relation to my Nancy? To whose kind, & skillful Love could we both so readily trust her as to yours? – My Wife's Heart overflow'd with Gratitude when I read to her, & her four Girls, your urgent Benevolence; & They all join'd in Thankfulness to you for it. Nancy herself very sensibly felt it; & express's herself accordingly. But can I add to Cares, which tho', I have increas'd by the Correspondence you favour me with, I wish to be able to lessen? – Indeed I cannot. But a Million of Thanks from my *Whole Self*, for your generous Request & Invitation. The dear Girl is in a better way than she has been in. <xxxxx 2/3 line erased> We have a pretty Retirement at Parsons Green, near Fulham: The Air is good. She is fond of the Place: But I shall never forget the Sisterly Kindness of an Invitation so cordially pressed.

¹² A most kind & flattering to my Vanity is this Paragraph. I dare not enter particularly into it. I will only say, that I can Account for the Partiality of my Favourers, from¹⁹

(bap. 7 April 1730 – buried 6 October 1732). As this letter suggests, Martha died from complications arising from childbirth on 23 January 1731. SR and his second wife, Elizabeth Leake, lost a daughter, Elizabeth (bap. 23 December 1733 – buried 11 January 1734) and a son, Samuel (bap. 26 April 1739 – buried 18 April 1740).

¹⁹ The manuscript ends midsentence.

SAMUEL LOBB TO SR, [EARLY 1755]

Samuel Lobb¹ to SR

[Early 1755]²

Printed source: Barbauld, 1, 186–9.

An answer already! Now is he wanting to know what I have heard about his Billy. Ha'n't I hit it, friend Lobb? Not the only motive, I assure you; yet I must ask my friend, what he has heard of my boy, that occasioned such an affectionate congratulation. But, on second thoughts, I think I will not; for why do I want to know what? Do I pretend to be a stranger to the honour he has received? I do not. Indeed, I know enough to think myself under great obligations to the gracious giver of his parts, and of his opportunities and inclinations for improving them; and I hope all his good friends and mine will join their best remembrances with our's for the favours he has received, and pray that they may be long continued, and always improved, to his being while he lives, and to his long being a most amiable example of a person's improving and employing fine parts to worthy purposes. 'As to his negligence in writing, do not suppose our Billy to be one of my correspondents: I have not for a long time received a letter from him'. 'Our Billy!' how kind is that? How shall I bring my poor boy off, charged with a neglect that has such an ugly appearance of his not having been so grateful as he should have been? You are a father, and cannot, in your heart, find fault with a father, for suggesting what shall occur to his thoughts to lessen his son's offence. But the truth of the case I take to be this. Ever since he has been at the university, he has had a larger acquaintance than has been common for an

¹ Barbauld, 1, 186, erroneously cites William Lobb, Samuel Lobb's son, as the author of this letter. The context indicates that it is by Samuel Lobb about his son, William or 'Billy'. The Reverend Samuel Lobb (1690–1760) who began as a Nonconformist minister, 'later took orders in the Church of England, and held the living of Farley, or Farleigh Hungerford, six miles from Bath from 1736 until his death' (G. Eland, *The Lobb Family from the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford University Press, 1955) p. 45). He was a friend of James Leake, brother of SR's second wife, Elizabeth. Samuel Lobb had two sons, William (1736–65) and Joseph (1743–1811), the latter becoming SR's godson in 1743. SR corresponded with William starting around 1750 and reportedly with Joseph, but no correspondence with the younger son has been traced.

² While the letter was undated by Barbauld, it can be dated by the mention of William's 'success on his trial for his degree'. William graduated with a BA from Peterhouse, Cambridge, in 1755. He was subsequently awarded an MA in 1758 and made a Fellow in the same year.

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SAMUEL JOHNSON TO SR, MONDAY 3 FEBRUARY 1755

obscure country clergyman; all along he has had, from principle, a concern to answer his friends' expectations, which could only be by a proper application. Every week, after the first month, during the time of his being from me, he has wrote to me once, and generally three parts of a sheet: when he is to write to a friend, he must write something worth writing: for that, every one of good parts is not so well qualified. I will not pretend to clear him absolutely; but to save him, at least, from so heavy a charge as that of having been ungrateful, I must acquaint you, that before the bishop left college,³ he told him he had not yet done with him, by any means, and let him know he should expect to hear from him now and then. This obliged him to acquaint his lordship with his success on his trial for his degree; to which his lordship wrote him a very friendly answer: and about the same time I received a letter myself from his lordship, acquainting me as to the satisfaction he had had as to his parts, acquirements, and behaviour. I am, &c.

S.⁴ Lobb.

- ³ Edmund Keene (1714–81) was Master of Peterhouse 1748–54. In 1752 he was consecrated Bishop of Chester and he was made Bishop of Ely in 1771.
⁴ Corrected from 'W'. in Barbauld.

Samuel Johnson¹ to SR

Monday 3 February 1755

MS: Huntington Library, HM 20618. Autograph letter sent.

Febr. 3. 1755.

Dear Sir

If you have any part of the universal History² yet unengaged, I have a Gentleman desirous of giving his assistance. To recommend authors is dangerous, I have therefore sent you his Book I think

- ¹ Samuel Johnson (1709–84), author and lexicographer, and SR were well acquainted through the 1750s. Johnson had a high opinion of *Clarissa* and read the manuscript of *Grandison*.
² SR was engaged as printer of *An Universal History, from the Earliest Account of Time to the Present* from the appearance of the first volume in 1736 until his death in 1761. The first portion of this lengthy *History*, devoted to 'Ancient History', appeared between 1736 and 1750; the second portion, on 'Modern History', appeared between 1759 and 1765. Both parts involved several contributors and printers, including Tobias Smollett, George Psalmanazar, and Andrew Millar.

SAMUEL JOHNSON TO SR, MONDAY 3 FEBRUARY 1755

sets him on a level with most of those who are at present employed. I do not know him but the Gentleman to whom he dedicates informs me that he is diligent and persevering. His Patron will be answerable for any books put into his hands, and perhaps for money if any be advanced, but no³ request of money has been made to me.⁴ [I have said nothing to Mr Millar⁵ for who should judge of an author but you?] If you approve him you will therefore please to introduce him so as that no offence be given.

I am in no great haste for an Answer You may look into the book at leisure, for I do not expect that you should catch at it with the Eagerness with which the world catches at yours. I am Sir Your Most humble Servant

Sam: Johnson

Febr. 3. 1755

Pray Favor me with an account of the Translations of Clarissa⁶ which you have, I have a desire to borrow some of them

³ 'such' deleted after 'no'.

⁴ The 'Gentleman' and the 'Patron' have not been identified.

⁵ Described as 'one of the most eminent Booksellers of the eighteenth century' (John Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century; Comprizing Biographical Memoirs of William Bowyer, Printer ...*, 6 vols. (London: Nichols, Son, and Bentley, 1966), vol. III, p. 386), Andrew Millar (1706–68) acquired an interest in the *Universal History* in 1742, along with Richardson and Thomas Osborne. Johnson showed great respect for Millar, calling him 'the Maecenas of the age' and further saying, 'I respect Millar, Sir; he has raised the price of literature' (James Boswell, *Boswell's Life of Johnson, Together with Boswell's Journal of a Tour of the Hebrides and Johnson's Diary of a Journey into North Wales*, ed. George Birkbeck, Norman Hill, and Lawrence Fitzroy Powell, 2nd edn, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), vol. I, p. 287).

⁶ *Clarissa* had appeared in a number of translations by 1755. In 1751 the abridged, French translation, *Lettres angloises, ou, Histoire de Miss Clarisse Harlove*, by the celebrated novelist Abbé Prévost appeared (see SR's comments: SR to Lady Bradshaigh, 24 February 1755; SR to Clairaut, 5 July 1753; SR to Stinstra, 2 June 1753); a German version, *Die Geschichte der Clarissa, eines vornehmen Frauenzimmers*, translated by Johann David Michaelis, was published between 1749 and 1753; and Johannes Stinstra produced a Dutch version, *Clarissa. Of de historie van eene jonge juffer: Waarin de gewigtigste belangen des gemeenen levens vervat zijn* between 1752 and 1755 (see SR to Lady Bradshaigh, 24 February 1753). On translations of *Clarissa*, see Eaves and Kimpel, pp. 318–20, Thomas O. Beebee, *Clarissa on the Continent: Translation and Seduction* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), and Frank Howard Wilcox, 'Prevost's Translations of Richardson's Novels', *University of California Publications in Modern Philology*, 12 (1927), 341–411.