PART I
MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS
TO KEENE
1730–1756

From Thomas Robinson

DEAREST KEENE,

Tho’ I have been a long while interrupted in the pleasure of hearing from you and writing to you, for want of proper materials at two courts which, since my arrival here, have acted with so much reservedness and silence towards each other, yet the season of the year cannot but make me extremely glad to embrace the occasion to tell you that your humble servant is alive, and wishes you all the pleasure and prosperity that you can hope for from the next twelve new months. We live here in a little town, where there is more speculation than certainty upon facts, where politicians of all kinds form schemes in their imaginations and some of them both build castles in Spain, and send them thither, when they have done. Of this kind is a certain gentleman you spoke to me of in a former letter, a great observer of visits, of the goings and coming of couriers, and no less a retailer of lacquey-news. I look upon them to be in politicks, what the Jews are in religion: an extraordinary visit is a Sabbath day to them, and the arrival of a courier, or what they please to call so, as good as a new moon. I received but the other day a person from my best of friends, Lord Chesterfield, who is upon his departure from Holland, and all Vienna, like Sidrophel’s family in Hudibras, were out upon the speculation. This incident made so much noise, and, like the kite with a

1 Thomas Robinson (later Sir Thomas, and later still Lord Grantham) had been employed in France as Secretary to Horatio Walpole, and was sent in 1729 as Envoy to Vienna. He remained at that Court till 1748, when he went as Plenipotentiary to Aix-la-Chapelle. Later he was for a short time Secretary of State.
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lantern at its tale, was interpreted to prognosticate so much peace by some, and so much war by others, that I was willing to know, if the numberless train of suspicious Italians and discontented Spaniards, who surround my good friend M. Eiegus,¹ had tormented him, tho’ sick and almost at death’s door, with surmises worthy of nobody but such miserable retailers. I own I went to him out of charity; I love him and esteem him, as a very honest man, but sometimes do not think the better of him for too much credulity and jealousy. He has been ill for above three months; at last an inflammation has got into his blood, and his worthy councilors would have put another into his head; but finding him as much tormented in mind with their idle insinuations as in body with his distemper, I advised him to be at ease, and with the tranquility that I would give to the former, to let the latter recover itself at leisure. In short, I charged him, if he intended to order anything to be wrote to his court, to say in my name, so much I found he had been taught the contrary, that since my arrival here, I could assure him on the word of a gentleman and a man of honour, that nothing had been transacted at this Court contrary to the King’s engagements and strict friendship with the Crown of Spain, which at all hazards his Majesty was ready to maintain; and this he has promised to write; but if, overpersuaded by those people above mentioned, or by a certain spark here, who has more invention and wit than knowledge and judgement, he should be so far mislead as to write the contrary, I was willing to give you this testimony that you might do me the justice, which I deserve from your friendship. To such ridiculous surmises, we have hitherto had, and God be praised, shall never fail to have, facts to oppose as certain and as sincere as the truth esteem and affection with which I am, dearest Keene, ever yours,

T. R.

My best compliments and services to Castres.²

[Holograph.]

¹ The Spanish Minister at Vienna.
² This is interesting as showing that Castres was in Spain, and sufficiently prominent to be known to Robinson, as early as 1730.
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From Sir Charles Wager

Admiralty Office. 30 Sepr. 1730

Sir,

I have not troubled you with any letter for some time, and was in hopes that our disputes with the Court of Spain had been at an end: and am sorry this unlucky accident has happen'd, because it will naturally revive several things, on one side and the other, that seem'd to be allmost quiet, and at an end. But as this Register Ship² (as they call her) was taken at the very place where a ship call'd the Woolbale (of equal value at least) had been carry'd in by a guard de costa (or licens'd pyrat), we may be pretty near a par as to those particular ships; but it seems very strange to me that, after the Spaniards have made such numberless depredations on the English trade, they should be surpriz'd at our taking one ship of theirs, tho' in lieu only of one of ours, carry'd into the same place and unjustly condemn'd. I believe you may remember, what I have said before, that so long as the King of Spain suffers ships, or other vessels, to be fitted out and arm'd as guard de costas at private expence, they must, and will, robb and plunder, or they can not live; and when they seize a ship, they carry her to a by place, where they make a bargain with the Governot (as I am told was the case of the Woolbale) that she shall be condemn'd, else they will not carry her in: for that ship was taken near the Havana, but the pyrat was doubtfull of her condemnation there, tho' it be much at one to the Buners, whether a ship be condemn'd or acquitted, if the captors have leave to appeal to Madrid; where it has been found by experience to be mony thrown away to follow it,

¹ Sir Charles Wager was a Lord of Admiralty from 1718 to 1733, and First Lord from 1733 to 1743. He held the seat for West Looe in the parliament of 1742, and was succeeded on his death in 1743 by Benjamin Keene. His letter gives a sample of the maritime disputes with which Keene had to deal throughout his residence in Spain.

² For financial and defensive purposes, the trade between Spain and America was concentrated in definite ports. These were, on the Spanish side Cadiz (which in the eighteenth century had supplanted Seville), and on the American side Porto Bello and Vera Cruz. All trading vessels had to sail in a fleet and were escorted by a naval squadron (the Armada de la Carrera de Indias). “Register Ships” had to sail with the fleet, but received a special licence, after crossing the Atlantic, to carry their goods to other specified ports in the Indies.
nay, tho’ she should be acquitt’d there too, and an order from the King obtain’d to restore the ship and cargo: for I believe you must remember that a ship call’d the Ann Gally, belonging to one Capt. Benham (which made a great noise here), was taken and carry’d into St Iago de Cuba, bound to Jamaica with Negroes from Africa. As I remember an order was obtain’d from the King of Spain to the Governor of the said place to restore the said ship and cargo, val’d here at £10,000—this order was boasted of in our newspapers: and what is the consequence? Why Admiral Steward says that the Governor is a very civil gentleman, and consequently gave him a civil answer; but that the captors of the said ship, some of them were dead, others gone, or insolvent, or did not live in that place: that there was no mony in the King’s coffers (which have no bottom in the West Indies) and that it was done in a former Governor’s time, in short not a rial to be had: which would be the case of all the rest, were orders obtain’d for their being restored. And it must be thought a strange thing, that after such numberless captures, depredations and insults, as this nation has receiv’d from the Spaniards, not only in the West Indies (but some, you know, in the Mediterranean), since the Peace of Utrecht, that we should take one single ship of theirs, in lieu only of one of the same value unjustly taken and unjustly condemn’d. The Spaniards seem to think that all our merchant ships, from the West Indies, that have any thing on bord of the growth or produce of the Spanish part if it, are, ship and cargo, lawful prize to them, when taken; surely that is something new; and if insisted upon, we must send convoys with our trade as in time of warr: what can be the consequence of that? I have writ as much or more to Stert, so say [no] more but that I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

CH. WAGER

[Holograph.]

From Lord Chesterfield

Hague. 22 Febry, 1732

SIR,

I delay’d returning you my thanks for the favour of your letter, ’till I could at the same time inform you of the concurrence of this
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Republick to the Treaty of Vienna,¹ which, tho’ it has been delay’d longer than I expected, was finally concluded and signed last Wed-
nesday morning.

This is not a proper opportunity to send you the act of concurren-
tce, which I suppose you will receive before it is long by a courier
from England. But I can tell you in generall, that the Dutch have
not whittl’d down their engagements in this, as they have constantly
done in all former acts of accession, but have entered without reserve
into the same engagements with the King, and whatever little altera-
tions the Act has made to the Treaty, they all extend equally to his
Majesty.

After the Treaty was signed, the States represented to me the
awkward situation they were in with Spain, who by the Marquis de
Castellar’s² declaration, as well as by their subsequent explanations
of it, have annul’d not only the Treaty of Seville, but all the other
Treatys as far as they relate to this Republick, whereupon they desire
his Majesty’s best offices with that Court; and that instructions may
be sent to you to second in the strongest manner Monr. Van der
Meer’s³ instances for a renewal of the Treatys. As these orders will,
I am perswaded, be sent you by the very first opportunity, I believe
you may safely venture in the mean time to assist Monr. Van der
Meer, even with zeal and warmth; for besides that the Dutch were
promised his Majesty’s best offices, as soon as ever they should have
signed the Treaty, it will be likewise a proper and creditable mark
of his Majesty’s influence, and of Spain’s gratitude to him, if at his
request his allies obtain what they could not get without it: and I
could heartily wish, that it might be done immediately, that every-
body may see, and this Republick in particular, that it is entirely
owing to the King. I beg too that you will let Monr. Van der Meer
know that I have writt to you upon this subject.

As the happy tho’ late conclusion of this affair has put an end to
all business here at least for sometime, His Majesty has been pleased

¹ The Treaty of Vienna, by which Great Britain guaranteed the Pragmatic
Sanction, was signed in 1731. The Dutch acceded in 1732.
² The Marquis de Castellar was the elder brother of Don José Patiño. He was
Minister of War in Spain from 1726 to 1730. In 1730 he went as Ambassador
to France and died there in 1733.
³ Van der Meer was for many years Dutch Minister at Madrid.
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to permitt me to return to England to attend him in my employ-
ment near his Person. I set out next week, so shall take this occasion
of returning you my thanks for the favour of your correspondence
during my ministry here. And tho’ the distance of the places, and
the scarcity of safe opportunitys made great intervalls in it, I am
not the less sensible of your friendship and attention in informing
me, whenever the case deserved or the opportunity allowed it. I re-
commend my self to the continuance of your friendship, and desire
you to do me the justice to be perswaded that no body has a truer
sense of your merit and abilitys, nor can be with more consideration
and esteem, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

CHESTERFIELD

From the Duke of Richmond

Whitehall. Sept. 28th, 1732

I have received both, my dear freind Keene, letters, and the two
pounds of snuff by the courier, which was most admirably good,
and I return you ten thousand thankes for it. You seem to despair
of hearing any more from me; it’s true I was formerly a very bad
corespondent, butt you can not imagine how I have taken to writing,
since I broke my legg; there is not a post day that I do not write
at least half a dozen letters; if I then should neglect my freind Keene,
who I love better that at least five out of six of those I write to, it
would be unpardonable. Since you are so good as to desire to hear
how my legg does, I’ll give you an account of it; you must know
then I have been about three times longer a growing well of this
affair than any mortal before me ever was, which certainly proceeds
from my being ill managed at first: by being permitted to gett up
too soon, and by my surgeons too often changeing the dressings,
which must have very much disturb’d the callous, butt it is now at

1 Charles Lennox, second Duke of Richmond, was a grandson of Charles II and
the Duchess of Portsmouth (Louise de Kéroualle). He was Master of the Horse
with a seat in the Cabinet from 1733. Horace Walpole says that he was the only
man who loved the Duke of Newcastle. His breezy and outspoken letters to the
Duke, preserved in the Newcastle Papers, are excellent reading. He died on
8 August, 1750. See below, p. 254.
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last confirmed; and I begin to use my legg pretty much, that is I can turn it anyway, lift it up, and putt it to the ground, but not to lay any stress upon it yet. I also walke about with crutches, and in short gather so much strength every day, that there is no manner of doubt butt that I shall be soon very well again; and indeed it is high time, for it is now full four months and a half since I broke it. I know of no news to send you, only that His Majesty arrived safe at Ken- sington the day before yesterday. Count Montijo,1 is not yet arrived, but is hourly expected; it is not yet settled which house he is to have, Montagu, Leicester, or Powis, but I hope the first, which is a most noble thing, and fitt almost for Las Majestas Catolicas themselves. I have according to your directions sent the twenty guineas to Mon- sieur Payzant,2 and enclosed is his receipt. A Dios, mi Querido Amigo, amo a usted de todo mi coracon, y loy su humilde y aficionado servidor,

RICHMOND

Don Thomas Montazillo is yours.

[Holograph.]

From Lord Carteret3

Arlington street. March 26th, 1737 O.S.

SIR,

I had from Mr. Blair ye honour of yr letter of ye 18th Feb: with ye printed dissertation upon Cervantes by Don Gregorio Mayans; I desire you will be pleas’d to send ye enclos’d to Don Gregorio. His work is now in ye Press; Tonson proposes to print it off in a fortnight and I shall, if he keeps his word, send you very soon some copy for yourself and Don Gregorio. I like it well, and would have had it printed as Quixote is to be, but Tonson told me yt printing it with yt letter would swell it to 30 sheets, which would take up too

1 Montijo was Spanish Minister in England from 1732 to 1735. Later he represented Spain in France.
2 Payzant was a clerk in the Foreign Office, whose special department was finance and the payment of salaries.
3 This and the following letters from Carteret are of considerable value as illustrating his keen interest in literature. Señor de Arteaga informs me that the Tonson edition of Don Quixote, issued in 1738, was highly appreciated in Spain and is now very rare. It was printed in London because Tonson was the only publisher who would risk the expense.
much room in ye first Vol. and make ye others unsizeable. You
know ye printer must be humour’d, but ye work shall be printed
very handsomely, so as to be an ornament as well as a light to ye
main work. His way of spelling shall be kept in his own treatise,
but not follow’d in Quixote, for I can’t allow it to be orthography
but a complanyce with ye vulgar; who learning by common use and
discourse write accordingly, and so confound ye etymology of lan-
guage, by which they become more difficult to foreigners, and so
fall into obscurity. You know ye Italian language is ye first of ye
modern languages yt was reduced into a learned and elegant form;
when yt was in perfection, ye other languages of Europe in ye politest
Countries were almost barbarous; but since ye Italians have receed
by degrees from ye Latin orthography, which is ye best foundation
both of Italian and Spanish, they have depreciated their language, as
one sees by ye modern works of ye last age, and if ye Spaniards fall
into ye same error, ye improvements yt have been made in their
language since Charles ye 5ths time, will insensibly be lost, and ye
dignity and purity of ye Castillian tongue will be swallow’d up in ye
provincial dialects such as Catalan and Portugese. The perfection of
Italian, Spanish and Portugese is to Latinizar without pedantry,
which may be done with exactness of derivation and etymology, so
yt even ye vulgar shall understand you, but if ye Latin, which is ye
original orthography of those languages, shall not be kept up, they
will become more difficult to foreigners, and then come to be
neglected out of their own bounds, and when once they are con-
fin’d in their circulation, they will come to be depreciated even at
home. I shall stop here, least I should run into a dissertation. Don
Gregorio may think me a pedant, and you may justly think me very
idle, for troubling a Minister with gramatical speculations. I will
therefore give no instances in other languages, and make no excuse,
but if, as you say in compliment, you have look’d out for a remote
and forced occasion to make your selfe known to me, I will improve
ye opportunity; and only tell you at present, yt tho’ you don’t know
me, I know you by services which you have done to your country;
and yt I will improve every opportunity of shewing ye real regard
yt I have for your merit. I am, Sir, with great respect, your most
humble and most obedient servant,

Carteret
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If you can procure a drawing from any portrait yet there may be of Don Gregorio, I will have it finely engraved here, as a ornament to ye work, and as a small mark of our respect for ye author of ye life of Cervantes.¹

[Holograph.]

From Lord Carteret

Arlington Street. Aug. 24th, 1737

SIR,

I have sent to Mr. Blair a set of ye prints of ye new Don Quixote which he promis’d to convey to you by ye first opportunity, and I here enclose to you a Dissertation upon them by Dr. Oldfield, who invented most of them. Ye Doctor has been negligent in ye style of his Dissertation, but yt is no matter, since I hope you will have it translated into Spanish, and in yt language it is to stand before ye book. I should be unwilling to give you any trouble of this kind, if I did not know yt you love books, and particularly ye work in question. If there is any thing in ye Dissertation yt you don’t like, you will be so good as to leave it out, and if you thinke of any thing to add to it, you will oblige all ye encouragers of ye work. I desire you will make my compliments to Don Mayans; if he has a mind to leave out or add any thing, we shall take his judgement. I won’t trouble you any more at present, but hope to have ye Dissertation settled by you in Spanish as soon as you can send it with convenience. The 1st Vol. of ye book will be finish’d in a few days, and ye rest will go on as fast as possible. I am, Sir, with great truth and respect, your most humble and most obedient servant,

CARTERET

[Holograph.]

From General Sabins

Gibraltar. Novr. 6th 1737

SIR,

My last to you was of the 24th of last month, which I hope is come to hand; and also my former letter of the 27th Sept., both forwarded

¹ Señor de Arteaga tells me that no such portrait appeared, so presumably Keene could not supply one.
per Mr. Cayley. Yesterday I received from Consul Black at Algier the inclosed packet for you, which, I suppose, will give you a full account of Capt. Hipper’s ship; who was taken and carried prisoner to Cartagene, as I mentioned in my last; the ship we hear has put into Mahon.

The Duke of Ripperda\(^1\) died at Tetuan the 5th inst. N.S. in a very miserable condition; he was buried at Martin, a place so called, by the shore, and there was not even a cord to lower the coffin into the grave. Bashaw Hamett has taken every thing the Duke left at his death; and made himself his lawful heir.

I wish you all health and prosperity and remain with great truth and respect, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

Jos. Sabins

[Holograph.]

From Lord Elibank

London. Janry. 29th, 1738

SIR,

The trouble you have been pleas’d to give your self on account of the Lady North and Grey, of which we have both the most grateful sense, encourages me to beg you will please to think of her affair, now that all England is made sensible of your authority with the Court of Spain, by the prospect of an accomodation brought about by you at the time it was the least hop’d for. You have given such proofs of your skill in setting that Court right in it’s notions, that I cannot help flattering my self you will find it an easy matter to convince it, that it is not altogether consistant with justice and its dignity, to make an example of a stranger Lady, whose husband had certainly merit with respect to them.

We are assured that, tho’ in strictness a Lady loses her pension by marrying without the previous consent of his Catholick Majesty, yet

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\(^1\) Ripperda was the famous Dutchman, who rose to great eminence in Spain after the fall of Alberoni. He negotiated the Treaty of Vienna between Austria and Spain in 1725, and this treaty plunged Europe into turmoil for the next six years. After his downfall in Spain, he came for a time to England, but ultimately made his way to Africa, where he is said to have become a Mohammedan. He fell in combat with the Moors. His career is described in Syveton, *Le Baron de Ripperda*. 