

Richard Bull to Thomas Pennant

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To: Thomas Pennant
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Dear Sir

Jan^y. 20. 1792

I give you this trouble merely to answer a question of yours in a former letter, which I had no opportunity of doing sooner, altho' I had enquir'd of every Nabob that came in my way, and of all the Booksellers I knew.

Rainsford, upon asking him the same question, this minute informs me, that he had the book, but lent it to a friend, who has never return'd it. the title is *Zendavesta* ^in English the lighter of the sacred fire, written by Anquetel de Perron, and having therein, (unless he is extremely mistaken), the journey from Goa, to Poonah.

I am sorry to find your London journey is not likely to take place soon, and more so, for the occasion of its being postpon'd. I am glad your Son deserves so well, and that your worthy Sister has the means, as well as the Heart, to behave so much en Princesse;¹ to make a young man quite happy, He must have a little less time, and a little more money than He absolutely has occasion for; and so She seems to think. Don't send your son to Westminster, experto crede,² I was there seven years; a Boy may learn there, if he pleases, or may let it alone, if he likes better to be idle, no particular attention is paid to any body, except to the Sons of ministers, or other great men, by whose interest the masters, and Ushers expect to rise in the world, as in general they do: thus it was forty years ago, and I don't hear of any alteration, except that vices of every sort, are more abundant, and less restraint laid upon them. I know a Westminster Boy, who is a Debauché at 16, and whom I have heard at Eleven o'clock at night, complaining he did not know any clever place to spend the Evening at.

The Character which the present Eton Seminary bears, is still more discouraging, and for reasons which a decent pen ought not to write. a particular friend of mine, the celebrated M^r Erskine speaks highly of Winchester School, and the manners of his son who is now there, seem to authorise his predilection for it.

Private Schools have their disadvantages certainly, and very material ones, nor can I tell where good ones are now to be found. one at Kensington³ is well spoken of, and another at Salisbury,⁴ but I know not enough of either to recommend them. I am ^myself at this minute very anxious about this matter, because the friend of my heart ^Lady Clarges?⁵ has a Son ready to send to school, and She depends upon me to make those enquiries, which a woman cannot, and ought not to do.

I have return'd your Volume of *Indian Zoology* to Faulder, not without feeling very much oblig'd to you for permitting me to ask for it, but in truth I am so little of a naturalist, that unless it is somehow connected with your *artic Zoology*, (the only part of your natural history I am possess'd of) I should act contrary to my fix'd intention, in never depriving any body of a Print, or a book, that I do not immediately stand in need of. – The news of the day ^which may be alter'd to morrow is, that the King, and the Prince of Wales, are upon the best terms again, that the former is to

dine with the latter shortly, and that Parliament will be apply'd to, [illegible] to add £40,000 a year to his income, upon the condition of the King's taking his debts upon himself, which are said to amount to 800,000£. perhaps the intended addition to the Duke of Yorks establishment may make the Elder Brothers hopes appear less unreasonable. but alas! one Brother would lose a world at Play, if he had it, and the other would fool away a world in races^s/horses and hunters, and unworthy connections. they say her Grace of York is very unhappy, both at the late hours, and the manners of a London fashionable life, as well upon the Account, of her Sposo's unabating propensity to play. I saw her at the tragedy of the Gamester (where M^{rs} Siddons play'd Mrs Beverly) weeping and wailing with such seeming feeling, that I really felt for her myself.⁶

The Report is, that Lord Salisbury is to lose his high office, for having given Martindale the Faro Dealer, one of the most efficient, and respectable employments, be[illegible] longing to him as L^d Chamberl[illegible]ain.⁷

It is said too that the Prince of Wales has made the Duke of Queensberry's peace at S^t. James's,⁸ and that he is to have some good department at Court. What has a very rich, a very old, and a very deaf man to do with places at Court, or, having quarrelled with an indulgent Master at 65, what business had he with a reconciliation at 70? – It seems agreed, on all sides, that no Chancellor of the Exchequer ever open'd his budget, with such very amazing abilities, both as to matter, [illegible] and manner, as M^r Pitt did his, last week.⁹

– give our best remembrances to your family, and believe me, my Dear Sir,
Yours very sincerely

Rich^d: Bull

Editorial Notes

¹ 'like a princess'.

² 'trust one who knows'.

³ On various schools at Kensington during the eighteenth century, see 'Private Education from the Sixteenth Century: Developments from the 16th to the early 19th century', in *A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 1, Physique, Archaeology, Domesday, Ecclesiastical Organization, the Jews, Religious Houses, Education of Working Classes To 1870, Private Education From Sixteenth Century*, ed. J. S. Cockburn, H. P. F. King and K. G. T. McDonnell (London, 1969), pp. 241–55. See [here](#).

⁴ This may refer to the grammar school at Salisbury cathedral in Wiltshire. 'The cathedral of Salisbury: Eighteenth to twentieth centuries', in R. B. Pugh and Elizabeth Crittall (eds.), *A History of the County of Wiltshire: Volume 3* (London: Victoria County History, 1956), pp. 197–210. See [here](#).

⁵ The name 'Lady Clarges?' is added in pencil, neither in Richard Bull nor in Pennant's hand.

⁶ Sarah Siddons (née Kemble) (1755–1831) and her brother, John Philip Kemble, first played the parts of Mr and Mrs Kemble in Moore's *The Gamester* on 22 November 1783. *ODNB*.

⁷ For a contemporary report of this appointment, see *Hampshire Chronicle*, 20 February 1792, which notes the significance of the promotion: 'It is to this officer that all the writs on the election of member of Parliament are delivered from the crown-office; and, on a general election, it is a place of very particular consequence.'

⁸ In 1789, during the regency crisis, George, Prince of Wales, was backed by William Douglas, fourth duke of Queensberry (1725–1810), in a vote against William Pitt. Contrary to Bull's account here, this led to Douglas's dismissal from the favour of the king after the latter's return to health. *ODNB*.

⁹ The *Northampton Mercury*, 21 January 1792, predicted that 'Mr. Pitt will, in the approaching Session of Parliament be enabled to open his Budget with an eclat beyond that of any preceding period, which must

considerably add to the reputation he has already acquired from his abilities as a financier. In addition to the annual million, there is stated to be a surplus of no less than eight hundred thousand pounds above the ordinary expenditure'.