

Thomas Pennant to Richard Bull

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From: Thomas Pennant
To: Richard Bull
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Dear Sir

Downing Dec^r 27th. 1792

That many many happy returns of this season may attend miss Bulls¹ & yourself is the sincere wish of this house.

Your favor bore a most melancholy complection. The relation of the Birmingham ass is truly affecting but nothing to what happened within a short time past at Holywell. The rumour of a mob prevailing I mounted my steed, & rode rashly into the midst of the market place. I scarce had time to speak but I was knocked off my horse dragged to a butchers blood, & off went my head, before I c^d emit one Ave maria. The bloody minded vill[illegible]ains ripped open my breast, & at my right kidney & were beginning on the left, when an irish gentleman most fortunate cried out, arrah,² the Rascal, drown him the well. soone went I in, head & tail, when wondrous to say, I had no sooner touched the holy hair of our blessed winefrid:³ but my viscera were restored & my head as nicely united to my body as if nothing had happen'd. I then sprung upon the bank. The ruffians took to their heels, & by this miraculous intervention of our blessed Saint, Loyalty & peace was restored to the country: I have been more than rewarded for my pain, having been unanimously chose chairman to the committee of the eleven associated parish[illegible]es. [illegible] [illegible] we are, (most seriously) wild with loyalty: not a collier or miner in this very populous Country but understands the business & is most sincerely attached to the cause of good order. I inclose two papers.⁴ for the third, I fear I must wait another post. The welsh one is a translation of *judge ashursts speech*.

At length I have got Moses to set down to y^r work. The subjects will not be so numerous as I thought: so I trust you will have them at the promised time. I still hold my pen. I saw it necessary to tack to China, Japan for the sake of making both ends meet.⁵ i.e China with the part of Asia described in the *arctic zoology*. pasting is also much in vogue so my *XIV volumes of M.S.* will be amazingly rich.

Thanks for your enquiry after our little girl: she is perfectly recoverd from a very painful illness which she bore with heroism.

I am
 Dear Sir
 most affec^{tly} &
 truly yrs

Tho. Pennant.

Editorial Notes

¹

Elizabeth and Catherine Bull.

² 'Arrah' is an 'expletive expressing emotion or excitement, common in Anglo-Irish speech'. *OED*.

³ Gwenfrewi or Winifred (fl. early 7th century) was closely associated with the cult of Beuno in north-east Wales. Twelfth-century vitae dedicated to her recount how she was miraculously restored to life at Holywell, where her sanctuary remains to this day. *DWB*. For current work on Gwenfrewi, see [here](#) [accessed 30 April 2019].

⁴ The enclosures have not survived with the letter.

⁵ Pennant's treatment of China was followed by attention to Japan in *volume XVII* of 'Outlines of the Globe'.