Richard Bull to Thomas Pennant

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Dear Sir

Stratton Street. February 6. 1797

I found your last kind remembrance of me and mine, upon my table, when we arriv'd from the Isle of Wight, about the middle of December, almost ever since which, I have had a sick family, & myself ailing, and spiritness, and my daughter still worse than myself, nor do I believe she will ever recover the former cheerfulness, and, pour comble de Malheur,[1] the vile yellow fever in the West Indies, has carried off, two valuable friends of mine, and several of our very intimate acquaintance besides. I shall be glad to receive my Whitford Parish,[2] but not sooner than may suit M^{r} Griffith's leisure and convenience. I find a memorandum that I sent him the two title pages of my large paper *Arctic Zoology*, at the same time that the *Introduction* of that work was remitted to him for his adorning the same. The *Introduction* I receiv'd safely, but the title pages never were return'd. will you have the goodness, if an opportunity offers to enquire about them, and if not to found, perhaps you can tell me to whom I can apply for two others to replace them, as I do not just now recollect ~~for~~^by whom they were printed.

sometime since, you ask'd me for a print of Marseille"s good Bishop, which I could not then give you, but have now a duplicate at your service. I am not much in the way of hearing public news, but I hear many complaints of men and Measures, and I doubt not without reason. Lord Spencer, report says, will not continue at the head of the admiralty, unless a serious parliamentary enquiry is made into the reason's for Lord Bridports delays before he left S^{t}. Hellens, as well as for the improper and unlikely Stations he took afterwards, for the intercepting the Enemie's fleet on ~~[illegible]~~ its return to Brest.[3] not a question has yet been ask'd, who was to blame for the strange manner, in which our ships, had ran foul of one another, in going from ~~[illegible]~~ S^{t}. Hellen's point, nor why Lord Bridport, did not sail without waiting for them, his force being more than adequate for the purpose intended. The Devil is a good Pilot, and I always thought, He would Steer his friends, the Savages of France out of our way, as he has always done hitherto. The last stroke in Italy, will most likely oblige our only real ally, the Emperor, to make a separate peace.[4] We shall know more of this business, when the next Hamburgh Mail arrives; at present it is said that the french had receiv'd a reinforcement of 30,000 fresh troops, which by neglect or other, the Imperial General had gain'd no intelligence about, and that ^the Emperors troops being, for the greatest part, young and new recruits when opposed to the Veterans of france, were soon oblig'd to give way. It is hoped and believ'd however, that the Braggard Buonaparte, has, as usual, exagerated his accounts of the several actions.

I am afraid my very old friend Lord Orford, is almost at his last stage. after combatting a fever for many days, in a manner quite astonishing for a man, of his age, and weak habit of body, an abscess has form'd under his arm, which must soon kill, or cure, but his friends hardly wish for the latter, because he has already suffer'd pain sufficient to deprive him of his intellects, so that the business of death being half done, it cannot be desirable, to have to begin it again at 87.

a more mellancholy account has just reach'd to me – poor Chiswell - has shot himself ^dead and I am actually so shock'd at the moment I am telling you so, that I cannot ^add another word, except our best, and our sincerest good wishes to you, and the House of Pennant.

I am Dear Sir, with great truth,
Yours always

Rich^{d}: Bull

P:S. since I wrote the within, a friend of poor unhappy Chiswell has been with me. The horrid deed was done at his house in Essex, on friday last, ^Febr 3^{d}, about 3 o'clock in his water closet. He had engag'd a party of friends to dine with him in Portland place the same day. – the immediate cause – is at present suppos'd to have been from ^some pecuniary difficulties arising from his having of late speculated too much in the funds ^and other matters. He had an Estate of 6000 per ann^{m}. in England, with which one would suppose any reasonable man would have been contented,, and his menage – did not seem above such an Estate..

It is said, (and I hope with truth,) that the Russian Paul, is desirous of an offensive and defensive alliance with England, and the Emperor, and he will Send a large army, and as many ships as may be wanted, into any part of Europe, to be employ''d against French. –

Editorial Notes

[1] 'to make matters worse'.

[2] Bull refers to the *'History of Whiteford Parish'* in *HPWaH*.

[3] This refers to the British response to a failed French attempt to land in Bantry Bay, County Cork, Ireland, in December 1796. Alexander Hood, Viscount Bridport, was ordered to set out to sea from Spithead on 20 December 1796 but failed to do so until 3 January 1797, with contemporary newspaper accounts noting on 7 January that he had sailed from St Helens on the Isle of Wight. *ODNB*. R. B. McDowell, 'The Age of the United Irishmen: Revolution and the Union, 1794–1800', in Moody and Vaughan (eds.), *A New History of Ireland*. IV, pp. 349–50; *Hampshire Chronicle*, 7 January 1797.

[4] This refers to the campaigns of Napoléon Bonaparte in Italy during 1796–7. The Austrian army surrendered under a concentrated force of French soldiers at the battle of La Favorita, outside Mantua on 16 January, and had withdrawn to the mountains by the end of the month. Mantua itself was captured on 2 February, leading to the signing of the Peace Preliminaries of Leoben on 18 April, a forerunner of the Treaty of Campo-Formio (18 October 1797). F. M. H. Markham, *Napoleon and the Awakening of Europe* (London: English Universities Press, 1954), 17–33, esp. pp. 28–9; Jones, *Longman Companion to the French Revolution*, p. 49.