

Mount Merrion, June 17, 1736.

My LORD.—If your Grace would not think me like Chaucer's serjeant-at-law, who having much business always seemed more busy than he was, I could truly say, I have not had a day of leisure since Christmas, for at Easter I was upon the Connaught Circuit, where I gained one hour to write to you. To think constantly of your favour is in my power; to acknowledge it, is not. I have in nothing more pleasure, yet never find myself more difficult to be pleased. In my letters I shall say nothing of the state of this kingdom, nor how readily the infection of every ill humour that stirs in England is caught here. Give me leave to describe to your Grace my retirement, which is about four miles from Dublin, where none upon earth has a greater share in my thoughts than your Grace, whether I expatiate in the open field, or meditate and muse in the shade, with the prospect of a smooth or a tempestuous sea before me. The place where I am is called Mount Merrion, where Lord Fitzwilliam intended to have built, and Lady Pembroke was born. The gardens were laid out and the plantations, which are now in very good order and well grown. The principal garden stands upon an ascent as high as the summer house at Clarendon. It is as open as the most modern taste can require, the prospect forward being bounded only by the sea and the horizon. It is formed with green slopes and terraces, like your Grace's amphitheatre, but not so large. At the bottom of the lowest terrace is a large bowling-green, set round with fruit trees. Upon the highest and second terrace are four clumps of laurels and flowering shrubs, equidistant and answering to each other, so as to form a square in the midst of which is a sundial upon a pedestal, upon which I often lean. The sea lies at the bottom of the avenue to the house, as it appears from this place, like the basins of water in England which are mere basins to this body of element. From hence is a perpetual command of the bay, the harbour, the ships at anchor, those that come in—or go out, of two islands, one called Ireland's Eye, the other Larobay, and of a peninsula that runs so far into the sea as to appear an island, and which is really a mountain, upon which the light-house stands, called the Hill of Howth, and from this dial I assure your Grace I very often, just before sunset or at sunrise, for that is the time, see the Welsh Mountains. I have no notion by what I have either heard from travellers, or read in classics, that the Bay of Naples exceeds that of Dublin, in anything but sunshine. Besides this, all Dublin is in view, and we look down upon it, as upon Tattle street from the top of the Abbey. Behind the garden is a wood of fir, ash, and oak. Beyond the wood are the Wicklow Mountains, which run many miles with heads touching the clouds. These are to the west; the sea lies to the east; to the north lies Dublin; to the south lies a valley, not so rich as in Sussex, but with a mixture of corn-fields, farm leas, old ruined castles, meadows, and rocks. The lime is so good here that all the houses look as white as chalk. In the midst of this valley stands an obelisk erected by Lord Allen, which would appear a stupendous pillar, if nature had not long before formed a vast regular pyramid exactly in the shape of a sugar-loaf and called by that name by the sailors. This nature is always showing at the same time, and in every place where the obelisk is to be seen, through a gap in the Wicklow Mountains, which they call the Devil's Bit, and if it be supposed a moriel, which he bit out in rage to spit at a giant in contempt, this idea was formed by some Irish Milton. But in short the sugar-loaf is a high mountain itself, and sinks and depresses the obelisk. Besides these advantages the gardens do not want shady walks, very well grown, of fine verdure, and in a flourishing condition, and without the advantages of nature would not be thought bad or small, unless they were as near Clarendon as the obelisk is to the sugar-loaf. I say nothing of the house: what we live in was intended only for one of the wings, the other wing is the stable. The rooms are not low or small, and every window has a share of the prospects I have mentioned. There are many fields belonging to the house, and the whole surround is enclosed by a better stone-wall than I have seen in England, which is about a mile and a half in circumference. Here we can ride, walk, shoot, hunt, or hawk. I had a share of all these diversions within the

walls. In the winter we abound in woodcocks. As to hunting and hawking, it is in miniature, and by accident. The walking and riding is incomparable, for every field affords a new view, and sets these ever occurring objects in a new light. I had almost forgot the rivulet that forms our serpentine river, which either the Duke or his Secretary Mr. Cary were pleased to call a serpentine ditch, though I assure your Grace it is worthy of being styled a Pindaric fountain, or a Castalian spring, if I could raise it to that height, otherwise I should not mention it so near the sea. All these charms would I cast behind me for the sight of my friends, and for them and that consideration would abate saushina, the next best comfort of life. I have shown you the bright side of mine; the other side, I send in a different paper. In all situations I am most truly, your Grace's ever obliged servant,

J. WALNRIGHT.