

My Dear Lord

I am much ashamed, that you should have prevented me in writing first: But tho' it may appear strange from one who is so voluminous a Scribler, I am certainly very lazy in writing. I am like some celebrated Patriots, who possessed a great Stock of public Virtue, without being endowed with any private.¹ It costs me nothing to write a Quarto; but to compose a Letter even for those Friends, to whom I bear the greatest Regard, encroaches too much on my Indolence.

I am extremely sensible of your Lordship's Friendship in offering me a Vote on Simprin:² But the Reason, I fancy, why Lord Kaimes³ thinks I would decline it, is that I refused a like Offer from my Brother.⁴ The Truth is, I hesitate extremely about my Plans & Schemes. There are many People who invite me to come forward with my History, & write the Reigns of K. William & Q. Ann. Several have offered me their Assistance in procuring Papers & historical Documents for the Purpose; and in general I foresee a greater Facility in this Undertaking than I at first apprehended. This Work would be more entertaining both to me & the public, than the diving into old barbarous & obscure Reigns; where I could scarce hope to communicate any thing new, and might even fail of making my Narration entertaining.⁵ If I undertook this Period, I should be fixed here for sometime; and it might prove very inconvenient for me to appear in Scotland at an Election, & support your Lordship's Interest. I wish very much that you would divide Simprin into Votes; and

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for that Purpose, there are many Persons who would be glad of Votes, & whose Attendance you could more depend on than mine.

I cannot agree that Robertson⁶ is guilty of any Inconsistency. Why might not Mary be seduced into many Imprudences & even some Crimes; & yet possess many Accomplishments which, joined to her singular Misfortunes render her a proper Object of Compassion? I know no Story more pathetically written than that of Anthony & Cleopatra by Plutarch; yet these were far from being innocent Persons. It is a singular & a very commendable Piece of Art in our Friend, to make that Princess an interesting Object, even while he represents her criminal.

The most considerable Circumstance in which his Narration & mine differ is, the Share she had in Babington's Conspiracy. I beg your Lordship to review that Story, & to tell me, whether you do not think I now fully prove my Point. You will see, that I have found

a remarkable Passage in Murden,⁷ which seems to put the Matter past Doubt. Surely, Robertson ought either to have condemned her in this point or to have taken more Pains to clear her.

I have seen pretty often your Nephew, Mr Johnston; & think him a very gallant, sensible young Fellow. By the Accounts I hear, he will soon be provided for, & have the Reward of his Services.⁸

I happend to tell Jack Dalrymple,⁹ that I intended to

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write to your Lordship. He is very anxious to stand right in your good Opinion; and desired me to put in a true Light to you a late Story, which, he says, had been misrepresented in some Letters to Scotland. It is the Story of his Combat with Hugh Dalrymple.¹⁰ As far as I knew that Affair (& I heard most of it from the first hand) Jack did nothing but what was honorable & prudent: The other the contrary. It would only tire you to enter into particulars; & therefore I shall say no thing farther of the Subject. You will hear the Story from many hands. I am My Dear Lord

London

April 28. 1759

Yours with the greatest Truth and

Sincerity

David Hume

注1 これはウォルポール (Robert Walpol) へのあざけりか。

2 ナインウェルズから遠くはないバーウィックシャイアーの教会区。

3 ヘンリー・ヒューム (Henry Home. 1696-1782) は、1752年ケイムズ卿 (Lord Kames) として裁判官に昇進した。形而上学・倫理学・歴史学・法学・文芸評論に関する著者。ヒュームの初期の良き友人。

4 ナインウェルズのジョン・ヒューム (John Home of Ninewells)。

5 ヒュームは結局は、過去に遡って執筆することを決心した。なぜなら、(1)1759年の大英博物館 (British Museum) の開館まで、ロンドンには公共図書館がなかったため、(2) 有力なイギリス諸家の個人コレクションへの入館〔許可〕を得る必要性のため、(3)ホイッグ派牧師によって拒絶される可能性のためである。

6 ウィリアム・ロバートソン (William Robertson. 1721-1793)。ロンドンの出版者から出たばかりの彼の『スコットランドの歴史』*History of Scotland*は、メアリー論争 (the Marian Controversy) では中道の方針を取った。

7 William Murdin, A Collection of State Papers relating to affairs in the reign of Elizabeth (London, 1740-1759), 2 vols.

8 ヒュームは正しかった。海軍将校ジョージ・ジョンストン (George Johnston. 1730-1787) は、1763年、西フロリダ総督 (governor of West Florida) に任命された。彼の母バーバラ (Barbara)、すなわちエリバンクの妹は、ジェイムズ・ジョンストン (Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall) の妻であった。

9 推測するに、ジョン・ダリンプル (John Dalrymple of Cranstoun. 1726-1810)、後のサー・ジョン (Sir John)、法律家にして歴史家、であろう。

10 ヒュー・ダリンプル (Hugh Dalrymple) の身元は不明。ダリンプル家の分家には多くのヒュー (Hughs) やヒュー (Hews) がいる。「戦い」について、明らかになっている情報は無い。

*1 Heawood, PL. 351. No. 2745. Cf., David Hume collection 3.