thing more than an amusement. Literature, art, and anti­quities ministered by turns to the same end, although all these pursuits were followed in the same careless and Epi­curean spirit. But his pen never lay long idle ; few themes that demanded but little study for their treatment proved alien to it ; and among his works there gradually accumulat­ed, not only an immense mass of letters, as evidently calcu­lated for publication as any thing else he ever wrote, but specimens of his aptitude for the composition of novels, of dramas serious and comic, of political tracts and satires, of grave historical disquisitions, of memoirs for the history of English art and of English aristocratic literature, and of those light verses which may be written by gentlemen hav­ing but slender pretensions to the name of poets.

Walpole’s circumstances however allowed him to indulge, in a more dignified fashion, his taste for art and literature. One who was ashamed of writing plays and poems, had no need to be ashamed of collecting books and antiques, or of building baronial castles, and designing romantic gardens. Although Sir Robert Walpole himself left his affairs ex­ceedingly embarrassed, he had carefully provided for the younger branches of his family by grants of public posts. Several sinecure offices conferred on Horace made up his income, during the greater part of his life, to L.4000 at least, or perhaps considerably more. To a bachelor, suffi­ciently methodical and cautious in money-matters, a sum like this offered no inconsiderable facilities for the indul­gence of one or two expensive tastes. Walpole began to collect a few antiques while in Italy ; but his passion for collecting did not arrive at its height till much later. In 1747, when he was thirty years old, he purchased a cottage and piece of ground at one end of the village of Twickenham. Subsequent purchases increased the domain to an extent of several acres, the whole of which was laid out as pleasure-grounds; and the “ little plaything house,” incessantly altered and enlarged, grew at length into the Gothic castle of Strawberry Hill. Its owner’s taste had received, partly perhaps from his friend Gray, an early direction towards this style of architecture, as well as to the branches of antiquarian study connected with it.

In the erection and decoration of his mansion, in desul­tory study and composition, in the enjoyments of society which embraced many of the aristocracy, and a very few of the literary men of the country, and in several excursions to Paris, which introduced him to the philosophical precur­sors of the revolution,—in employments such as these, varied only by his retirement from parliament, passed the life of Horace Walpole, till he had attained his seventy-fourth year. The death of his unfortunate nephew then gave him his father’s earldom, an honour unaccompanied by any substantial accession of fortune. He had for many years been a victim of gout, and the short remainder of his life was spent in utter helplessness of body. But the mind was unshaken to the last.

The works in which Walpole exhibits most characteristi­cally all his qualities of mind, both moral and intellectual, are his Letters, especially those in which the politics of the country are the matters chiefly handled. Accordingly his correspondence with Sir Horace Mann (which was prudently suppressed till the present generation) may be most advan­tageously studied as a likeness of the writer; and to this interesting series other sets of letters, such as those to the Conways, and even the posthumous Memoirs, may be re­garded as little else than supplementary. The dissection of motives, which is the task undertaken with the greatest readiness, is that which is performed least satisfactorily. The analysis of the springs of action is often evidently just ; but as often it is clearly performed by one who was incapable alike of believing that men whom he disliked could act patriotically or nobly, and of even conceiving that any party or any individual could be actuated by mo­tives of a higher class than those by which, unconsciously in part, he himself was led. The selfishness of Strawberry Hill, though not its refinement, was indeed a fair enough measure by which to estimate such statesmen as the Pel­hams : but both the selfish indolence and the confined though acute intellect were utterly alien to the mind of Pitt, and utterly incapable of estimating him and the few other spi­rits which in that age of intrigue and detail possessed real strength and elevation. Akin to this temper of universal censoriousness, and indeed springing from the same source, is another distinctive peculiarity of all Walpole’s political sketches ; namely, his incapacity for determining the rela­tive importance either of principles or actions. An intrigue which substitutes in the ministry a Holdernesse for a Pel­ham, possesses in his eyes equal consequence with the agi­tation which decides whether the foreign policy of the nation is to be swayed by strength and patriotism or by weakness and corruption—hy William Pitt, or by the crea­tures who, during the greater part of his life, thwarted and crippled his exertions. Nay, the politics of the day them­selves appear, in Walpole’s eyes, as standing on the same level with the amusements, the family history, the de­bauchery of the fashionable world : Lady Orford is sati­rized in the same breath with the Chancellor Hardwicke, and the king of Prussia is not less a theme of merriment than “ Prince Pigwiggin" or the duchess of Kingston.

These very qualities, which at once bear unfavourable witness to the state of the writer’s mind, and diminish the value of the writings as historical documents, do never­theless give a peculiar attraction to them as literary com­positions of a certain class. The class is not a high one, but in it the best parts of this Correspondence oc­cupy the very foremost place. The Letters are inimi­table pictures of society and of human character, drawn by the hand of one who was a master in the delineation of scenes from familiar life ; not, it is true, inspiring his figures with poetic truth or serious significance, but shedding over all of them a gaily comic light. They are a kind of satires, and few compositions claiming that name are equal to them in lively wit, in striking grasp of character, in picturesque colouring of incidents, and in apposite, epigrammatic, vi­gorous language. They have been criticised at great length, and with consummate talent, in the Edinburgh Re­view, vol. lviii.

WALSALL, a town of the hundred of Offlow and county of Stafford, 116 miles from London and fifteen from Staf­ford. It is a place of great antiquity. It stands on the side of a hill, and consists of several regular and spacious well- built streets, which are well paved, and lighted with gas. The parish church is a spacious building, in the form of a cross, with an octagonal tower. There is also a handsome chapel, called St Paul’s, erected in 1826. The town has a well-supplied market on Tuesday, and three annual fairs. The trade is very extensive, chiefly in various kinds of hard­ware, but especially in what consists in horses’ furniture, usually called saddlers’ ironmongery. The government is vested in a corporate body, consisting of a mayor, six al­dermen, and seventeen councillors. The suburb, called the Foreign, is now the largest portion of the place, or at least contains the greatest number of inhabitants ; and by the late act the whole is made one borough for the purposes of election, and has received the power of returning one member to the House of Commons. Walsall contains many dissenters, who have their respective chapels. The popu­lation amounted in 1821 to 11,914, and in 1831 to 15,066.

WALSH, William, an English critic and poet, the son of Joseph Walsh, Esq. of Abberley in Worcestershire, was born about the year 1660. He became a gentleman com­moner of Wadham College, Oxford, but left the university without taking a degree. His writings are to be found among the works of the Minor Poets, printed in 1749. He was