

X^{DRH}

To D^r Johnson, Lynn Regis, Norfolk.
Feb^r 17. 1755

Sir

Though I have never had the happiness of a personal knowledge of you, I cannot think myself wholly a stranger to a man with whose sentiments I have so long been acquainted: for it seems to me as if the writer who was sincere had effected the plan of that Philosopher who wished that men had windows at their breasts, through which the affections of their hearts might be viewed.

It is with great self-denial that I refrain from giving way to panegyric in speaking of the pleasure & instruction I have rec^d. from ^{your} admirable writings; but knowing that transcend-ent merit speaks more at praise, than either vice or dulness at censure, I shall compress my encomiums into a short compass, & only tell you, that I adore your principles & integrity in not prostituting your genius, learning, & knowledge of the human heart, in ornamenting vice or folly, those beautiful flowers of Language, due only to wisdom & virtue. I must add that your periodical productions seem to me models of true genius, useful learning, & elegant diction, employed in the service of the purest precepts of religion, & the most inviting morality.

I shall waive any further gratification of my wish to tell you, Sir, how much I have been delighted by your productions, & proceed to the business of this letter; w^{ch} is no other than to beg the favour of you to inform me, by the way that will give you the least trouble, when, & in what manner, your admirably-plann'd & long-wish'd-for Dictionary, will be published? If it should be by Subscription, or you sh^d. have any ^{books} ~~copies~~ at your own disposal,

Johnson's Dictionary

I shall beg of you to favour me with 6 Copies for myself & friends, for which I will send you a draught, ~~for the money, or~~
~~send as I ^{shall} procure the requisite sum.~~

I ought to beg pardon of the public, as well as yourself, Sir, for detaining you thus long from your useful labours; but it is the fate of men of eminence to be persecuted by insignificant friends, as well as enemies; & the simple one who backs through fondness & affection is no less troublesome, than if stimulated by anger & acrimony.

I hope however that your philosophy will incline you to forgive the intemperance of my zeal & impatience in making these enquiries, as well, ^{my} ambition to subscribe myself with very great regard, Sir,

Your sincere admirer,
and most humble servant.

Cha. Burney.

Feb. 16. 1755.

291.

Copies of 1st letter
to Mr. William Johnson
Feb. 16. 1755.

462
3 ALS

Burney (Chas)

COLLECTION OF

Catalogue Number

Autograph of

. Contents

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78

CHARLES BURNEY, A. L. S., 16 February 1755, to
SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Lynn Regis, Norfolk.
Febr. 1755

Sir,

Though I have never had the happiness of a personal knowledge of you, I cannot think myself wholly a stranger to a man with whose sentiments I have so long been acquainted: for it seems to me as if the writer who was sincere had affected the plan of that philosopher who wished that [~~canceled~~] men had windows at their breasts, through which the affections of their hearts might be viewed.

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I ought to beg pardon of the public, as well as yourself, Sir, for detaining you thus long from your useful labours; but it is the fate of

men of eminence to be persecuted by insignificant friends, as well as enemies; & the simple cur who barks through fondness & affection is no less troublesome, than if stimulated by anger & aversion.

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Sir, your sincere admirer, and most humble servant,

Cha^s. Burney.

Feb^r. 16. 1755.

ALS, 2 pages. Single sheet, 25.4 x 20 cm.

Laid paper. Portion of fleur-de-lis watermark along edge.

Provenance: Parke-Bernet Galleries, 27 Nov 1941. Penciled, upper corner of page 1: R. H. \$75⁰⁰ (lot 78 \$20). In American Art Association folder.

Published by Frances Burney, *Memoirs of Dr. Burney* (3 vols.; London: Edward Moxon, 1832), I, 119–120; Percy A. Scholes, *The Great Dr. Burney* (London, 1948), I, 88. As to substantives (apart from deletions) Miss Burney's version is consistent with the Lewis MS, but there are 22 variations in accidentals, not counting abbreviations (as over against 5 substantive and 23 accidental variations in Scholes's version). It is likely, then, that Miss Burney made her transcript from the Lewis MS, but afterwards expanded the numerous abbreviations and altered punctuation, and that Scholes made some use of her transcript.

Notes: 1. The Lewis MS is the first copy of the letter sent Johnson: Burney wrote "To D^r. Johnson." at the top of page 1 and below his signature "Copy of 1st. Letter | to M^r. Sam^l. Johnson | Feb^r. 16. 1755. | N^o. 1."

2. Johnson replied 8 April, from Gough-square, asking Burney to "direct your friends to Mr. Dodsley."

Lynn Regis, Norfolk

Feb 7, 1755

Sir

Though I have never had the happiness of a personal knowledge of you, I cannot think myself wholly a stranger to a man with whose sentiments I have so long been acquainted: for it seems to me as if the writer who was sincere had effected the plan of that philosopher who wished men had windows at their breasts through which the affections of their hearts might be viewed.

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and most humble servant,

Chas. Burney

Feb. 16, 1755

(To Samuel Johnson)

MENTIONS JOHNSON'S DICTIONARY

Park. Benet Nov
27, 1941 20⁰⁰

78. BURNEY, CHARLES. A.L.s. "*Chas. Burney.*" 2 pp., 4to, about 375 words. Lynn Regis, Norfolk, Feb. 16, 1755. To Dr. Samuel Johnson.

AN ENCOMIUM TO THE GENIUS OF DR. JOHNSON. Mentions Dr. Johnson's forthcoming dictionary, placing an order for six copies.

This letter is apparently a file copy, as is evident by a notation on the second page in Dr. Burney's autograph: "*Copy of 1st Letter to Mr. Saml. Johnson. Feb. 16, 1755*"; and there are a number of corrections and deletions in the letter.