

**Accession number:** 1992-24/9b

**Description:** Single sheet of paper, originally folded in half with stitch marks, as if from a note book. Watermark of a hunting horn in a cartouche and the initials 'LVG'. Written on one side only in a scribal hand, a manuscript copy of 'A Present to my Wife on her Birthday'. Originally folded within the same, a newspaper cutting re an entertainment put on by Garrick at Hampton. On the reverse of the cutting, on a printed letter, is the date 20 July 1774

**Transcript:**

*Cutting:* On Friday Evening the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough gave an Entertainment at their seat at Blenheim, to upwards of 700 of the Nobility and Gentry, in the same Manner as Lord Stanley gave some time ago at the Oakes. The same Evening Mr Garrick gave a splendid Entertainment, or Fete Champetre, at his Gardens at Hampton. Signor Torre conducted a most brilliant Firework; an elegant Concert of Musick was performed, and the Company, which consisted of a great Number of Nobility and Gentry, expressed the utmost Satisfaction. The Temple of Shakespeare, and Gardens, were illuminated with 6000 lamps.

**Verse:** A Present  
To my Wife, on her Birthday

In Imitation of Fontenelle

Two Gods there are, with Wings who move,  
The One is Time, the other Love:  
This seems a blooming smiling Boy,  
Brimful of Roguery, and Joy,  
But That, an old, bald, peevish Man,  
Who thwarts the child, in all he can:  
In short these Two play different parts;  
With fine-wrought Chains to fetter hearts  
The Boy delights – The Old-One sneers,  
And as Love makes 'em, breaks the Gears;  
Breaks 'em with ease: and where's the wonder,  
That Bands so slight, are snap'd asunder!  
Sometimes indeed Love works a Chain,  
And then, perverse, to last the longer,  
Time Joins with Love to make it stronger!  
Saw you this Chain? The Wits will Say;  
O yes, I see it ev'ry day;  
See it! Nay more – I feel it too,  
This very Chain – Wife, what say you?

**Notes:**

Aileen Osborn, 'The Literary Material in the Hereford Garrick Papers' M.Phil. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1999, 159-61.

Other versions: Knapp 131; Folger, autograph Y.d. 120, transcript, with last two lines autograph W.b.464.

p. 160 'Bernard le Bovier, Sieur de Fontenelle (1657-1757), was a "miscellaneous writer, born at Rouen, nephew of Corneille". Garrick's poem is modelled on *Le Temps et l'Amour, Fable*, quoted in full by Osborn.

p. 161 'the association of the newspaper cutting and poem suggests a connection. On the reverse of the cutting is the end of a letter dated 20 July 1774. In that year Mrs Garrick was 50 so it is conceivable that, though not specifically acknowledged as such, the party was a celebration in her honour. Eva Maria's birthday was in February when the weather would not be suitable for an open-air party'.

However, Ian McIntyre points out that it was the Garricks' 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in June 1774, and says that the party was held in late August and reported in the *London Chronicle*. The fireworks were orchestrated by the 'eminent Italian pyrotechnist Morel Torr , who offered Garrick's guests his *pi ce de r sistance*, 'the forge of Vulcan'. Vulcan is discovered in his forge behind Mount Etna with the Cyclops. As the fire blazes, Venus enters with Cupid, and begs them to make arrows for her son; they agree to do so, and there is a spectacular eruption of the volcano'. The footnote on Torr  continues, 'Torr  had supervised the fireworks for the marriage of Marie Antoinette to the Dauphin four years previously. When he fell foul of a monopoly arrangement introduced into the pleasure-garden business in Paris in 1771, Monnet recommended him to Garrick, who effected his introduction to the managers of Ranelagh and Marylebone. Torr  was versatile man of wide interests. He devised a licopodium torch for use on the stage at Drury Lane; the Forster Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum contains a number of letters from him in which he offers to reveal to Garrick the secret of the cabbala and to give instructions for "harvesting the Celestial Manna"'. I. McIntyre, *Garrick*, 1999, pp. 515-6.

See 1992-24/39f/h for a reference to Torr .