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JEREMY BLACK

ON THE GRAND TOUR IN A YEAR OF REVOLUTION

The hitherto unprinted letters of Samuel Boddington provide fascinating information on the Grand Tour in 1789. Boddington, a curious and intelligent young man, visited Paris that summer and his letters to his family are a valuable source both for the response of a British tourist to the beginning of the Revolution and for the Grand Tour on the eve of its dissolution by revolution and war.

Samuel Boddington (1766–1843) was the son of a distinguished city merchant Benjamin Boddington (1730–1791), a prominent West India merchant and a director of the South Sea Company. The father was a leading Dissenter and sympathetic to radical political circles. He was one of the Dissenters responsible for lobbying Parliament during the campaigns in the 1780s to secure the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts and he was one of the senior Dissenters who conveyed to George III the congratulatory address on this recovery in 1789. His son Samuel was also to follow a career in London and was to be a fishmonger and merchant. Material on his Grand Tour is to be found in the Boddington papers in the Guildhall Library in London, MS. 10823/5. There is both a manuscript diary (5A) and 15 letters from Samuel to his family (5b). The latter are more complete and are therefore printed in extenso, though reference will also be made to the diary. In Benjamin Boddington's journal (10823/4) there is only one reference to his son's travels. On 2 July 1789, the day after Benjamin had been elected a director of the Million Bank, he noted: *son Samuel with the Reverend George Morgan and Messrs. Woodhouse and Rigby left Clapton, and arrived at Dover that night. 3. Friday arrived at Calais in 6½ hours passage. Thereafter there is no reference, either to his son or to the Revolution. On 3 July, having crossed in calm seas on the Nymph, Samuel sent his first letter to his father from Calais:*

I have just been committing my head and what is more extraordinary (as it is the first time) my throat to the mercy of a French barber and I am now going to satisfy the cravings of nature a Bouillii etc at the Lion D'araent dans Rue neut a Calais.

... We have had a pleasant tho a tedious passage from Dover ... 6 hours ½ upon the water & obliged to get into a boat about 4 miles from shore and remain 3 or 4 hours longer on board the packet till the next tide. The first object which presented itself to us on our landing was a Mendoza¹ scene between two French damsels but they seem'd to be much readier in words than blows. Calais I think could not fail of being agreeable to you. There are children of every age without number.

Boddington set off, as did most British tourists, to Paris, and travelled via Lille and Cambrai. On 6 July he wrote to his father from Chantilly:

I have been delighted with what I have seen of France hitherto. We left Calais on Saturday

1 A prominent British bare-knuckled boxer.

and reached Lisle² that night. Sunday afternoon we came on to Cambray where we lay. The country the whole way is one continued garden the richest soil and the highest cultivated you can conceive of. Wheat and beans are in the greatest abundance there are also great quantities of flax but little oats and barley and scarcely any meadowland. There is but one hill before we reached Lisle. All through Flanders the country is flat, but it is particularly so to Lisle. The country is wonderfully populous and happiness appears to be strongly expressed in every countenance.

His next letter was sent to his father two days later from Paris:

I wrote you a few lines on Monday just as I arrived at Chantilly which I was obliged to conclude abruptly on account of the Post. The greatest part of yesterday was employed in viewing the magnificent Palais of the Prince de Condé at that place. As you have seen it I will not attempt any description of it to you. A profusion of wealth is everywhere apparent but the buildings I think are very heavy and discover few marks of good taste. I must except an archway leading into the menage of three ionic pillars forming part of a circle which is at the same time grand and beautiful. The many strait lines of trees under the savage despotism of the shears, canals in every form but those which we find in a state of nature, and the formal disposition of the Jet d'Eaus without any apparent utility are all very disgusting. I could not but lament that the majestic woods which surround this place are tortured in so pitiful a manner. The apartments in the Palais are loaded with gold and silver but without elegance. The Cabinet of natural history is worthy of a Prince. The celebrated Reaumer has retired from public life and was writing descriptions on the different fossils when we entered the room. We had a striking trait of the polite manners of the French in the attentions he showed us. Mr. Rigby having made some remark which discovered his knowledge of fossils Reaumer immediately entered into conversation with him and Mr. Morgans name being mentioned he very politely thanked him for the pleasure he had received in perusing his papers in the Philosophical Transactions. He attended us for near an hour pointing out the most curious articles in the collection. I have not yet seen anything of the higher ranks of the French but if they resemble those of the lower class I will not answer for what effect a long stay in this country might have upon me. The women have so much ease and vivacity so much elegance of form and neatness of dress that they are quite enchanting. Few of them I have yet seen wear stays. A kind of jacket or gown with a flounce round the waist, short petticoats and not overburdened with respect to the number of them with a small neat cap compose their dress. The untidy manner in which they cloath their feet is unpleasant to an English eye. They almost invariably wear slippers down at the heel or more properly with the upper leather of the heel cut off.

I have in a former letter mentioned the fertility of French Flanders. From Calais to Lisle I did not see one fallow field or piece of waste land and as it is all arable land there is not such a thing as a hedge to be seen and that part under the trees by the roadside where corn will not flourish is sown with clover or lucern or some other hardy plant which is not much affected by the situation. Even the fosses of the fortified towns are cultivated generally as gardens for the soldiers quartered in them. To the very entrance of Paris the same fertile country continues but not always to so great a degree. The country is as populous as it is luxuriant. In passing through the different towns it seems impossible for such numbers to be supported by their own country alone and in passing through their fields it appears impossible for them ever to be in want. At this present time there is a great scarcity owing they say to the large quantity of corn bought by the Emperor for his troops. The roads are very good hardly any variation the whole way to Paris very broad with a pavé in the middle and rows of elms, poplar, aspen, or apples on each side. The elm are in the greatest abundance. I have seen no oaks but in the Prince de Condés wood or rather forest, from Pont St. Maxence to Chantilly. Those in general were inferior in size to the Beach. The Birch grows

there to an immense size. I have seen no other game but partridges. These must be very numerous as the whole way to Chantilly we saw some of them running across the road or feeding in the fields every hundred yards. Thursday July 9th. I was most completely tired with seeing sights yesterday and quite unfit to add anything to this letter last night. We are lodged at the grand Hotel Palais Royal. This is certainly the first situation in Paris and we pay accordingly 8 Louis per week but as we do not intend to exceed that time a Louis or two more or less is of little importance. We have a very handsome coach for 5 Louis a valet de place of course. I will not attempt a description of the churches and other edifices I saw as the hasty manner in which I went over them does not enable me to say much that is interesting to you concerning them. I think the French are much superior to us in their public buildings. There are some which are very grand but their delight in finery frequently appears to be lamented. In our shops and streets we again are superior. The Pavement here is wretchedly bad and as there are no flat stones for foot passengers walking is exceedingly unpleasant and the shops on each side in consequence of the carriages going close up to them [portion of letter torn away] with dirt. We went last night to the Italian Theatre. It is pretty but not so commodious for spectators. [Tear].

Boddington's journal adds some interesting details to the Calais–Paris section of his journey. At Calais he found *the politeness and liveliness of the inhabitants very striking*³. Of the journey through St. Omer to Lille he noted,

The women were working in the fields as well as the men. The poorer sort were without hats and carried their goods to market upon their shoulders. We saw very few in carts and none on horseback. They all appeared both men and women very strong and healthy. We saw very few chateaus and those in miserable taste. The houses in the towns were generally of a whitish brick, large commodious and high.

Boddington stayed in the Hotel de Bourbon in Lille, *a good inn very large. We all slept in the same room in which we supped ... the houses are all high, 4 stories ornamented in front but very vilely – great numbers of people were walking about from 4 o'clock in the morning. Hackney coaches very good. Went to two churches and two convents but saw no good paintings ... the houses are all numbered and the city divided into districts.* Boddington's diary also reveals great interest in women: their clothes, and the presence of prostitutes in Calais, a very pretty girl at Peronne, a woman riding a straddle near Paris⁴.

Boddington's fourth letter was sent from Paris to his father on 13 July,

I imagine you have seen frequent accounts of the unsettled disposition of the inhabitants of this City in the public prints. They have been so irritated by a circumstance which occurred yesterday that there is no saying to what lengths their passions may hurry them. It was at the French Theatre that our party was first informed of it. We had returned from Versailles to a late dinner with a Mr. Dallas a friend of Mr. Rigby's and afterwards adjourned to the Theatre where instead of the gaiety which usually is displayed on the drawing up of the curtain one of the principal actors came forward in deep mourning and told us that there would be no play. The audience immediately demanded the cause. 'Le peuple ne le veut pas.' said he. We soon learned that this prohibition (which has been general against all amusements whatever) was on account of the dismissal of Monsr. Neckar the Prime Minister who by command of the King set off on Saturday night at 9 o'clock with the greatest secrecy in a cabriolet without any attendants to quit the Kingdom. Madam Neckar and his suite followed him yesterday morning. I suppose you saw some

³ MS. 10823/A f. 1.

⁴ F. 1–3.

account in the newspapers of his being ordered to deliver up his office the week before last and of the Kings receiving him into favour again through the interposition of the Citizens of Paris who repaired to Versailles in large bodies to express their disapprobation of His Majesty's conduct. The soldiers were ordered to fire among and disperse them but absolutely refused saying that they would on no account kill any of their fellow-citizens. The army which is assembled in the neighbourhood appears equally friendly. Large bodies of them have marched from their camp last week and voluntarily taken an oath of the people not to take up arms against them. But to return to my narration. From the theatre we went to the Palais Royal a large square inclosed with the Palais and houses belonging to the Duc D'Orleans who is at this time one of the most popular characters in France – here it is that the politics of the times are discussed and since we have been here it has been one continued scene of bustle. Scarcely a moment in the day without half a dozen parties of twenty and thirty each with the utmost eagerness delivering their opinions and making their comments on the measures of the National Assembly. We did not find this place more crowded than it usually is of an evening but two or three of their orators were haranguing the people with uncommon earnestness when about 7 o'clock a fellow came running in and said he had just been wounded by a hussar. It is inconcievable the ferment the people were thrown into and a dirty fellow having put an old military cap on his stick cried out to arms, to arms, there is nothing left but for each man to defend himself. The whole assembly as if they had been animated with one soul immediately rushed out of the gates and spread the tumult everywhere. We thought it most prudent to retire to our Hotel which is just by. In a short time the whole City appeared to be collected together by far the greatest part armed with muskets the rest with cutlasses, bludgeons etc. We saw them as they passed by the end of our street into the Palais Royal a most terrible sight. It was not so much in itself as in the consequences to be apprehended. We saw large bodies of the military who appeared to have joined with them. We heard the report of a considerable number of muskets as it appeared to us at that time. Scheilds has just informed me that it was the fire of two regiments who attempted to disperse the mob. He hears that many were killed on each side. He says that everything appears quiet at present. The noise has ceased since about 5 o'clock, but such a night I never passed before. We did not go to bed till morning when the firing appeared to have abated but it was impossible to sleep. Every now and then the report of a cannon then a volley of musket. Carriages going past into the country. Men hallowing and women screaming. In short it was one continued scene of alarm and confusion. From what I saw early in the morning and have since heard I imagine the firing has been more from the desire of showing their power and their numbers than directed to any object. I saw many of them fire into the air evidently from no other view but to make a noise and the [torn away] of time and irregularity of the firing evidently proves that it could not [tear] any attack. What will be the consequence of this confusion it is hardly possible to conjecture especially as we are not yet certain of what part the army took last night. Their numbers amount to about 35000 encamped within a quarter of a mile of the city composed of Swiss, German and provincial troops but as both officers and men are in general favorably disposed to the cause of liberty I do not see how contention can last for a long time between people who appear to be of the same mind and I will hope that the tumult of last night will only occasion a little humiliation on the part of the Court. For ourselves we propose to leave them to their own devises in the course of the day if possible. For however we rejoice in the glorious revolution which has imparted the blessings of liberty to four and twenty millions of people we rather prefer to leave the reestablishment of this happy event to their own exertions and shall be contented to hear of their proceedings instead of being in the midst of them...

PS My hairdresser informs me that there have been only 20 slain and those of the people who were obnoxious to the mob. The military he says did not fire. If this is true they certainly have wasted an immense quantity of powder and shot. Our route is Dijon, Lyons, Marseilles,

Geneva. I should be glad if you would send a few lines to Marseilles merely to say you are all well as it is uncertain if I receive it.

The enthusiast for liberty sent his next letter to his father from Paris on 14 July,

I embrace the opportunity of Mr. Erskins going to England to send you a few lines in addition to what I wrote yesterday. I find that the attack was begun on the Saturday night by the hussars and that in a most wanton manner but they were driven off by the populace and three or four of them left dead on the spot. The whole body of French Guards consisting of 1200 men joined the People and those it was which we saw marching with them Sunday night. During the course of yesterday the mob assumed a very different appearance. All the principal inhabitants who before stood aloof now came forward and declared themselves. They assembled in the different churches and there determined to put themselves under the tuition of the Guards and form into a regular militia. They afterwards went to the different monasteries to search for ammunition of which they found a large quantity. They also found flour which they secured for the public use. They have bound themselves to secure peace and order. Through the City all the rabble are now driven away and none but the most respectable bourgeois suffered to carry arms. Every measure is adopted with the utmost unanimity. A whole regiment from the camp joined them last night. I mentioned in my letter of yesterday that there was 35 000 men in the camp near the Gates. I should have said in the neighbourhood that is within a day's march. The camp does not consist of more than 5 or 6000. I do not hear of any blood being shed last night but a whole regiment joined them from the camp.

The period was so interesting and Mr. Jefferson the American Ambassador assured Mr. Morgan that our situation and our character as Englishmen secured us from any danger that we determined to stay till this day. We set off for Dijon at 10 o'clock.

The King and Queen have not been seen since Sunday. No one is suffered to enter their apartments and it is imagined they are gone to one of their Palais's at a distance from the capital.

Samuel's next letter, sent to his mother on 19 July, still found him at Paris,

As every possible precaution was taken during the commotions which have taken place in this City to prevent any intelligence being sent away I am in hopes that my letter of Thursday last arrived in England in time to prevent your having any alarm for my safety and that of my friends. Although you will probably see a much better account of the whole in newspapers than I can give you I cannot avoid sending you some little detail of what has passed since I wrote on Monday last. Our curiosity led us to stay that day hoping we should find no more difficulty in proceeding the day following than there was then but during the course of it the face of affairs took a surprising change. What in the morning was a lawless rabble in the space of a few hours became a respectable army of Bourgeois. The arms were take out of the hands of the mob and the City with one accord rose up to defend themselves. Everything was conducted with wonderful regularity and it was astonishing with what prudence everything was conducted to guard against disorder and with what spirit and activity every measure was taken for the defence of the City. All Tuesday morning we saw nothing but loads of provisions which had either been procured from the country or from the different monasteries in the City every one [of] which were obliged to deliver up the stores for the public service by noon this day. It was computed there were 80 000 citizens in arms and a very considerable part armed with muskets. At our return from a walk in the afternoon we heard the joyful though hardly to be credited news of the Bastile being taken, not many minutes after hearing a great shouting we ran out of our Hotel into the Palais Royal (a large square where everything new is generally known). There I first beheld the horrid effects of war. The heads of the Governor and Commandant of the Bastile just cut off from their bodies carrying in triumph. There are various accounts of this memorable action. As near as I can learn is that the Bourgeois presented themselves at the Gate and summoned the Governor to deliver the

fortress. He immediately hoisted a signal to show his intention to comply and opened the outer gate. The Bourgeois rushed in to the amount of about 200. The Governor retired into the inner part of the fortress and drew up the bridge over the foss. But not without first setting fire to a house between himself and the people. Whilst they were in that confined situation he ordered his men to fire upon them. The Bourgeois without seeing the situation of the[ir] friends rushed to their relief and by their hatchets and swords cut through the house which was in flames and planted a cannon against the opposite side. Whether it was a ball from that cannon or whether some daring fellows made their way over the foss which broke the chain I cannot learn with any certainty. By some means or other they got the bridge down and entered the fortress. Observing some soldiers directing a cannon from above to the place where they stood they all fired at them and fortunately their fire was effectual. Great numbers of the Bourgeois now got in and all defence became fruitless. They seized the Governor and Commandant and carried them to the town hall and cut off their heads without any ceremony. Thus was one of the strongest fortresses which in a former reign had resisted the united force of 30 000 men taken in the space of twenty minutes by a handfull of brave fellows inspired by the love of liberty. Except some Swiss who were lately put in, there were only 8 prisoners found in it, one of them a Count D'Auche had been confined two and forty years in one of the dark dungeons. I never beheld so affecting a spectacle. His beard was of a great length and his hair which appeared never to have been combed was entangled in large nets as if it had been wove. It was parted into two long parts and coming over his shoulder reached below his knees. His face was [obscured] but quite pale and he looked about him as one should conceive a man to do who for the first time had the use of his eyes. In the evening it was rumoured about the City that the Duc D'Artois the Queens Brother⁵ was within a few miles of the City with 30 000 men and [tear] to make an assault upon it that night. Although this appeared [tear] hazardous a scheme that no man in his senses would attempt – yet the possibility of its being true from the violent character of the Duke – the sound of all the bells of the City calling to arms, drums beating and cannon drawing about – the pavement before our hotel taking up and carried to the top of the opposite house to throw upon the soldiers in case of an assault, together with the impression made on our minds by the sights we had just seen. All tended to have an effect upon us which was not of the most agreeable kind. The morning however came to destroy these phantoms. Good news was said to have been received from Versailles and everything wore a better appearance. Wednesday a deputation came from the National Assembly to assure the people of the King's readiness to comply with their requests. And yesterday he came to fulfill his promise. I never saw a sight which could bare the shadow of a comparison to it. No less than 200 000 men in arms behind the streets [tear: escorted him?] along to the Town Hall. There he sanctioned what had been done. The King came without any of his usual pomp guarded only by the Citizens of Paris. The troops near the City are to be withdrawn immediately but the citizens are too wise to lay down their arms. They intend to form themselves into a militia to the amount of 30 000 ready to act at any emergency. I spent half an hour with great pleasure in surveying the exterior of the Bastile. There are about 300 men employed in pulling it down in a fortnight. They hope that horrid evidence of evil will be no more. They propose to erect a temple to Liberty in its stead.

We hope to set of tomorrow. As everything is now quiet we go to Dijon and to Lyons.

Boddington's journal adds nothing to the account of revolutionary developments in his letters. It does however provide some information on his tourist activities when he arrived in Paris. On 8 July he visited St. Sulpice, the Carmelite Church, the Invalides church and the Italian theatre. The following day it was the turn of Notre Dame and a glass factory, and on 10 July of the King's Library and the Duke of Orléans's picture

⁵ The Comte d'Artois (1757–1836) was the brother of Louis XVI and not of Marie Antoinette.

collection. He also went to *the Opera which I thought much more absurd than our own*. On 11 July he travelled to Versailles. The following day he toured the palace, seeing the King and Queen at mass, the royal picture collection and the opera house before returning to Paris. His comments on the sights were conventional, similar to those of many other tourists⁶. He left the interesting revolutionary developments to his letters for reasons that are unclear.

Boddington left Paris on 20 July and travelled through Fontainebleau to Auxerre, where he slept. The following day he reached Dijon from where he wrote to his father on the 22nd,

I arrived at this place last night after being detained at Paris many days contrary to our inclinations. I assure you myself and party were happy to hear the last centinel at the Barrier order the post boy to drive on. The road to Fontainebleau appeared very little different from what we had seen on the other side of Paris but within about a mile of this place we entered the royal woods which grow among vast masses of rock and present a very grand appearance. They contain 30000 acres. Fontainebleau is a Palais kept merely as a hunting seat but the King is so poor that he has not been able to go there these three years. It is situated in a large plain bounded all round in a very singular manner by a ridge of rocky hills. From thence we passed into a delightful country cultivated in the richest manner you can conceive, principally vineyards in which were interspersed peach, plumb, apricot and other fruit trees. At Pont sur Yonne we crossed that river which turns into the Seine. From this place to Auxerre the country presents a series of most enchanting views. The road was no longer in strait lines but followed the course of the river which ran at the foot of a ridge of very high hills. The country appeared exceedingly populous as is always the case where the grape is cultivated both from the number of hands requisite to dress it and keep it clean and from its being so much more valuable than corn land and of course divided into smaller farms. We were scarcely ever without a village in view frequently three or four situated at the foot of some of the hills which surrounded us on all sides. We did not reach Auxerre till 11 at night. It is 107 miles from Paris. We were 17 hours upon the road 16 of which were passed in the carriage as we only stopped to breakfast. At Sens we bid adieu to the Pavé which [we] were very glad to do on account of our carriage for it is inconceivable how it wears every part of it and as there had been much rain the Post Boys drove upon it the whole way. Fifty miles further travelling upon it would I believe have obliged us to stop to repair. The road afterwards is but so so. The country from Auxerre to the place I now write from is hilly but did not present so many beautiful views as the preceeding day till within the last 30 miles. There it presented some mountainous views to us but these were too soon cut off from us by the shades of the evening. We travelled this day 97 miles in 16 hours including an hour at breakfast. The shortness of the Posts with the dilatory disposition of the Post Boys in bringing out their horses and adjusting their curious tackle to the carriage consumes a great deal of time. If this was altered we should travel quite as expeditious if not more so than in England. They are seldom less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour in changing horses and [word obscure] a stop of two or three minutes to make some alteration when they have got a mile from the inn. One of the most striking circumstances in travelling over this part of the Continent is the clearness of the atmosphere. This adds much to the brilliancy of the views. As far as the eye can reach we discover objects perfectly distinct. This is seldom the case in England owing perhaps to the quantity of moisture with which the clouds which pass over it are loaded from its being surrounded on all sides by the sea. It is wonderful how much the love of liberty had diffused itself all over this kingdom. Every town and village we have passed through have cried out Tiers Etat pour toutjours and when we showed them our cockades we have always been applauded by them. They are Englishmen say they, our friends. We also shall be free now.

⁶ MS. 10823/A f. 5-6.

Even the people we have met on the road have always asked if we were for the Tiers Etat. I did not intend finishing this till I got to Lyons but as I think you will be glad to hear we are really out of Paris I have determined to send from this place.

There is no description of Dijon in the correspondence, but in the journal there is a brief mention, *Walked round Dijon, a very neat pretty town with many good shops, a capital Hotel belonging to the Prince de Condé, a very good Hospital remarkably clean. There are some very romantic rocky hills in the neighbourhood.* More significant was another passage not mentioned in the correspondence, relating to the Journey from Dijon to Banague,

On our road hither we met about 120 of the inhabitants some on horseback others on foot with cockades for the Tiers Etat. Our Post Boys in the true spirit of servants of Le grand Monark hollowed to this band of Patriots (who were returning in triumph to their several villages from whence on the news of the troubles in Paris they had marched to the protection of Dijon) to make way and rudely drove in amongst them which insult they reprov'd by cutting the hempen traces of the horses. We had not time to feel any anxiety concerning the event of this little obstruction as the leaders of the party immediately came to the windows of our carriage and with all the politeness of the French nation begged we would not be under any alarm as the reprimand was only intended to chastise the insolence of the Post Boys. Our traces were repaired immediately and we proceeded amidst the huzzas of the party whom we soon convinced of our hearty interest in their cause and attachment to liberty. Our cockades on this and many other occasions procured us every respect and made way for us with the greatest facility⁷.

Boddington's next letter to his father, from Lyons on 24 July, began, as many other letters from tourists did, by apologising for the shortness of his letters, a consequence of *the rapidity of our movements* and by discussing money. He had drawn bills for £90 in Paris and he now wrote that he would draw for £50 or £60 from Lyons. He continued,

We confine our attention to the principal objects of the country throughout we pass that we may extend our tour as much as our time will permit. Our route from this place is not determined ... We left Dijon Tuesday morning⁸ and came on to Chalon that night. We saw larger quantities of grapes in this ride than in any other part. They extended for two or three miles broad to the mountains which bounded our view to the right and which were cultivated to the very summit. At their foot was village after village hardly a stones throw from each other the whole way. To our left was a wide plain which was partly vineyards and partly corn and meadow. They grow large quantities of Indian wheat. It is much used to fatten turkeys but I fear our climate will not allow Mrs B. to make use of it. Chalon is a pleasant town on the banks of the Saone⁹. It has a good quay and a handsome row of houses to the river. We went 15 or 20 miles to breakfast to Tournus intending to have reached Lyons that night but owing to the carelessness of and stupidity of a fellow who boxed our four wheels and in some measure owing to our own folly in trusting to his word rather than our own senses we were stopped in our career before we arrived at the next post. A violent squeaking and presently a furious smoke gave us the first intimation of our situation. We hallowed with all our might to the Post boys but as we were then going down hill at a great rate on a stony road our exertions only served to make the temperature of our bodies bare some affinity to that of the wheel. By the time we stopped our drivers there was too much mischief done

7 F. 6-7.

8 21 July.

9 River Saone.

for us to remedy on the road. We stationed ourselves in regular order with four half pint tin tumblers instead of buckets and threw water on the unfortunate member of our carriage with the utmost expedition and so far extinguished the smoke as to give us time to devise a method of taking off the wheel. Fortunately a man came by at that instant with a long pole by the assistance of which we hoisted the carriage upon a heap of stones. Off came the wheel but the wood in the inside burnt to a cinder and the iron box so fast fixed to the axle that all our efforts to move it were fruitless. There was nothing left for us to do but to put on the wheel and proceed as cautiously as possible to the next town. To complete our ill luck we were now in the middle of one of the longest stages and the sun shining in his meridian splendour. For two hours and a half were our northern frames under the influence of his powerful beams. We got to St. Albin hot, dusty, and cross, and were set down to rest our weary limbs when Scheilds came with a grave face to inform us that the blacksmith had done his utmost and was now *au desespoir*. We then sallied out and tried what could be done by force. We hammered a long time without effect but trusting that perseverance would produce something we continued our exertions. At last the box moved and repaid our labour, but so great had been the heat that the iron had absolutely been in a state of fusion. We had now nothing to do but wait with patience till the wheel was refitted. Mr. Morgan and myself attended the Blacksmith for the first time turned Coachmaker and by our skill and his labour we got out of our difficulties much better than we expected. We proceeded one stage to Macon situated like Chalon on the banks of the Soane. We here found one of the cleanest hotels we had seen. I am now tolerably well reconciled to the accommodations of the French inns. I generally take off the thinnest mattress and sleep upon the floor or rather stones. By this means and by the defence of my dress I have defended myself from bugs which are in great abundance. I last night was attacked by a new enemy fleas of an enormous size. they have used me most cruelly and they are such an active foe that there is no escaping from them. We arrived at this place yesterday to dinner. The road lay through a country similar to what I described from Dijon to Chalon. The chain of mountains still bound our view to the right. We have had this beautiful termination of our prospect with all the varieties which you can conceive to be produced by river villages, vineyards corn meadows etc. for above 100 miles – to have a true idea of the riches and population of this kingdom is only to be obtained by traveling through it. I have not seen one heath or common throughout the whole journey. The soil in general fertile but such is the temperature of the climate that the most barren parts are productive in a surprising degree. I have seen good crops of corn and vineyards loaded with grapes where nothing but stones were to be discerned. If such has been the situation of a country under the iron hand of despotism what may not be expected from it now the shackles of industry are broken and a free government is about to be established. The clergy and nobility of this Kingdom are computed to amount to 300000. What an idea does it give one of the oppression the common people have laboured under to consider that almost all the wealth of a Kingdom containing four and twenty millions of inhabitants has flowed into their hands. They who could best afford it have paid no taxes but have rioted in abundance obtained from the industry of the honest peasant. Their day is now over. The eyes of the Kingdom are now opened and they have those ideas of their own consequence and the rights and privileges they are entitled to that I trust will effectually humble that superiority which the nobles have so long unjustly arrogated to themselves. When the King came to Paris it was not as formerly *Vive le Roi* but *Vive la Nation*. I hope Englishmen will have the good sense to take a hint and not let their late loyalty carry them too far¹⁰.

The account in the journal of the journey from Chalons to Lyons was far less detailed but several additional items are worth noting. Boddington noted the use of

¹⁰ A reference to the celebrations that had greeted George III's recent recovery after a serious illness and the consequent ending of the Regency Crisis. This passage makes clear Boddington's Whig sentiments.

oxen for farming and that the carriage wheel's problems came from it having been boxed with green wood. Of his supper at Macon on 22 July he wrote,

We were entertained by the solicitation of some women who with the utmost familiarity entered our apartment and laid down their boxes and insisted upon our purchasing some knives and scissors the manufacture of the place, a favour they absolutely refused to be denied.

The following morning they covered 18½ miles in 2 hours 5 minutes before breakfasting at Villefranche a small town and indifferent inn. Had a bad breakfast. Paid enormously for it. It is always best to breakfast at coffeehouses. There you have whatever is to be had and reasonable¹¹.

Boddington described Lyons in a letter sent to his father from Marseilles on 29 July,

It is very large and populous and esteemed the second city in France both on account of its wealth and importance. There [are] many good buildings in it but none of such consequence as to be worthy of particular notice. Some of the houses in it are uncommonly large. Monsieur Rey the merchant to whom I was recommended by Sir John Lambert had apartments in one which he told me contained 500 people and the Hotel we lodged in was valued at £30000. The situation of Lyons is delightful beyond description. We were much indebted to this Monsieur Rey for many civilities. In the afternoon of the day I wrote to you he took us to his house in the country. It is about half an hours drive from his counting house and the most delightful spot you can possibly imagine. The house is large and adapted for the pleasures of hospitality. This Mr. Rey who attended us is a bachelor but there were living at this house his mother two brothers and three or four sisters. It put me in mind of the Patriarch's – all the apartments were delightfully clean and looked as if designed for use and not for show. We did not remain long in the house but from the few minutes conversation we had with the family I am sure I should have found myself perfectly at home with them in a days time. The grounds around are laid out in the best taste imaginable. Nothing is sacrificed for mere show. Every inch is employed to some useful purpose. Vineyards, meadows, groves and rivulets running from the adjacent hills with pleasant walks, not cut out with that dull formality which gardens are scarcely ever free from but such as you would expect to meet with round the abode of a peasant. In short such shady retreats as strike every one with pleasure but are impossible to be described. The views from this spot are composed of some of the most grand and beautiful parts in nature, a country fertile to the highest degree exceedingly hilly with all the variations which vineyards, corn, fruit trees, pastures etc. can furnish. Interspersed among these beauties of nature are an innumerable number of chateaus and villas belonging to the inhabitants of Lyons. The Rhone and the Soane are both at the foot of these hills. The opposite side of the country is equally rich. The Alps are the termination of this prospect and when we saw it the sun was shining full upon Mont Blanc and gave it a most splendid appearance – you may imagine we expressed our delight in this scene and congratulated our conductor on his possessing so charming a spot. He assured us that he was by no means singularly happy for that almost every hill round Lyons would furnish us with similar views and that almost every citizen of Lyons even taylor and shoemakers had their country houses to which they came either every night or on the Saturday as their business permitted them. House rent and the necessaries of life are here so reasonable that Mr. Rey assured us a man might live very respectably and comfortably for £60 or £70 a year. There are many English families in this neighbourhood and I am only surprised there are not many more. When a free Government is established I think they must increase for there seems to be every requisite to happiness but that – the best society, a delightful and plentiful country and the finest climate under the sun. Monsr. Rey won all our hearts by his polite attentions which were

11 MS. 10823/A f. 7–8.

shown in that easy and pleasant way for which the French are so justly celebrated. I could not help contrasting his manner of living to that of the merchants in London able to carry on a very considerable business and to enjoy the pleasures of the country at the same time and by his account at a very moderate expence indeed.

Boddington's journal adds a few details of his visit to Lyons,

... we passed through a long narrow street in entering the City the houses dirty and very high crammed with people and stinks of every kind offended our nostrils. He stayed at a very good inn but was most terribly maul'd by the fleas. He visited the remains of a Roman aqueduct and of the Roman baths, took a walk along the quays and thought the Theatre comique a handsome house but it had the same fault with that of Paris too great depth in proportion to its width¹².

Boddington set off from Lyons on Saturday 25 July, but did not describe his journey until his letter from Nice of Saturday 2 August. They paid 9 Louis d'or for the journey to Avignon and 12 livres duty and set off in a boat *neither handsome or commodious*¹³. Boddington's description of the river journey in his letter is an excellent one, an account of a trip that was to be soon made redundant by better roads,

... committed ourselves and our carriage to the care of three men in a boat about 60 foot long upon the Rhone. This is a noble river. The Soane runs into it a little below Lyons and it is at that part more than half a mile broad but it afterwards grows much narrower. It is very deep, our conductors told us about 30 feet. This we seem inclined to believe from the currents of the surface for so rapid a stream would entirely have been irritated by the rocks at the bottom if there had not been a great body of water. We went generally at the rate of 6 miles an hour sometimes considerably faster without the assistance of a sail and in general without using the oars which served principally to keep the boat in the best current. Owing to our setting out late and stoping at Vienne an old Roman town to look at some antiquities we only got to Tain the first night, which by land is only 56 miles. The next day we reached Avignon which is 96 miles but the river is so serpentine in its course that both these days journey must have been considerably further by water. After we left the villas and fertile environs of Lyons the scenery on the Rhone was exceedingly mountainous and afforded us a most wonderful variety of beautiful and picturesque views, sometimes one side of the river was a rich plain covered with corn and meadows the opposite side perhaps a mountain with vineyards to the very top and here and there a small village appearing under the brow of some stately rock. At other times we seemed to be upon a large lake entirely surrounded with barren rocks which came down to the waters edge. This was frequently the case for the current of the river was so winding that we could seldom discover which way we were to proceed not a trace of anything human around us except an old ruined castle at the summit of some apparently inaccessible rock. We had many of these views in the evening of the first day. The total silence around us and the moon only affording sufficient light to trace the grand [word obscured] of the surrounding objects gave a solemnity to the scene which was very uncommon. We felt less inconvenience from the heat than we expected. The glass was generally about 85 in the shade and 105 in the sun but we had a constant breeze the whole way which was so pleasant that we did not at all regret the delay we suffered on account of its being against us. At Avignon we entered the dominions of the Pope. It is a large town not very well inhabited but such a multitude of churches in it that at a distance it looked like a forest of steeples – our ears were distracted with the incessant jingle of the bells. They were not silent a single moment. We quited the dominions of his Holiness and ferried over the Rhone into the fruitful Province of Languedoc.

12 MS. 10823/A f. 9–10.

13 MS. 10823/A f. 10.

Here the country presented an appearance altogether different from what we [had] yet seen. The whole of our way to Nismes lay through orchards of olive trees interspersed with rows of vines at the distance of 6 or 8 yards which space was cultivated with corn. Year after year does the land produce immense crops of these fruits without any manure. What an idea does this give of the amazing fertility of the land under this happy climate. The severity of the last winter has committed a most uncommon havoc among the olive trees both here and in Provence. By far the greatest part are dead. They say it will be thirty years before the orchards can be restored to their former state. The destruction is so general that it gave the country a melancholy appearance. We went a little out of the road to see Pont du Gard one of the completest and most beautiful remains of the Roman aqueduct. The part which remains is over the river Gardon and is composed of three rows of arches one upon another. It formerly extended 27 miles from a spring at [gap in text] to Nismes which was a favourite city of many of the Roman Emperors. We are enabled in some measure to form an idea of the luxury of the Romans when we consider that this immense work was merely to convey water which was agreeable to their palates as there is plenty of water at Nismes but apparently none that was sufficiently pure to suit their taste. There are the vestiges of another of these aqueducts near Lyons which they can trace for 21 miles. Nismes contains more Roman antiquities than any other town in Europe out of Italy. The Romans were very particular in their baths which were contrived to be perfectly cool in the hottest climate and where they spent a great deal of time. There are some very large ones in this place very little impaired by age. They are formed of arches underground with antichambers to dress and undress in supported by beautiful pillars a stream of clear water constantly running before them by stoping which they could fill these apartments of luxury to any height and empty them in a few minutes. There are also the remains of a Temple to Diana and a kind of town hall called the Maison Quarée. It requires but little attention to perceive the superiority of these buildings to modern architecture. Tuesday July 28th we continued our journey through a country equally fruitful to what we had seen the succeeding day to Aix the capital of Provence. This is a very beautiful town the streets wider and very clean with pleasant shady walks in which there are three fountains continually playing. One of them is said to possess the same virtues as the waters at Bath. Wednesday we got to Marseille to breakfast. This town appears admirably adapted for commerce. There is an excellent quay and a large harbour. The streets in the new town are wider and handsome houses and they [tear] building very fast. Thursday we proceeded to Toulon the first twenty miles offered nothing but what we had seen before a fine country covered with vines olives figs corn etc. but about a mile from a small village called Cyis [Cassis] we entered a most romantic vale stupendous rocks rising on each side the road 5 or 600 feet high entirely covered with most beautiful firs. Under them grew mirtles, rosemary, lavender, pinks, sweet marjorum thyme with a thousand other odiferous plants which filled the air with perfumes. The road lay winding round the feet of these mountains for upwards of 6 miles when we passed into another vale or rather a continuation of the former one still more romantic. Here the rocky mountains on each side were considerably higher the road which was cut out of these rocks was so narrow that it was only in some places that carriages could pass one another. In parts a low wall only defended the traveller from a tremendous precipice in others the impending rocks seemed to threaten him with immediate destruction. The scene was altogether grand beyond description. These stupendous rocks were perfectly barren except a few plants which have found a little soil in the fissures which different convulsions of nature had made in them. Some of these immense rocks rose perfectly strait from their base, others were broken into the most fantastical forms and large masses appeared as if the least thing would hurl them to the bottom. You may perhaps think that I am telling you a travellers tale but I assure you that I cannot give you any adequate description [of] this valley. It was nearly 5 miles in extent. We reached Toulon time enough to take a row round the harbour which is very secure both by nature and art. The next days journey was the most fatiguing we have yet experienced a horrid rough road which added to the heat of the weather.

The glass being at 87 and no breeze made us glad to get to Frejus an old town upon the Mediterranean going to ruins. We arrived here at Nice yesterday to dinner. The first part of our journey lay over a high mountain which we did not descend till we came to Napoul 18 miles from Frejus. We were about 2 hours walking to the summit of it. Never had I such a walk: extensive views of the Mediterranean, and vast ranges of mountains all round us, mirtles of various kinds in full bloom, numbers of beautiful heaths, arbutus's, rosemary, tamarisk, box interspersed with firs and cork trees with pinks wild thyme and a number of other fragrant plants formed a natural shrubbery which leaves at a humble distance all the feeble efforts of art. We shall probably be at Antwerp in about three weeks.

Several additional points on the journey from Lyons to Nice emerge from Boddington's journal. The description of the first day in the road, particularly of the visit to Vienne is far fuller,

We met many boats similar to the one we were in laden with corn and merchandise.

The left side at first was flat but very soon presented beautiful hills cloathed with vineyards. At Vienne we went on shore. It is a very ancient city about 15 miles from Lyons. Has a large Gothic Cathedral. The Archbishop is at present President of the Assemblée Nationl.

We were conducted on shore by a girl of whom we had bought fruit but our guide not appearing very intelligent we were about to return to our boat when we met with a very civil bourgeois who very politely undertook to show us the curiosities of the place. It was anciently a Roman City and has many pieces of antiquity. We went first to a College where we saw many fine remains of Roman cornishes and pillars. Afterwards to a triumphal arch which was erected to the honour of Augustus Caesar. We then saw a most beautiful Praetorium. It had 8 corinthian pillars in length and 6 in breadth but the barbarous Goths had converted it into a Church by filling up the spaces between the pillars. The two corner ones were very very perfect. We also saw an obelisk erected to the honour of Severus but this we thought clumsy. Our polite conductor then led us to his house and treated us with vin du pays but it had not the fine flavour of Burgundy. The country round is famous for this kind of wine. There are abundance of vineyards on the surrounding hills and the plains are wonderfully fertile. They have fine crops of wheat incessantly year after year without any manure. There are many iron founderies in this City. The iron ore is found in the neighbouring mountains. There is also lead ore. Glass at 105 in the sun. In the shade 75.

A few leagues after we passed Vienne the rocky mountains on each side presented very romantic views. Few of them appeared capable of cultivation, but wherever there was a possibility it appeared to be embraced and laid out in vineyards – an old castle in ruins frequently occurred to increase the beauty of the scene. We landed at Tain a very romantic town and 9 o'clock. It is 58 miles by land from Lyons. We had a good supper and remarkable clean beds free from vermin¹⁴.

In additon there are comments on various details of the journey, not deemed important enough presumably to be included in a letter home. The Hotel de St. Omer at Avignon provided good eating but dirty lodging, the fair at Beaucaire led to a delay in obtaining horses there, the dinner at the table d'hôte in Marseilles, where *the conversation was entirely political*, was excellent, as were the coffee and cakes in a coffee house the following breakfast. Nice was in the Sardinian dominions and entering them from France on 1 August the travellers were obliged to show their passport which on account of the late troubles at Paris was not in the usual form. They were obliged to see the Governor who however let them proceed to Nice where they

14 MS. 10823/A f. 11–12.

arrived the following day. Having sent one letter to his father that day, Boddington sent another in the evening to his father to let him know that he had purchased three casks of wine and some pomades – 10 pounds each of rose, jasmin and orange – for his mother. Boddington had been shown round the town by Mr. Faraudy, a British physician whom he had met by chance and he described it to his father¹⁵,

It is delightfully situated surrounded on all sides with high hills except towards the sea which forms a beautiful bay. There are many good houses in it. The fronts of some of the principal of them are painted to represent columns etc. which gives them a showy but not unpleasing appearance. Mr. Faraudy says there are many English who reside here in the winter on account of the mildness of the climate and the purity of the air for which it is so famous. We are very comfortably lodged in the Hotel de York where we have had our palates gratified with good roast beef and have enjoyed ourselves in good beds without being molested by bugs – Mr. Morgan in particular has recruited himself here as the French ragouts have not suited him at all and he had been most terribly molested by the vermin. Our companion Mr. Rigby is the finest traveller in the world. Nothing affects him. He can eat anything and sleep anywhere without being discomposed in the least degree and is always in high spirits and full of humour. Indeed we all enjoy ourselves as much as possible and except a few twinges for the good fruit we eat, and a few repasts we have afforded to the gentry in the inns¹⁶, we have passed without inconvenience of any sort. . . . We are just now returned from a pleasant row in a felucca to Franch Ville a port town about a league distant. It is situated in a very fine bay. In time of war the English fleet frequently harbours there¹⁷. The women of this place do not please us so well as the French. Their dress especially about the head is very unbecoming. Their hair is in general plastered in front and all the rest enclosed in a large white bag which covers the greatest part of their head. From the back part hangs a long tassel. All the lower sort are without shoes or stockings.

We saw aloes for hedges in our route yesterday and orange trees in some gardens planted as we do peaches against the walls. Mirtles and pomegranates were really so common that we at last took no notice of them. At Loup we crossed the Var and entered Italy. I cannot refrain from once more recurring to what I have so frequently observed to you before, the amazing fertility and population of the Kingdom of France. We have now travelled near 1000 miles in it and have seen only one common piece of waste land and only two towns going into ruins through our whole route¹⁸. The industry of the French is astonishing. This added to their happy climate and fruitful soil and enjoying as they soon will do the blessings of Liberty must make them a very happy and glorious people. I wish the English would take a lesson from the French mode of living. I think it would go a great way to rid us of our gloom and formality. We drink too much [rest of line obscured by fold].

Boddington's journal adds little to this letter. He noted that he *saw about 100 galley slaves got to mass. They all appeared chearful and reconciled to their lot. Went into a church . . . The people appeared more devout than in France and the church was better filled*¹⁹.

Boddington's next letter was sent to his brother Thomas on 3 August from Lucairin. For most of the century British tourists travelling from France to Italy had had little choice. The only land route had been over the Mt. Cenis pass, between Savoy and Piedmont. The sole alternative had been by sea from Provence to Italy, usually from

15 MS. 10823/A f. 13–16, 18.

16 Presumably a reference to fleas.

17 It had been used a lot by the British fleet during the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–8).

18 Frejus and Loup. MS. 10823/A f. 18.

19 MS. 19823/A f. 18.

Marseilles or Toulon to Genoa. There was no coastal land route east of Nice. An anonymous tourist who visited the area in 1776–7 wrote, *torrent-courses are the roads, and, in some parts, the only roads of the country... The road to Monaco is practicable only for mules, asses, or mountain horses; and in some parts is scarcely safe with any of them.* The writer found the road to Monaco so bad that he got off his mule and went on foot²⁰. East of Monaco the Ligurian mountains fall sheer to the sea. The corniche road on the Riviera was not opened until Napoleon's time.

In the 1770s and 1780s Victor Amadeus III of Sardinia had a carriage road constructed from Nice to Turin through the Col of Tenda, the first complete opening of an alpine pass to wheeled traffic. It was this route that Boddington described,

We are now at a small village in the Alps called Lucarin in our way to Turin. We have hired 6 horses and a bidet with two postilions to take us to Coni about 50 miles from Nice. You may judge of the Country we are to pass through when I tell you that we have been 3 hours and a half going the first 10 miles and which they say is the best road we shall meet and that we do not expect to reach Coni till the third day. This dilatory mode of proceeding to us who have travelled from 70 to 100 miles in a day is rather unpleasant especially as we are so confined in respect to time. Notwithstanding we travel so slow we pay an immoderate price for our horses no less than 10 louis (about £ 10 English). I suppose we have as usual paid one half too much although the rascal of a postmaster took off 14 louis from his first demand. It seems to be a settled system with all the foreigners we have hitherto [word unclear] with to do all in their power to cheat the English. The greatest part who come abroad are so extravagant that they are quite surprized when they find any one with sense enough to revolt against their impositions. We have generally endeavoured to make some kind of bargain, but as we are none of us disposed to give ourselves too much trouble in saving our money I believe 9 times out of ten we have been taken in. ... We are now going to dinner although it is not long since we have eat our breakfast, but as we have put ourselves under the direction of our postilions we are obliged to submit to their regulations in the places we stop at. Tuesday 12 o'clock. We are much surprized to find a most excellent road over the immense hills we are now traversing. It is equally good with the Hackney road²¹ except here and there a few loose stones which the rains have washed into it. After dinner yesterday we crept up hill zig zag round the side of a mountain for 3 hours. We descended on the other side to Sospello a pretty considerable village situated in [a] beautiful fertile vale with a number of neat cottages scattered among the vineyards and orchards of olive trees which grow there. A priest told us there were near 4000 inhabitants in it. When we had reached the top of the mountain we quitted our carriage and walked down to the bottom a short way by a bye path. We had the most delightful ramble you can conceive. Every turn we took opened a new view to us. Mountain after mountain rearing their majestic heads aloft in the air. Some of them were concealed in the clouds and as the evening came on appeared the more romantic. The moon had risen before we got to the village and added greatly to the beauty of the scene. We have passed over a similar mountain this morning which took up 5 hours. Our drivers say that we travelled 9 French leagues (or 27 miles) yesterday and 5 today but I believe they only guess at the distance for I walked full 3 hours and a half this morning and I am sure at least 3 miles an hour. We have found the road equally good today. The ascent is very seldom steep and the way is as secure as a road upon the edge of a precipice can be made. In the narrowest part there is generally a small way. The King of Sardinia who is also Duke of

20 Anonymous journal, British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Additional Manuscripts, 12130 f. 113, 130.

21 The road from the City of London to the suburb of Hackney.

Savoy and Prince of Piedmont the latter of which places we are now in has infinite credit for the immense expence he has been at in this work. In many parts it is cut through the solid rock which has been separated by gunpowder.

Wednesday 5th. A few miles from the place where we dined yesterday we entered a valley which made every object we had seen before appear quite fertile. In a letter I wrote from Toulon I expressed myself highly delighted with a valley we passed through to that place but this was infinitely superior to it in every respect as there was both wood and water to vary the scene and the rocks were three or four times as high. Such a wonderful variety I could have formed no idea of without seeing it. The road ascended the whole way and lay by the side of a torrent of water as clear as crystal which poured impetuously from the mountains. It was continually varying its course and frequently formed some noble cascade over the immense rocks which were in the bed of this stream. Mr. Morgan thought some of the rocky mountains on each side were near a mile high. It is impossible for you to conceive how grand this scene was. Notwithstanding we were above three hours passing through the valley each turn discovered some new object to us till at last we were quite wearied with gazing. In many parts we went directly under the rocks which formed an arch over the road and great masses appeared to hang over our heads by so slight a tenure that the least gust of wind would hurl them to the bottom. Accidents of this kind are frequent in the winter after heavy falls of snow. We never enjoyed our landau more than in this ride. We arrived at Tende the place where we were to take our abode for the night about 7 o'clock, a most miserable village without a decent house in the whole place. We went into the Hotel as they called it and marched upstairs into a large room which appears [line obscured by fold]. The ceiling was hung with cobwebs and the pictures upon the walls seemed to be an admirable retreat for vermin. For this receptacle of filth where they proposed we should sleep upon straw for beds they said they had none they asked 2 crowns [words obscured by tear] for our supper besides. After expressing ourselves in the strongest terms disgusted at the rascality of their demands we told them we would rather sup in our carriage than be imposed upon. While we were arranging our affairs and hiring a guide to protect the trunks etc. on the outside seeing us so resolute they came and made proper submissions to us and offered us a small room with one bed in it and as good a supper as they could give us with vin du pays for the price they asked for the beastly hole they showed us at first. This we accepted of and after we had finished our repast which was of a piece with the rest of our entertainment we began to think of arranging ourselves for the little time we were to stay there. Our companion Rigby undressed and turned into the bed with as much pleasure as if he had been in his own habitation and by the sound of his nightly music which I have more than once had occasion to wish at a distance, soon convinced us that as usual he felt no inconvenience from vermin either in idea or reality. As for Mr. Morgan, Woodhouse and myself so strongly were we impressed by the dirty appearance of everything around us that we did not venture even to repose on a mattress but laid in our cloths one on a wicker couch one on four chairs and myself on the table. I believe they all slept sound for I heard nothing of them till 3 o'clock when we set off again as the hill or rather the mountain we were to ascend this day we were told was much higher than any of the preceeding. After ascending three hours we arrived at a small cottage where we followed the advice of our guides and laid in a sufficient quantity of food to enable us to bear the fatigue we were to expect as we resolved to walk the remainder of the way. At 9 o'clock we reached the summit. I never till now knew what mountains were. Mr. Morgan conjectured the one we were on 1 mile and $\frac{1}{2}$ high but we saw others ascend many hundred yards higher covered partly with snow. We found the air exceedingly cold. We descended in two hours to Lamon where we found some excellent bread and butter and drank some of Mr. Morgan's tea with a wonderful relish. We came on after dinner to this place Coni through a flat country where we saw nothing remarkable but beautiful streams of water running on each side the road with which they flood the land at pleasure. The Italians are remarkable for this mode of fertilising their land.

Friday August 7th. Turin, We came here yesterday to dinner. The face of the country the whole way since we left the mountains very much resembles French Flanders but it is not near so populous. The land from the constant supply of water is very productive. The hemp frequently grows to 15 foot high and immense crops of Indian corn. We set off tomorrow for Geneva which we hope to reach in five days.

Boddington's journal adds little to this letter. He observed many goitres, large flocks of goats and a vile practice of the farmers that of washing their corn after thrashing owing to their always thrashing it on the land. Boddington found the roads from Coni to Turin good but intolerably dusty owing to the soft gravel with which they are made²². His next letter, to his mother, was sent on Tuesday 11 August from Canouge outside Geneva. It includes an interesting description of Turin that complements the recently printed accounts of the visits of Andrew Mitchell and John Holroyd, written in 1732 and 1764 respectively²³.

We were disappointed last night in our expectations of reaching Geneva on account its being a fortified town and the gates being shut soon after sunset. We intend going there to breakfast but as our time will be fully employed while we are there I have seized this opportunity of giving you an account of our proceedings since I wrote to my brother from Turin. We approached that city through a long avenue of trees 6 or 7 miles in length just like the entrance into Paris. It is the most regular built city I ever saw and has a very handsome appearance as the streets are wide and tolerably clean. A little attention might keep them sweet, but that is a circumstance about which both the French and the Piemontese are not at all concerned for such an assemblage of scents as have assailed our nostrils not here only but in most of the large towns we have passed through none but natives could endure. The extremes of heat and cold are experienced in this city owing to its situation surrounded on all sides by Alpine mountains. The cold in winter is very severe. In the summer its being under a tropical sun makes it as we can bear witness excessively hot. To provide against this latter inconvenience most of the principal streets are built with piazzas under which you may walk in the shade at all times in the day. Here are all the different kinds of shops and here it is that the officers and abbés consume their wearisome hours . . . they sit in small parties of 6 or 7 together some asleep others keeping up a languid conversation till dinner relieves them from the burden of their own thoughts. Afterwards the opera or the play employs their time till the evening promenade closes the day. The nobility here are the only people except the army and the church who are thought of any consequence . . . On Saturday early we left Turin. In about 10 or 12 miles we began ascending but as there are posthouses established the whole of this route to Geneva and the roads good we proceeded tolerably quick. We got to Novalesse in about 9 hours. Here the steep part of Mount Cenis begins and we were obliged to have our carriage taken entirely to pieces and placed upon the back of mules. Everything is so well regulated upon this route that travellers are in no danger of being imposed upon but they are most intolerably slow in their proceedings. . . in 2 hours and a half we got to the top of Mount Cenis. We found much less difficulty in ascending than we had expected. The road is indeed very rough and in some parts steep but it is perfectly safe and the mountain itself not near so steep as those we passed over between Nice and Turin. The road over Mt. Cenis was never designed for anything but mules and horses. The zig zag is therefore more abrupt.

That over the other mountains from Nice is more winding but the latter I think the most dangerous as a slip off the side of the road carries you to the bottom at once, whereas at Mont Cenis the worst that could happen would be a bumping bout against the stones for a few yards.

22 MS. 10823/A f. 20-1.

23 J. BLACK, *The Grand Tour and Savoy-Piedmont in the Eighteenth Century*, in: *Studi Piemontesi* 13 (1984), pp. 155-7, 159-160, 162-3.

Mount Cenis is rather more than a mile and a quarter high. Upon the top is a large plain which furnishes good pasture to sheep but the flocks are not very numerous as great attention is necessary to defend them from wolves. In winter these animals are very daring and come up to the very doors of the cottages. There are also many bears on some of these mountains. We wished exceedingly to have heard them howl but were not so happy. We had however the pleasure to see a number of their heads against some barns in our route the next day. In the midst of the plain at Mount Cenis is a small lake but 62 feet deep – probably this was formerly the crater of a volcano. We saw a number of cascades and some of them wonderfully grand in our ascent. At this time of the year the immense quantities of snow which have accumulated during the winter on the tops of the mountains are continually melting and form an infinite number of streams down their sides. These as they descend join each other and acquire new force from the increased bulk and the force they gain in falling. The noise of these torrents roaring impetuously over the ragged beds which they have formed for themselves and every now and then dashing and foaming over an opposing rock added amazing majesty to the scene. We changed horses at the top and made a delicious repast on excellent bread, butter and cheese which we little expected to meet with. Our hostess told us they were all of her own making and added a good bottle of wine to crown our feast. We mounted our horses to descend but notwithstanding the eloquence of our guides in their praises of their beasts and the perfect assurance we might have of their safety we chose rather to trust to our own legs which were thoroughly tired by the time we reached Lunenborgh²⁴. This descent was by a similar road to what we had found on the other side. We reached our inn about 9 o'clock but it was very inferior to [the] neat little mansion we had enjoyed so much at the summit we had just quitted²⁵. Indeed it was quite the reverse of everything sweet and cleanly – but we did not long experience any inconvenience from this ... we disposed of ourselves with our cloaths on much after the same manner as I have described at Tende. As I had not my nightly garment (which I have found a very kind protection) I did not choose to trust myself to the ravages of the vermin who I know can almost trace by their scent. The road now permitted us to go on in our carriage. We were still on high ground and have been descending gradually till within about 30 miles of this place. We may be said to have been upon the Alps the whole way and have had a series of delightful views in all the varieties of hill dale imaginable. We have been much surprised to see so much cultivation. The valleys are every one exceedingly fruitful and full of villages and some of the mountains are productive very nearly to the top. These form a fine contrast to others which are perfectly barren and exhibit nothing but a vast mass of rock shattered into ten thousand different shapes. There are others again entirely covered with forests of pines and larchs – to these varieties of scenery add the torrents which pour down for a mile in length sometimes hid by the woods then breaking out violently over some impending rock. Conceive of all these objects on the grandest scale and when I say that you will then have an idea of Alpine views. My dependance is on the brilliancy of your imagination and not on the imperfect description I have given you of them. You recollect I suppose the strange people with monstrous craws who were said to have been found in the South Seas. I remember then to have been told they were mere impostures but am now convinced of it beyond a doubt. It is nothing but an enlargement of the glands about the throat called the Bronchaceel a very common complaint in mountainous countries. It is almost universal among the inhabitants in the villages round the Alps. The women are most subject to it and in the greatest degree but I saw many men with it also. If you did not see those who were in London you can hardly form an idea what horrid ugly objects the poor creatures are who are affected with it.

... I have been shocked with their mode of nursing in the south of France. The poor little things are rolled up with half a thousand cloaths till they are like a log of wood and so they continue for four months. I am told this was once the custom in England. I only wonder how such unnatural

24 Lanslebourg.

25 For other passages of the Cenis, J. BLACK, *The British and the Grand Tour*, London 1985, pp. 20–1.

ideas should ever enter the human mind and how the poor little wretches could exist in such a state of torture. Our plan is now to the glaciers to Basle and down the Rhine as fast as the stream will carry us.

Boddington's journal adds little to this letter apart from a reflection on sanitary habits in Turin,

Commodities seem to be unknown as the streets abound with nastiness. In entering to a square I saw 3 children easing themselves without any ceremony²⁶.

His penultimate letter was sent to his mother on 17 August from Lausanne,

You perceive by the place from whence this is dated that we have made but little progress in our way towards home since my last. (Geneva August 12th). Travelling in this country is exceedingly slow as there are no post horses. In about another week we shall bid adieu to Switzerland and then we shall make as rapid marches as possible. Indeed this we shall be under the necessity of doing on account of Mr. Morgan as a week beyond his limited time (July and August) will be the utmost he will choose to transgress and if it is practicable you may probably see us by the 3^d or 4^d of Sept. I should have been happy to have stayed a few days longer at Geneva to have enjoyed the beautiful scenes of the surrounding country. No situation can well be more delightful at least none which I have seen has been equal to it. The environs of Lyons were charming but they wanted that grand expanse of water which Geneva enjoys in the Lake at one [end] of which it is situated. It is as clear as crystal and reflects the brightest blue imaginable. On each side are numbers of villas and the land cultivated down to the waters edge in vineyards and meadows and woods in the richest variety. You must make a party and come and spend a summer there for otherwise you will have no idea of it. The town of Geneva is not remarkable either for the beauty of its buildings or the regularity of its streets but there is a certain cleanliness in its appearance and its inhabitants are in general so neat in their persons and seem so chearful and happy that it is almost impossible to remain an uninterested spectator. We spent the afternoon of the day we came to Geneva upon the Lake in sailing about from side to side. This is the narrowest part of it. It is above 60 miles long and in one part 12 broad. Our letters of credit introduced us to a very pleasant young Mr. Pasteur one of the principal merchants of the place. We breakfasted with him the next morning. The English resort here so much that they have adopted many of our modes of living. Our breakfast was quite a l'anglois and at our inn we were absolutely able to tell what we were eating²⁷. Prince Edward²⁸ has resided here about a year and a half. He seems to be very happy in copying his wise brothers in England. We never stirred out without meeting him either in his phaeton or in his gig or on horseback galloping away the tedious hours of the day as hard as he could drive. He is very musical and continually inviting large parties to concerts at which he has no small pleasure in joining himself. Mr. Pasteur said he went to one lately about 9 o'clock when his Highness had already favoured the company with ten songs and he gave them 18 more before the evening was over. To give you a striking instance of his good sense and economy for which his family is so remarkable, a short time since he received a present of books from England superbly bound in red morocco. He paid £ 80 to have them rebound because he did not like the colour when the first cost of them was only £ 50. The people here are all sons of freedom and know no other distinctions but those which arise from superior virtue or abilities, an admirable school for a Prince if he had but the understanding to profit from it. He had a lesson the other day which I think must have made some impression on him. He was playing with the young men of the town at cricket. They were all in new white dresses made to fit as tight and smart as possible. The Prince was seized with a merry fit as one of the party who was somewhat jolly stooped to take up the ball

26 MS. 10823/A f. 21.

27 Presumably because the food was not disguised by sauces and spices as was usually the case in France.

28 Edward, Duke of Kent, son of George III and father of Queen Victoria.

and gave him a friendly smack which made the air resound again. Said Mr. Pasteur we hardly knew how to take this specimen of royal manners for we knew nothing of the Prince any otherwise than as an English gentleman but our companion soon relieved us by turning the laugh against his Highness by a retaliation in kind. On Thursday 13th we left Geneva and set off for Mont Blanc in a hired coach with three horses having sent our own carriage ... to meet us here at Lausanne. At Salanche²⁹ about 30 miles from Geneva we expected to have got a [2 words obscured by seal mark] to have taken us to Chamongny³⁰ but it happend unfortunately for us that three or four very large parties had taken up every mule in the place. I must tell you that these Chariot Bancs are long narrow carriages upon very low wheels calculated for bad roads. They are drawn by mules and so light that when there is a bad piece of road or a torrent the guides take them in their arms and carry them over. They hold three persons who sit with their backs against one side of the carriage and their legs dangling out on the other. A little canopy like the head of a tent bed defends the traveler from the weather ... We got to Salanche about 3 and as we did not like the idea of loitering our time away there we determined to hire a couple of guides to carry our portmanteau etc. and set out to walk. Our guides told us we should find a great deal of rough road and steep ascent and that it was 6 good leagues (18 English miles) at least. However we were so animated with the distant view of Mt. Blanc and the grand scenery of the surrounding mountains that we set out very boldly. We had not proceeded above a mile before we were overtaken by a shower. Nothing is upon a pitiful scale here. The perpetual snows upon the tops of the high peaks on all sides of us so thoroughly condense the moist atmosphere which has been exhaled by the influence of the sun that you may as well be under a water spout as in a shower in this country. We were completely soaked in a few minutes. We found our guides description of the road very accurate and were very well pleased to refresh ourselves a little at a small house about halfway. One of our guides was a fine lively fellow and entertained us exceedingly by his conversation. He had lived 6 years in Paris which I presume gave him no small consequence in the opinion of his [word obscure]. He frequently made use of the exclamation *Le Diable* by way of embellishment. We asked him if he was acquainted with that gentleman. *Non Monsieur*. Do you believe there is one? Said he *Monsieur Voltaire* says the bad men upon the Earth they are the Devils. The sable mantle of night was soon spread around us after we left our friendly hut, and in about a mile or two we overtook a fellow countryman sitting in solemn state upon the back of a mule who absolutely refused to proceed one step further. He had left Salanche at the same time with ourselves. His companions he said were before. We advised him to quit his beast and go along with us but he rather preferred waiting till his mule was rested. So we wished him good night. Not a great way further [tear] the side of a roaring torrent which was compleatly enclosed by an apparently impenetrable wood we overtook another of our countrymen Lord Guildford. He had very gallantly taken up behind him a pretty *fille de chambre* of [tear] French Comtesse who was distressed for a conveyance for her from Salanche. His Lordship said he believed he was come to the end of the world for he did not see how it was possible to advance a step further. However our guides soon relieved him from his difficulties and conducted him across the torrent. But they did not seem a little pleased that he had met with some interruption from having ventured to go without one of their fraternity to point out the way. We arrived at Chamongny at 10 o'clock having been only 6 hours on the road. I confess to you I was compleatly done up and I believe my companions were by well pleased to sit down by a very good fire side. There was not a bed to be had at the inn but they procured us a small room in a neighbouring house with two straw mattresses which with a couple of trusses of straw afforded a very good nights rest to people who were too much fatigued to be very nice. We set off the next morning early to ascend the mountain. All I have time to say at present concerning the glaciers and Mont Blanc is that

29 Sallanches.

30 Chamonix.

we were in high good luck in the weather and that we were delighted beyond measure. In some future letter or on my return I must give you the particulars.

The last letter sent on 21 August from Basle to his mother was a rushed one. In common with other tourists Boddington commented on the cleanness of the cottages and neatness of the inns. He also wrote,

The want of Post horses has obliged us to be contented with seeing less of Switzerland than we could have wished – according to the present mode of hiring horses by the day, it is to the interest of the voiturin to travel as few miles in the day as possible. We have found some difficulty to make them bring us from Lausanne which is under 120 miles in nearly four days ... The country the whole way from Lausanne has afforded us very agreeable views not indeed in that grand style which we had seen when we were directly among the Alps but yet very pleasing.

No more letters survive and the last stages of the journey are best recorded in the journal. This shows that the route from Basle took Boddington through Alsace to Strasbourg and then over the Rhine into Germany. Having visited a German saltworks and the picture collection of the Elector Palatine at Mannheim Boddington crossed a bridge of boats to Mainz and then took a boat to Cologne. From there he travelled to Düsseldorf, where he saw the paintings *esteemed the best collection out of Italy*, Arnhem and Amsterdam, arriving at the last on the evening of 30 August. Boddington rowed round the harbour, visited the workhouse, botanical gardens, and townhall and an official brothel where he *saw a score of women sitting ... in such solemn state as would suit only the frozen spirits of Dutchmen*. From there he visited Haarlem and The Hague before embarking at Helvoetsluys for Harwich, which he reached on 6 September. The latter stages of the journal were clearly written in haste. The comments on the mechanics of travel are brief. At Lausanne he *had excellent provision at the Golden Crown but bad lodging*. At Berne *our inn the Crown we found excellent in its accommodations like all the inns in this country very clean*. The dinner at Soleure was *excellent*, the Hôtel de St. Esprit in Strasbourg *a good inn*. The posting system in the Prussian lands between Düsseldorf and the Dutch border was attacked as expensive. The sole reference to political events occurred in Amsterdam where Boddington objected to the control of the pro-British Orangists. William V of Orange had benefited in 1787 from Prussian military and British diplomatic assistance to overthrow the power of the *Patriots* and it is clear that Boddington sympathised with the latter, *... everyone wore orange cockades. We were under the necessity of providing ourselves with the badge of slavery before we ventured out*³¹.

Boddington's account of his travels is an interesting one on several counts. It was not written for publication and is therefore more reliable on that account. The value of those written for that purpose, such as the account by Smollett, is questionable. The particular political conjuncture of the trip was an interesting one. Boddington reveals the enthusiasm that many British commentators expressed when they first heard of the Revolution. His presence in Paris in mid-July is fortunate as he provides a very vivid account of the overthrow of royal power. Boddington captures the exhilaration and confusion of the occasion. His travel letters are also a vital testimony of the character of eighteenth-century tourism on the eve of its dissolution.

31 MS. 10823/A f. 27–37.