

in the higher ranks, he has done enough to preserve his name from oblivion."

Crabbe, in his "Tales of the Hall," sums up Walpole's taste for castle-building, as exemplified in his work at Strawberry Hill, in the following mock-heroic lines:—

"He built his castles wondrous rich and rare,
Few castle-builders could with him compare;
The hall, the palace, rose at his command,
And these he filled with objects great and grand."

Walpole bequeathed Strawberry Hill and its contents, in the first instance, to his cousin, Marshal Conway, and to the Countess of Ailesbury during their lives; then to their daughter, the Hon. Mrs. Damer, the sculptress, for her life; and after her, to Lord Waldegrave.

Marshal Conway, who was for many years a Member of Parliament, seems to have been one of those many mediocrities who found their way into high official position under the good old patronage system which prevailed through the first twenty years of the reign of George III.

Mrs. Damer made Strawberry Hill her abode for several years, most of her time being occupied in her favourite pursuit of sculpture. At a somewhat

early period of her progress Mrs. Damer attained almost to perfection in the art, and acquired a celebrity not only in her own country, but on the Continent of Europe, her title to which will be readily acknowledged when the number and excellence of her works are called to mind. They include the following figures, statues, and designs:—

1. The Dog, for which she was so highly honoured by the Academy of Florence.
2. An Osprey, formerly belonging to Horace Walpole, and exhibited in his collection at Strawberry Hill, but afterwards the property of Sir Alexander Johnston.
3. Charles James Fox, which she presented to the Emperor Napoleon at Paris, on his return from Elba.
4. The colossal bust of Nelson, executed by her in marble, shortly after he returned from the battle of the Nile, and sat to her for it, and which she presented to the City of London, whose officers placed it in the Council Chamber at Guildhall, where it now stands.

5. A bust of Nelson, executed in bronze by her for the King of Tanjore, and presented by her to His Highness.

6. A similar bust, presented by her to King William IV. when Lord High Admiral, which is now at Windsor.

7. Heads of Thames and Isis, for the keystones of the bridge over the Thames at Henley; presented by her to the Town of Henley, near which stood her father's country-house, called "Park Place."

8. Two Dogs, executed in marble, and presented by her to her sister, the Duchess of Richmond; now at Goodwood.

9. Several pieces for Boydell's Shakespeare.

10. A bust of herself, presented by her to Payne Knight.

11. Her mother, the Countess of Ailesbury.

12. Miss Farren (the late Lady Derby).

13. Miss Berry, editor of Horace Walpole's works.

14. Prince Labornirthy.

15. Peniston Lamb, the eldest son of the late Lord Melbourne.

16. The second Lord Melbourne, when a child.

17. Sir Humphrey Davy.

18. Queen Caroline, consort of George IV.



HORACE WALPOLE.
(From a Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds.)

Finding, however, the situation of Strawberry Hill lonely when her mother died, Mrs. Damer gave up the house and property, together with the £2,000 per annum left to her by its founder for its maintenance, to Lord Waldegrave, in whom the fee was vested under the will, and removed to a mansion of Lady Buckinghamshire, at East Sheen.

Strawberry Hill has since continued in the possession of the Waldegrave family, though they did not care to reside there. In 1842 the contents of the house were sold by public auction. The sale lasted from April 25th to May 21st, and realised the sum of £33,468. It was conducted by Mr. George Robins in a large temporary building erected on the lawn for the purpose.

"The fate of Strawberry Hill," writes Eliot Warburton, "was lamentable. For four-and-twenty days the apartments sacred to Horatian pleasures echoed with the hammer of the auctioneer. Circumstances that need not be more particularly alluded to rendered this degradation unavoidable, and it was only with difficulty that the most sacred of the family possessions could be preserved from the relentless ordeal of a public sale." The shrine which had been visited with so much interest and