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Over the past several years, a team of scholars at the Voltaire Foundation, based at the University of Oxford, has been working on an extraordinary project to publish 2,500 mostly unedited letters of Françoise de Graffigny (1695-1758), a French novelist and playwright known principally for her novel *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (1747) and her play *Cénie* (1750). As an acquaintance of Voltaire, Madame Du Châtelet, and several contributors to the *Encyclopédie*, Graffigny was highly engaged with the literary and intellectual life of the time, making her letters a rich mine of information about the culture and history of the eighteenth century. Having come from a noble family, Graffigny had acquaintances at court as well as in intellectual circles from the fields of literature, theater, science, finance, and politics.

The volume under review here contains letters written from January 1754 to December 1755, all addressed to her friend, François Devaux. In the area of literature, these letters deal with her own writings, such as her play *La Fille d'Aristide*, in process during this period. The letters contain many exchanges with other writers, discussions of manuscripts, and literary ideas. We also find allusions to the latest works of Voltaire, Diderot, Madame de Sévigné, and Rousseau. Since theater was her passion, Graffigny often attended plays in Paris, reporting to Devaux about performances such as Voltaire's *Mahomet*.

The world of the eighteenth century comes to light in other ways too as the letters deal with practical issues such as exchanges of goods and manuscripts, various commissions, problems with domestic help, household furnishings, and more. Due to her social status and connections at the courts of Versailles and Lorraine, Graffigny often attempted to secure positions or housing for family and friends in need. The world of finance finds its way into the letters as well. During this period Graffigny attempted to invest in various markets and helped acquaintances get in on various financial deals. Always optimistic and reluctant to accept any weakness, Graffigny nevertheless writes at length about health issues as well. During this time she suffered several painful health problems and keeps Devaux apprised of the effects of a remedy

she is taking. But she is dismissive of her own health problems, as well as of those of Devaux, often admonishing him to avoid doctors.

In contrast to the correspondence of Madame de Sévigné and others who were conscious that their letters would be read in public, that of Graffigny appears extremely personal and unrestrained. The letters are frank, sometimes humorous, often shocking in their directness and intimate detail. The use of nicknames and insider jokes renders them lively and realistic. Graffigny's correspondence is a tremendous resource for scholars of history, culture, and literature. The editorial annotation is exacting and highly detailed. The volume is beautifully presented, supplemented with an invaluable introduction, illustrations, a general index, and indices of nicknames and colloquial expressions. A great scholarly achievement, this correspondence has made an enormous impact on eighteenth-century research.