

vited her, promised her an apartment exactly in her own way, and that she shall see nobody but whom she chooses to see.<sup>3</sup> This will not surprise you, Madam; but what I shall add, will; though I must beg your Ladyship not to mention it even to her, as it is an absolute secret here, as she does not know that I know it, and as it was trusted to me by a friend of yours. In short, there are thoughts of sending her with a public character, or at least with a commission from hence—a very extraordinary honour, and I think never bestowed but on the Maréchale de Guébriant.<sup>4</sup> As the Dussons<sup>5</sup> have been talked of,<sup>6</sup> and as Madame Geoffrin has enemies, its being known might prevent it; and it might make her uneasy that it was known. I should have told it to no mortal but your Ladyship; but I could not resist giving you such a pleasure. In your answer, Madam, I need not warn you not to specify what I have told you.

of Catherine the Great. His friendship with Mme Geoffrin had begun in Paris in 1753, when she obtained his release from a debtors' prison (Janet Aldis, *Madame Geoffrin*, 2d edn, 1906, pp. 198, 246–50; S.-A. Poniatowski, *Mémoires*, St Peterbourg, 1914–24, i. 79, 86–9). In 1875 Charles de Mouÿ published the *Correspondance inédite du roi Stanislas-Auguste Poniatowski et de Madame Geoffrin, 1764–1777*.

3. 'Vous serez logée au château où je demeure. . . . Vous dinerez et souperiez chez vous quand vous voudrez, ou avec moi toutes les fois que je ne serai pas en représentation. . . . Vous ne verrez chez vous que qui vous voudrez, et vous voir sera une faveur' (Stanislas to Mme Geoffrin 1 June 1765, Mouÿ, op. cit. p. 158). She left Paris 21 May 1766 and arrived 22 June at Warsaw, where she remained until 13 Sept. (Aldis, op. cit. pp. 267, 274, 281; Poniatowski, op. cit. i. 567–8).

4. Renée du Bec-Crespin (d. 1659), m. (1632) Jean-Baptiste Budes, Comte de Guébriant, Maréchal de France. 'Sent [1645] with the character of ambassadress from Louis XIII [XIV] to the King of Poland. Mr Walpole, in a subsequent letter, owns having been misinformed with respect to Madame Geoffrin; no such plan having ever been really in agitation' (Mary Berry). Miss Berry did not print the later letter, and it has not been found.

5. Presumably the Chevalier Pierre-Chrysostôme d'Usson de Bonac (1724–82), Comte d'Usson, ambassador to Sweden 1774–82; and his wife, Margarethe Cornelia van de Poll (1726–93), who married 1 (1743) Cornelis Munter, and 2 (1754) d'Usson de Bonac, at which time she was said to have an income of 100,000 florins (about £8000). She was a cousin by marriage of the Duke of Richmond, whose grandmother was a Munter; when the d'Ussons visited England in 1763 HW wrote verses for her (*De Navorscher*, 1880, n.s. xiii. 487–8; Michael Ranfft, *Neue genealogisch-historische Nachrichten*, Leipzig, 1750–63, vi. 438–9; René-Louis de Voyer, Marquis d'Argenson, *Journal et mémoires*, ed. Rathery, 1859–67, viii. 372; *Correspondence of Emily, Duchess of Leinster*, ed. Brian Fitzgerald, Dublin, 1949, i. 367; HW to Montagu 17 May 1763, MONTAGU ii. 71; Hazen, *SH Bibl.* 179–81; *Journal politique de Bruxelles* 23 Feb. 1782, p. 147; *Recueil des instructions données aux ambassadeurs et ministres de France: Suède*, ed. A. Gefroy, 1885, pp. 443, 465).

6. HW had reported the same rumour to Conway 28 Oct. 1765, but it proved untrue. The next person sent was Louis-Gabriel, Marquis de Conflans (*ibid. Pologne*, ed. Louis Farges, ii, 1888, pp. 255–6).