

HORACE WALPOLE'S CORRESPONDENCE

TO LADY OSSORY, ca 1778

Erroneously printed in earlier editions as part of HW to Lady Ossory 30 Dec. 1783. The handwriting and the tone of the letter suggest an earlier date (see *post* 19 May 1778).

Address: To Lady Ossory.

YOU accuse me of twenty things that I have no sort of title to, as sense, prudence, entertainment, jollity and mystery. Who would ever think, Madam, of those being features in my character? It is like your desiring me to write, and *promising* me not to say above two words in answer to my letters. Indeed I shall not write on those terms. I have no more vanity than hypocrisy—and if you would only substitute *indifference*, in the place of all the attributes you have so graciously bestowed on me, you would find it the sole key to almost every action of my life for some time past, and I believe for all to come. With neither love nor hatred, with neither avarice nor ambition, it is very seldom that one grows a hypocrite after being the contrary. If I could be vain or forget myself, your Ladyship's compliments would have that effect: but as they have not turned my head hitherto, I trust they will not be able, and then I am sure nothing else will, since I can boast and desire to boast of nothing but being

Yours most faithfully,

HW.

TO LADY OSSORY, Thursday 1 January 1778

Now first printed.

Address: To Lady Ossory.

Jan. 1, 1778.

THOUGH the fault is not mine, Madam, I am as much ashamed as if I was guilty. It is impossible for me to be at Amphill tomorrow, and I am forced to plead the last excuse in the world that