being blown to Plymouth. After his servants and baggage were embarked, the frigate was very near being lost.

I have seen nobody but him today, so cannot tell any more news.

## TO LADY OSSORY, Monday 29 November 1779

In Kirgate's hand.

*Address:* To the Countess of Ossory at Ampthill Park, Bedfordshire. *Postmark:* 29 NO.

Berkeley Square, Nov. 29, 1779.

THOUGH you[1] command, Madam, it would be impertinent and ridiculous to talk of myself, when at the same time the post will bring you Lord Ossory's account of Mr Fox's duel.[2] Could such an old story as the gout expect to fill a cranny of your attention at such a moment? Would not you hate anybody or letter that could not answer fifty questions you want to ask in a breath? I would answer them beforehand if I were not just got into bed with a little return of pain[3]—Oh, and Lord Lyttelton[4]—in about three hours your Ladyship will want to know all about him too.[5] Would I could satisfy you, but just now I am not able, and therefore, after thanking you a thousand times, I must bid myself good night, and will answer your letter as soon as it is in my power.

fortified that they are under no apprehension of another visit from the French' (*London Chronicle* 23–25 Nov., xlvi. 502).

14. 'Portsmouth, Nov. 21. Yesterday morning arrived the *Champion* frigate, Capt. Hamilton, from Jersey. Gov. Conway is arrived in this ship' (ibid. 20–23 Nov., xlvi. 494).

1 MS reads 'your.'

2. On 29 Nov. Fox fought a duel with William Adam (see following letter), in which Fox was slightly wounded. Adam had suggested in the House of Commons 25 Nov. that, bad as the administration might be, it was preferable to the Opposition. Fox taunted Adam for supporting North and his ministry, a support which, Fox suggested, Lord North could hardly be grateful for. Richard Fitzpatrick was Fox's second. A detailed account of the duel is in MASON i. 481–3. See also the *London Magazine*, 1779, xlviii. 553–4, 556–8, 575–6.

3. From HW's letter to Mason 29 Nov. 1779, MASON i. 482, it appears that he 'was in the other room from twelve till six today, when my pains returned [and he went to bed]; yet finding them easier at nine,' he had 'been writing in bed till eleven at night.'

4. 'On Saturday evening died, at a quarter past eleven, at his seat . . . Pitt Place, Epsom . . . Lord Lyttelton' (*London Chronicle* 27–30 Nov., xlvi. 514). His dream or premonition that he would die within three days, which he did, was much talked of; see MASON i. 480–1, 487; *London Magazine*, 1779, xlviii. 534–6 (with a print facing p. 534).

5. Unexplained.