

have children, you cannot be indifferent to a great accession, as the town says, you are likely to have,² and which I most sincerely wish—but in reality you will, instead of losing a parent, I trust, recover one.³ *That* I most heartily hope will happen both for your sake and hers!—but it is not proper to say more—yet I could not help telling you how much I have considered your present position under all its faces—and having done so, I will mix nothing else with it—though without any Pindaric transition, one might easily slide into a variety of reflections, which however foreign to the theme, would be all serious.

Your Ladyship's most devoted
H.W.

TO LADY OSSORY, Tuesday ca April 1784

As indicated in a note to the preceding letter, Lady Ravensworth and Lady Ossory were reconciled soon after the death of Lord Ravensworth 30 Jan. 1784. This letter is tentatively dated in that year, although it might have been written somewhat later. The handwriting suggests 1784–6.

Tuesday night.

I WAS excessively mortified, Madam, when I found I had kept your Ladyship so inconveniently from going to Lady Ravensworth. Indeed by Lord Palmerston's staying I had concluded you were not going out, and having seen so very little of you this year, I was glad to indulge myself. I am sure you are good enough to excuse so involuntary a fault.

Your purse is so pretty, that I should like it, if it had no superior merit: it has no rival in my estimation but another work of the same fingers, your Ladyship's kind note. When written to such a decrepit skeleton, I should think it mere charity, had you not always been too partial to me. Still it is pleasant, when one has outlived one's self, not to have survived the kindness of one's friend's; and I will not think that age and pain are terrible evils, when they have neither shaken your friendship, Madam, nor weakened my memory of the gratitude I owe you.

2. The chief family estates at Ravensworth, Co. Durham, did not go to Lady Ossory but to her father's nephew, the 5th Bt.

3. Lord Ravensworth had been estranged

from Lady Ossory since her divorce and remarriage in 1769. After his death, Lady Ravensworth and Lady Ossory were soon reconciled.