

and so may continue some time. Indeed it's one constant feast in this country; it's the great business of life to stuff and be stuffed. Immoderate eating is among the prime social virtues, but immoderate drinking lifts you up to the skies.¹⁷ One would think such furious politics would interrupt it; but it's quite the contrary, and more than half the warfare is carried on by bumpers of confusion to their enemies and success to their friends. Adieu! don't think I abuse the country. All this is right and only errs in a little excess. I am dreadfully encumbered with all sorts of encumbrance of the most disagreeable kind, and am amazed to find myself almost at the end of a long letter:—visits, dispatches, applications, attendance, politics, steams of meat, and fumes of wine, all conspiring to confound me.

Yours most faithfully,

H. S. C.

From LADY AILESBURY, ca Friday 9 May 1755

Printed for the first time from the MS now wsl, formerly Rutnam. The letter must have been written during the first week of May 1755, the only time that Conway would have been at Holyhead on his way to Ireland without Lady Ailesbury during Ricciarelli's operatic career in England (below, nn. 4, 7).

Address: To Mr Walpole.

[Warwick Street].

I AM always sorry not to wait upon you, but I think if you'll excuse me, it shall not be on Monday;¹ for I am but little acquainted with any of the company except Lord Stormont, and some of them have not much partiality for me. I shall be very glad to see you at

the Lord Primate; on Wednesday with the Right Hon. the Lord Chancellor; on Thursday with the Right Hon. the Earl of Bessborough; yesterday with his Grace the Lord Archbishop of Dublin; and we hear he is to dine this day with the Right Hon. the Lord Molesworth' (*Pue's Occurrences* 6–10 May, *sub* Dublin 10 May; see also *Leinster Corr.* i. 9).

17. Lord Kildare, in describing a dinner given by Hartington on the 12th at which Conway was present, says 'I don't think I ever drank so hard and fast in my life;

every one of the company complain today' (*ibid.* i. 16).

1. On Monday 12 May, HW gave a dinner for Lady Hervey and the Rochfords at SH (*MONTAGU* i. 168); Lord Stormont is not mentioned as a guest, but he was well acquainted with Lady Hervey, who the year before had called him 'one of the prettiest and most amiable kind of young men I ever was acquainted with' (*D. M. Stuart, Molly Lepell, Lady Hervey*, 1936, p. 248).