

the stile is a little too high to help them over. His Lordship is a little fitter for raising a storm than laying one, and of late seems to have lost both virtues. The Americans at least have acted like men,¹⁴ gone to the bottom at once, and set the whole upon the whole. Our conduct has been that of pert children: we have thrown a pebble at a mastiff, and are surprised it was not frightened. Now we must be worried by it, or must kill the guardian of the house, which will be plundered the moment little master has nothing but the old nurse to defend it. But I have done with reflections; you will be fuller of them than I.

FROM CONWAY, ca Tuesday 20 December 1774

Missing. Several letters, answered *post* 26 Dec. 1774, and presumably received after HW had written and sent his missing letter to Conway *post* 23 Dec. 1774. In them Conway mentions his visit to Montmorency, where he, Lady Ailesbury and Mrs Damer were staying apparently 15–17 Dec. (DU DEFFAND iv. 119).

TO CONWAY, Friday 23 December 1774

Missing. 'Votre lettre du 23 qu'il [Conway] me traduit en grande partie, m'apprend que votre goutte est bien forte, vous n'aviez plus de douleurs, dites-vous, mais votre faiblesse est extrême' (Mme du Deffand to HW 29 Dec. 1774, DU DEFFAND iv. 125). HW wrote to Mann 23 Dec. 1774: 'You will perceive by the change of writing that my hand hath lost its cunning. . . . The gout . . . has . . . bound me hand and foot above a fortnight. However . . . the wounds have not been deep, nor will the scars I think remain long. Yet for these last five days I have been very ill, less by the gout than by its consequential weakness, which has chiefly affected my breast' (MANN viii. 66).

14. Chatham expressed his approval of their conduct in a letter of 24 Dec. to Stephen Sayre: 'I have not words to express my satisfaction, that the Congress has conducted this most arduous and delicate business, with such manly wisdom

and calm resolution, as do the highest honour to their deliberations. Very few are the things contained in their resolves, that I could wish had been otherwise' (*Chatham Corr.* iv. 368).