

FROM CONWAY, Sunday 25 December 1774

Missing; received 30 Dec.; answered *post* 31 Dec. 1774.

FROM LADY AILESURY, ca Sunday 25 December 1774

Missing. 'La Milady m'a dit vous avoir écrit une lettre de sept pages, et qu'elle vous a rendu compte de tout ce qui pouvait vous intéresser' (Mme du Deffand to HW 29 Dec. 1774, DU DEFFAND iv. 126). HW received this letter along with Mme du Deffand's letter of 23-5 Dec. 1774: 'Celle de Milady Ailesbury, que je reçus avec, ne me plût nullement. Elle dit que vous vous êtes tellement épuisée à votre fête [Mme du Deffand's soirée of 24 Dec. for the Choiseuls], que vous en avez pensé mourir' (HW to Mme du Deffand 4 Jan. 1775, *ibid.* iv. 131).

TO CONWAY, Monday 26 December 1774

Printed from *Works* v. 176-9.

Arlington Street, December 26, 1774.

I BEGIN my letter today, to prevent the fatigue of dictating two tomorrow.¹ In the first and best place, I am very near recovered; that is, though still a mummy,² I have no pain left, nor scarce any sensation of gout except in my right hand, which is still in complexion and shape a lobster's claw. Now, unless anybody can prove to me that three weeks are longer than five months and a half, they will hardly convince me that the bootikins are not a cure for fits of the gout, and a very short cure, though they cannot prevent it: nor perhaps is it to be wished they should; for, if the gout prevents everything else, would not one have something that does? I have but one single doubt left about the bootikins, which is, whether they do not weaken my breast: but as I am sensible that my own spirits do half

1. HW also dictated a letter to Mme du Deffand 26 Dec. 1774 (DU DEFFAND iv. 124-5). 2. That is, though still swathed in the bootikins.