

TO LADY AILESURY, Sunday 20 August 1775

Printed from the MS now WSL; first printed *Works* v. 568–9. For the history of the MS see *ante* 23 Aug. 1760.

Address: To the Countess of Ailesbury, at Park Place, near Henley, Angleterre.

Postmark: 25 AV.

Paris,¹ Aug. 20, 1775.

I HAVE been sea-sick to death, I have been poisoned by dirt and vermin, I have been stifled by heat, choked by dust, and starved for want of anything I could touch; and yet, Madam, here I am perfectly well, not in the least fatigued,² and thanks to the rivelled parchments, formerly faces, which I have seen by hundreds, I find myself almost as young as when I [c]am[e] hither first in the last century. In spite of my whims and delicacy and laziness, none of my grievances have been mortal; I have borne them as well as if I set up for a philosopher like the sages of this town. Indeed I have found my dear old woman so well, and looking so much better than she did four years ago, that I am transported with pleasure, and thank your Ladyship and Mr Conway for driving me hither. Madame du Defand came to me the instant I arrived,³ and sat by me while I stripped and dressed myself, for, as she said, since she cannot see, there was no harm in my being stark. She was charmed with your present, but was so kind as to be so much more charmed with my arrival, that she did not think of it a moment. I sat with her till half an hour after two in the morning, and had a letter from her before my eyes were open again. In short, her soul is immortal and forces her body to bear it company.

This is the very eve of Madame Clotilde's⁴ wedding; but Monsieur Turgot,⁵ to the great grief of Lady Maryc,⁶ will suffer no cost,

1. Where HW arrived 19 Aug. ('Paris Journals,' DU DEFFAND v. 343).

2. See below, n. 16.

3. 'At half an hour after six' (DU DEFFAND loc. cit.).

4. Marie Adélaïde Clotilde - Xavière, sister of Louis XVI, m. (by proxy 21 Aug. 1775) Charles Emmanuel, Prince of Piedmont, later Charles Emmanuel IV of Sardinia (*ante* 2 Oct. 1765, n. 21; OSSORY i. 254).

5. Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (1727–81), Baron de l'Aulne; controller-general of finance 1774–6 (MANN viii. 26, n. 17).

6. Lady Mary Coke, who had arrived at Paris from England 31 July (Coke, 'MS Journals' 1 Aug.). In imitation of royalty she had taken to signing her name 'Maryc' (with the 'c' at the end passing for a flourish) after the death of the Duke of York (1767), George III's brother, whom