

TO LADY CRAVEN, Saturday 17 February 1776

Printed from HW's MS copy written on the last page of Lady Craven's letter to him 17 Feb. 1776 (see previous letter, n. 5). HW wrote Mason 18 Feb.: 'I shall take the liberty . . . to trespass on your decorum by sending you an impromptu I wrote yesterday, to pretty Lady Craven, who sent me an eclogue of her own, every stanza of which ended with *January*, and which she desired me not to criticize, as some of the rhymes were incorrect, a licence I adopted in my second line' (MASON i. 247). Previously printed in *Horace Walpole's Fugitive Verses*, ed. W. S. Lewis, 1931, p. 168. The original letter is missing.

Feb. 17, 1776.

Tho' lame and old, I do not burn
 With fretfulness to scare ye;
 And charms and wit like yours would turn
 To May my January.

The God, that can inspire and heal,
 Sure breath'd your lines, sweet Fairy;
 For as I read, I feel, I feel—
 I'm^r not quite January.

TO the COMTE DE GUINES,¹ Sunday 18 February 1776

Printed for the first time from a photostat of the MS in the Bibliothèque Municipale de Nantes (Collection Labouchère, MS français 674,250). The collection of autographs formed by Pierre-Antoine Labouchère was bequeathed by him to the city of Nantes in 1873.

Ce 18 févr[ier] 1776.

UNE maladie longue et douloureuse,² qui m'ôta l'usage des mains, a été l'unique cause, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, que je n'ai pas pu vous marquer ni en personne ni par écrit l'intérêt extrême que je prends à tout ce qui vous regarde, et la sensibilité dont me pénètre votre rappel.³ Vous n'en doutez pas, je me flatte: vous

1. 'I am' in the copy sent to Mason (see headnote).

1. Adrien-Louis de Bonnières (1735–1806), Comte and (10 May 1776) Duc de

Guines; French ambassador to England 1770–6.

2. See *ante* ca 12 Feb. 1776, n. 3.

3. In late January Guines was recalled from his embassy at London; his letter to