

## TO HERTFORD, Tuesday 12 August 1760

Printed for the first time from the MS now wsl. The MS was sold Sotheby's 13 [14] March 1865 ('another property' with Joseph Cottle Sale), lot 140 to Moffatt; Sotheby's 27 Oct. 1959 (George Moffatt Sale), lot 499, to Maggs, and Maggs to wsl 10 Nov. 1959.

Strawberry Hill, Aug. 12, 1760.

My dear Lord,

**Y**OU will be surprised at a letter from hence while you are thinking me at Wentworth Castle. Alas! I am no more that volatile creature I was! I cannot now tire Lord Beauchamp, and run over Oxford from morning till night!<sup>1</sup> I have taken my degrees under your brother Jack Harris, Professor of Gout—in short, since yesterday sennight I have been laid up with that respectable malady in both feet—My legs, by the help of flannels are grown of a very portly size, and though I cannot guess where I got any flesh to swell, have swelled, till I have been carried to bed by two servants. The pain is now almost gone, and today I walk alone with a stick, but when I shall be able to get out I know not:<sup>2</sup> I trust, time enough to be with you by the twentieth. You will laugh, and so do I, when I don't cry; but my chief satisfaction has been in abusing Temperance and Leanness, who have made such a fool of me, and made me think myself invulnerable and immortal. I find vices are at least honest; *their* consequences one expects—but it is woeful to be as much deceived in one's own virtues as in those of other people. I should as soon have expected to get a bad distemper, by making a vow of chastity, as the gout by the hardiness and regularity of my way of life. My dear Lord, I beg your pardon for abusing your friends the Virtues, but consider I had but one such friend in the world and see how she has served me. 'Tis shocking when one has chosen a mistress for her

1. HW told Montagu, after his return from Oxford, that he 'ferreted from morning to night' and 'fatigued' Lord Beauchamp (MONTAGU i. 288). The same letter mentions some of his discoveries, which are listed in greater detail in *Country Seats* 24–5.

2. Conway wrote from Park Place to the D. of Devonshire 14 Aug., 'I wish for his sake H. Walpole may be able to wait upon you but alas the poor gentleman

has been laid up with the gout, an honour his friends little expected for him, and to which, though I love him, I must say he has as little pretension as any man in England. If he is able he thinks of coming here today by way of trying his wings for a longer flight but doubts much if he shall be able to reach the north, which I believe is a great mortification to him' (Chatsworth MSS, 416/64).