

ugliness and meagreness, to be betrayed with as much impudence as if she was as agreeable as the poor Countess³ in your neighbourhood.

I received a *Gazette Extraordinary* yesterday,⁴ and the bells have been ringing, and the guns going off for a piece of victory; but I think it is not quite allowed. They say our army is retired, and Cassel taken by the French;⁵ but I know nothing certain; I am an old gouty man, that live in my armchair and can't tell how the world passes—I have done with it—Well! What would I take to be first minister, if I had the gout as much as Mr Pitt—I have thought often that his fits were political, now I am persuaded of it. Last Friday I should have flung my standish⁶ at a General Wolfe's head, if he had come to plague me with a plan for taking Quebec. Adieu! all you young creatures.

Yours ever,

H. WALPOLE

From HERTFORD, Thursday 14 August 1760

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Ragley, August 14th 1760.

Dear Horry,

AS I dined today at Lord Archer's¹ I have but a minute to pity your gout and to say that if you are able, as we all most heartily wish, we hope you will be here on the 19th instead of the 20th as first pro-

3. The Countess of Coventry, one of the beautiful Gunning sisters, died 30 Sept. at Croome Court, Worcs, after a long illness. Dr Wall's letter to Selwyn, 8 Aug., describes her condition (J. H. Jesse, *George Selwyn and His Contemporaries*, 1882, i. 173-5).

4. Apparently the *Gazette Extraordinary* 9 August, on the battle of Warburg, 31 July (*ante* 10 Aug. 1760, n. 1).

5. 'Notwithstanding the great advantages just gained over the French, it is reported that they are in possession of the city of Cassel. The French, upon meeting with a resistance from the troops in that

city, immediately fired into it with red-hot balls, which set fire to several houses; upon which Prince Ferdinand sent them orders to surrender the city, rather than have it destroyed by such inhuman proceedings' (*London Chronicle* 9-12 Aug., viii. 150, *sub* 12 Aug.).

6. Inkstand.

1. Umberslade, near Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire. Hertford probably alludes to a tedious dinner which he and HW had once endured there, perhaps in 1751 (*post* 7 April 1765; HW to Montagu 22 July 1751, MONTAGU i. 121).