

nights ago carried the King to Ranelagh³⁷—I suppose next week they will go to Mrs Holman's³⁸—anywhere, so they would not come to the opera and dislodge us. It will be as much as the Duke of Devonshire's good breeding and my passion for Lady Mary Coke can do, to keep the remains of our poor society together; Lord Strafford vows and Lady Mary swears they will not subscribe, unless we can have as good a box as the King's on the nights he goes; they are not content to coo up two pair of stairs over Miss Chudleigh. In short, I am so miserable with losing my Duchess,³⁹ and you and Mr Conway, that I believe if you should be another six weeks without writing to me, I should come to The Hague and scold you in person, for alas! my dear Lady, I have no hopes of seeing you here. Stanley is recalled,⁴⁰ is expected every hour,⁴¹ Bussy goes tomorrow,⁴² and Mr Pitt is so impatient to conquer Mexico, that I don't believe he will stay till my Lord Bristol can be ordered to leave Madrid.⁴³ I tremble lest Mr Conway should not get leave to come⁴⁴—nay, are we sure he would like to ask it? He was so impatient to get to the army, that I should not be surprised if he stayed there till every sutler and woman that follows the camp was come away. You ask me if we are not in admiration of Prince Ferdinand—in truth we have thought very little of him—he may outwit Broglio ten times, and not be half so much talked of, as Lord Talbot's backing his horse down Westminster Hall.⁴⁵ The generality are not struck with anything under a complete victory—if you have a mind to be well with the mob of England, you must be knocked on the head like Wolfe, or bring home as many diamonds as Clive.⁴⁶ We live in a country where so many follies or novelties start forth every day, that we have not time to try a general's capacity by the rules of Polybius.⁴⁷

37. This report was false; see *post* 10 Oct. 1761.

38. Not conclusively identified. The all-inclusive but fashionable assemblies at her house in Park Place provided HW with a subject for jest for several years; see especially MONTAGU i. 126–7 and n. 11 and MANN iv. 142.

39. The Duchess of Grafton, who was abroad (Mary Berry). See MANN v. 537.

40. On 15 Sept. (*ibid.* v. 536 and n. 16).

41. He left Paris 23 Sept. and arrived in London on the 29th (*ibid.* v. 504, n. 5).

42. He sailed from Dover on the 28th (*ante* 25 Sept. 1761, n. 3).

43. As Pitt had demanded 18 Sept., but was overruled (*ibid.*, n. 9).

44. He did not, but remained abroad with the army all winter (Conway to D. of Devonshire 21 Aug., 5 Oct., 17 Dec. 1761, 2 Nov. 1762, Chatsworth MSS, 416/71, 72, 73, 80; MANN v. 549).

45. For more flattering accounts of Talbot's performance see MONTAGU i. 388–9, nn. 27–8.

46. Robert Clive (1725–74), *cr.* (1762) Bn Clive. He had returned to England from India in July 1760 (MANN v. 429 and n. 23).

47. Polybius believed that the statesman