

TO LADY AILESURY 27 SEPTEMBER 1761

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I have hardly left room for my obligations, to your Ladyship for my commissions at Amsterdam, to Mrs Sally⁴⁸ for her teapots, which are likely to stay so long at The Hague that I fear they will have begot a whole set of china; and to Miss Conway and Lady George⁴⁹ for thinking of me—pray assure them of my rethinking—I don't know how to say anything to the last word of your letter—my per-roquet⁵⁰ is dead! Adieu! dear Madam; don't you think we had better write oftener and shorter?

Yours most faithfully,

H. W.

TO CONWAY, ca Tuesday 6 October 1761

Missing: 'I wrote you an account last week of his [Pitt's] resignation' (HW to Conway *post* 12 Oct. 1761).

should learn from history to avoid predictable disasters and to cope with the unpredictable strokes of Fortune. 'That men, in the infirmity of human nature, should fall into misfortunes which defy calculation, is the fault not of the sufferers but of Fortune, and of those who do the wrong; but that they should from mere levity, and with their eyes open, thrust themselves upon the most serious disasters is without dispute the fault of the victims themselves. Therefore it is that pity and sympathy and assistance await those whose failure is due to Fortune: reproach and rebuke from all men of sense those who have only their own folly to thank for it' (Polybius, *The Histories*, ed. E. S. Shuckburgh and F. W.

Walbank, Bloomington, Ind., 1962, Bk II, 7). He says that a man's virtue should be judged 'in the hour of brilliant success or conspicuous reverse. For the true test of a perfect man is the power of bearing with spirit and dignity violent changes of fortune' (*ibid.* Bk VI, 1).

48. Lady Ailesbury's woman (Mary Berry).

49. Lady George Lennox. Her husband, brother of Lady Ailesbury's son-in-law the D. of Richmond, was with the army in Germany as Lt-Col. of the 33d Foot (Namier and Brooke iii. 35).

50. The parakeet is also mentioned to Montagu 14 Oct. 1760 and 31 March 1761 (MONTAGU i. 306, 350) and to Strafford 5 July 1761 (CHUTE 308).