

Lord Holderness is to be at the head of this procession.⁴ He returned here three or four days ago from his tour through the southern provinces.⁵ Both him and Lady Holderness⁶ dined with us yesterday; they dined with us again today, and his Lordship attends us this evening to the manufacture at Sève and from thence to Versailles.

Lady Hertford is magnificently prepared for the ceremony; her own dress is ordered by the Duchess of Nivernois, and is beautiful; her pages, *officiers* or men out [of] livery, with the servants in livery, are all dressed for the occasion, and it is nobly done. Do not think my head is turned and that I am grown so young as to forget I have thirteen children; I mean to act with all proper economy, but since I have undertaken this commission I will not in any instance suffer disgrace from it though it is an expensive one.

The Maréchale⁷ goes this evening likewise to Versailles. She has attended Lady Hertford upon her visits and is, with the Duchess of Nivernois and Madame de Gisors,⁸ quite interested that everything should go right. I must not upon this occasion omit doing justice to the Nivernois family; their attention to Lady Hertford and the trouble they have undertaken by choice on her account, will sufficiently contradict every bad impression that may have been conceived in England on their indifference of behaviour to the nation.⁹ Lady Hertford begins to summon all her powers in the French language and will do very well. She speaks it with modesty and not with impropriety, and the French are satisfied to understand her. If she presumed to dictate in better language she might be worse heard,¹⁰ and yet she has spirit enough for her situation. My son and

4. The custom of gentlemen accompanying an ambassador's wife at her presentation is not mentioned in the protocol for the ceremony in Jean Dumont, Baron de Carlsroon, *Cérémonial diplomatique des cours de l'Europe*, ed. Rousset, Amsterdam, 1739, i. 49-50, 57-8 (*Corps universelle diplomatique, Supplément*, Vol. IV), though it gives directions that her other servants (discussed in the next paragraph) proceed with her in the procession from the entrance chamber to the antechamber of the Queen's reception chamber (i. 49).

5. He and Lady Holderness had been

on the Continent since late July (*St James's Chronicle* 21-3 July).

6. She subsequently caused something of a furore by being presented to the French Court, thus defying the usual custom of English ladies; see *post* 7 Dec., 16 Dec. 1763 *bis*.

7. Mme de Mirepoix (*ante* 28 Oct. 1763).

8. The widowed daughter of Mme de Nivernais (*ante* 11 Nov. 1763, n. 9).

9. For the source of this impression, see *ante* 18 Oct. 1763, n. 8.

10. Probably a reference to the Duchess of Bedford, who had been unpopular in France (*Leinster Corr.* i. 397).