

## TO CONWAY, Thursday 23 June 1774

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Strawberry Hill, June 23, 1774.

I HAVE nothing to say—which is the best reason in the world for writing; for one must have a great regard for anybody one writes to, when one begins a letter neither on ceremony nor business. You are seeing armies,<sup>1</sup> who are always in fine order and great spirits when they are in cold blood: I am sorry you thought it worthwhile to realize what I should have thought you could have seen in your mind's eye. However, I hope you will be amused and pleased with viewing heroes, both in their autumn and their bud. Vienna will be a new sight;<sup>2</sup> so will the Austrian eagle and its two heads.<sup>3</sup> I should like *seeing* too, if any fairy would present me with a chest that would fly up into the air by touching a peg, and transport me whither I pleased in an instant: but roads, and inns, and dirt are terrible drawbacks on my curiosity. I grow so old, or so indolent, that I scarce stir from hence; and the dread of the gout makes me almost as much a prisoner, as a fit of it. News I know none, if there is any. The papers tell me the City was to present a petition to the King against the Quebec Bill yesterday; and I suppose they will tell me tomorrow whether it was presented.<sup>4</sup> The King's Speech<sup>5</sup> tells

1. Mr Conway was now on a tour of military curiosity through Flanders, Germany, Prussia, and part of Hungary (HW). His tour was prompted by an invitation from Sir Robert Murray Keith (*ante* 27 March 1764, n. 1), envoy to Vienna 1772-92, to visit him there (Keith, *Memoirs and Correspondence*, ed. Mrs Gillespie Smyth, 1849, ii. 5-12); he left London 8 June, accompanied by David Scott (d. 1792). Capt.-Lt in the Royal Artillery (*Army Lists* 1775, p. 171; *Scots Magazine* 1792, liv. 413), who kept a record of their travels in his MS 'Journal of a Military Tour of the Continent with Gen. Conway 8 June - 12 Nov. 1774' (Bodl. MS Eng. Hist. C 282); see Appendix 9. Conway wrote to Hertford from Brussels 20 June (MS now wsl), describing their itinerary thus far: they had visited garisons, fortifications and battlefields at

Dunkirk, Cassel, St-Omer, Arras, Douai, Lille, Fontenoy, etc.

2. Conway was there 31 July - 14 Aug. (Appendix 9); see *post* 18 Aug. 1774 and n. 3.

3. I.e., Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II, who were joint Empress and Emperor of Austria.

4. 'The bill for the future government of Quebec [for making more effectual provision for the government of the province of Quebec] having passed both Houses, lies also ready for the royal assent [22 June]; but previous to his Majesty's going to the House of Peers, a petition [printed GM 1774, xlv. 247-8] will be presented to him by the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and commons of the City of London, relative to the said bill' (*Daily Adv.* 22 June). Among other things, the bill provided for toleration of Roman Catholics,