

sand Baronesses may be ever so angry, I venture to prophesy that we shall make but a very foolish figure, whenever we are so lucky as to obtain a peace—and posterity, that may have prejudices of its own, will still take the liberty to pronounce that its ancestors were a woeful set of politicians from the year 1774 to—I wish I knew when.

The Duke of Ancaster¹⁴ is dead, and Lord Bolinbroke.¹⁵ If I might advise I would recommend Mr Burrel¹⁶ to command the fleet in the room of Sir Charles Hardy¹⁷—the fortune of the Burrells is powerful enough to baffle calculation.¹⁸ Mr Burrel is Lord Great Chamberlain-Consort of England.¹⁹ Good night, Madam.

PS. I have not written to Mr Conway since this day sevensnight,²⁰ not having a teaspoonful of news to send him. I will beg your Ladyship to tell him so.

FROM LADY AILESBURY, ca Wednesday 21 July 1779

Missing; answered *post* 23 July 1779.

14. Robert Bertie (1756–8 July 1779), 4th D. of Ancaster, 1778. See MANN viii. 498–9.

15. 'On Thursday night [8 July] died of the dead palsy . . . Viscount Bolingbroke' (*Public Adv.* 10 July). This was a false report; however, he was ill, apparently of a 'palsy upon the brain,' and was confined in a madhouse in 1780 (OSSORY ii. 107, n. 9; MANN ix. 11).

16. Peter Burrell (1754–1820), Kt, 1781, 2d Bt, 1787; cr. (1796) Bn Gwydir.

17. (ca 1714–80), Kt, 1755; Adm., 1770; M.P. See *ante* 16 June 1779, n. 6.

18. See MANN viii. 499.

19. Upon the death of Ancaster his hereditary office of Lord Great Chamberlain and barony of Willoughby de Eresby fell into abeyance between his two sisters, the elder of whom, Lady Priscilla Barbara Elizabeth Bertie (1761–1828), had married Burrell on 23 Feb. 1779. By patent dated 18 March 1780, she was declared to be Baroness Willoughby of Eresby, while in May 1781 it was declared that the office of Lord Great Chamberlain was to be shared between her and her sister; on 14 Aug. 1781 Burrell was appointed Deputy Lord Great Chamberlain.

20. HW's earlier letter is missing.