

FROM HERTFORD, Sunday 14 January 1781

Printed for the first time from a photostat of BM Add. MSS 23219, f. 127. HW wrote the news in this letter to Lady Ossory on 14 Jan. (OSSORY ii. 269) and to Mann on 18 Jan. (MANN ix. 115-16).

Address: Honourable Hor. Walpole.

Sunday.

Dear Horry,

I BELIEVE your mind may be perfectly easy. The French prisoners consider the attempt as quite over, since they did not succeed; if they had, the Chevalier de Luxembourg¹ was to have followed them with five of the best battalions in France.² The ship³ in which my brother and son⁴ were was in the worst weather imaginable for two nights, and in great danger. The wind forced them to Plymouth,⁵ and they fear the cutter which sailed from Portsmouth is

1. Anne Paul Emmanuel Sigismond de Montmorency-Luxembourg (b. 1742), younger son of the Duc d'Olonne, called 'le Chevalier de Montmorency-Luxembourg'; Lt-Col. in the Régiment Royal, cavalerie; captain of a compagnie des gardes du corps du Roi, 1767; Prince de Luxembourg, 1781; maréchal de camp; chevalier du Saint-Esprit, 1788 (La Chenaye-Desbois xiv. 394; Comte de Colleville and F. Saint-Christo, *Les Ordres du Roi*, [1925], pp. 49, 393; *Répertoire . . . de la Gazette de France*, ed. de Granges de Surgères, 1902-6, iii. 683). He did not intend to lead the expedition himself; see M. Perrot, *Deux expéditions insulaires françaises. Surprise de Jersey en 1781*, 1929, pp. 53, 56, and C. Hippeau, *Le gouvernement de Normandie au xviii^e et au xviii^e siècle*, Caen, 1863-9, Pt I, ii. 301-8, 336-7. Conway wrote Sir Stanier Porten 11 Feb. 1781 that among the papers captured from the French were 'the instructions of the Count de Vaux relative to embarkations and descents; the letter from Paris apparently of the Chevalier de Luxembourg to the Baron de Rullecour, though without signature; the journal of the Baron de Rullecour, and the *dernières réflexions* of the same' (S.P. 47/9). In *Last Journals* ii. 344, sub 9 Jan., HW mentions this 'letter from the Chevalier de Luxem-

bourg, expressing the eagerness of the French King for the expedition.'

2. The components of the second expedition which was ready to embark if de Rullecour made a successful landing, are listed in Perrot, *op. cit.* 125-6, 129; see also *ante* 11 Jan. 1781, n. 7. The expedition was ordered to be abandoned by the Duc d'Harcourt 17 Jan. (see Hippeau, *op. cit.* ii. 306-18; Perrot, *op. cit.* 123-8, 132; MANN ix. 115).

3. The *Emeralde* frigate.

4. Lt-Col. Robert Seymour-Conway (*ante* 8 Jan. 1781, n. 5). He delivered Conway's letter of 11 Jan. to Hillsborough, which is endorsed, 'R. 14 by Lt-Col. Conway' (S.P. 47/9), brought the news of Conway's safety to HW on 14 Jan., and called on him again the next day to tell him about the voyage (OSSORY ii. 269-70).

5. Conway wrote Hillsborough 11 Jan. from Plymouth, 'Though I have nothing more material to inform your Lordship of than the arrival here of his Majesty's ship *Emeralde* in which I embarked, I think it my duty to trouble your Lordship with a line for that purpose. It was impossible for us to make the islands of Guernsey or Jersey with the winds and weather we had though Capt. Marshal I am certain from his great diligence and activity would have done anything he