

ations may be of vast importance. to a mind possessed by humanity the prospect of carnage & destruction is truly afflicting! To our trade this is ruin, and there can be no doubt of a very serious diminution in the price of furs in consequence of this general war, into which, pacific as we are at present, we may be actors before it is over. The people here all execrate the Empress's attack on the liberties of Poland, and very large sums are subscribed to support them: they are not well pleased at Mr Pitt for not assisting them. With regard to France the people are more divided, every body wishes them free, but think they have gone too far. One thing you may rely on, that a spirit of reformation, some call it innovation, is secretly making its way in every country in Europe. The liberty of the press is diffusing knowledge among the mass of the people, even in Spain, Portugal, & Italy, where the press indeed can hardly be said to be free, & the great abuse of religion in those countries has opened the eyes of those who were *superstitiously blind!* We hear nothing particular about the posts. An ambassador is just arrived from America, but not for any *special* purpose that yet appears. Mr & Mrs Mercer were well by a letter I had lately from him at Dublin barracks. Mr & Mrs Meredith spent the day with me not long ago. they were well a few days ago when I had a letter from him. There is no domestic occurrence worth notice. Lord North²⁶ (or rather Earl of Guilford, but he is better known by the former title) is dead, & at the same time Gen^l Burgoyne²⁷ made his final exit from this stage. Peace is restored in India & Lord Cornwallis is coming home.

²⁶ Frederick North, second Earl of Guilford (1732-92). His entire career was devoted to politics, in which he achieved a high degree of eminence. He is best known, perhaps, for the policies which made the American Revolution inevitable and resulted in the loss by England of the American colonies. He died Aug. 5, 1792. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

²⁷ John Burgoyne (1722-92) entered the army as a cornet in 1740, although not until 1758 did he engage in actual military service. In 1768 he entered Parliament, where he achieved some political prominence. Late in 1774 he was sent to America to reinforce General Gage, returning to England in the autumn of 1775. The following spring he was sent to Canada as second in command to Sir Guy Carleton, there to participate in an attack on the colonies from the north. This campaign proved abortive, and Burgoyne returned to England, disgusted at Carleton's inaction. He