

antique eagle<sup>10</sup> that has lately been found at Rome in the highest preservation, and as far superior to that of Benv[en]uto Cellini which Ganimede keeps,<sup>11</sup> as that is to the worst that could be made at Hide Park Corner.<sup>12</sup> Cardinal Albani is in love with it, and says it would be a fine present for the new Emperor, but that he would not know its value; he thinks it too dear. The demand is 250 crowns,<sup>13</sup> but Mr Chute believes, in case the Cardinal will not have it (as it was he [who] brought him acquainted with it) that he could get it for 100 zecchins<sup>14</sup> ready money. It treads<sup>15</sup> a sepulchral stone with its inscriptions and bas reliefs entire.<sup>16</sup> Mr Chute thinks you might indulge your taste for antiquities at such an expense. All I am afraid is, that your orders will come late, in case you would have it. I have not time to say half Mr Chute writes in its praise, but by his accounts both the eagle and its pedestal are complete.

The day after tomorrow I begin my *conversazioni* in the garden, for which the *dame* are very impatient. Adieu, my dear child. I write to you in infinite hurry, having many dispatches to *distend* yet. Believe me ever most affectionately yours,

H. M.

Your gesses are embarked, and perhaps I may have the bills of lading to send you here enclosed.<sup>17</sup>

10. A marble eagle 'found in the gardens of Boccapadugli within the precinct of Caracalla's baths at Rome in the year 1742' ('Des. of SH,' *Works* ii. 463). HW bought it for £50 (his priced 'Des. of SH'), and it became the chief ornament of the Gallery at SH, and one of HW's most prized possessions, so that an engraving of this 'glorious fowl' rests on the table beside HW's figure in Reynolds's portrait of him. The eagle was sold SH xxiii. 86 to Lord Leicester for £210. See DU DEFFAND i. 405, n. 4. In his priced 'Des. of SH,' HW notes that he was offered £1,000 for the eagle.

11. Benvenuto Cellini restored an ancient fragmentary statue of Ganymede for the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and executed a statue of an eagle to go with it. The group was kept in the Uffizi (*Catalogue of the Royal Uffizi Gallery in Florence*, Florence, 1897, p. 56; *Life of Benvenuto*

*Cellini*, tr. J. A. Symonds, New York, 1906, ii. 246, 253, 256).

12. At Hyde Park Corner in London 'in the lane leading from Piccadilly to Tyburn' stood Bushnell's and other establishments where mortuary monuments were made and sold (HW's *Anecdotes of Painting, Works* iii. 383-5; *London Past and Present* ii. 255).

13. 250 Roman crowns would be equivalent to about £63 (*ante* 5 March 1743 NS).

14. About £50.

15. This word is not clear in the MS.

16. 'A Roman altar, decorated with masques of satyrs, centre Medusa head, and festoons of flowers and fruit, beautifully sculptured with noble eagles, in high relief, and a curious old inscription in the centre' sold SH xxiii. 86; HW bought the pedestal for £25 (his priced 'Des. of SH').

17. Though they are now missing, the bills were enclosed in this letter when HW received it (*post* 26 July 1745 OS).