write but a few lines at a time, and must rest every quarter of an hour; so that the expedition with which I used to dispatch my letters is quite gone, and they are become a pain instead of an amusement.

You know to be sure, Madam, that the peace is arrived.[2] I cannot express how glad I am. I care not a straw what the terms are, which I believe I know more imperfectly than anybody in London. I am not apt to love details—My wish was to have peace, and the next, to see America secure of its liberty. Whether it will make good use of it, is another point. It has an opportunity, that never occurred in the world before, of being able to select the best parts of every known constitution—but I suppose it will not, as too prejudiced against royalty to adopt it even as a corrective of aristocracy and democracy; though *our* system has proved that every evil had better have two enemies to contend with than one, as the third may turn the scale on every emergence; but when the one defeats the only other, it is decisive. In short it is necessary there should be government, but that government should be checked as much as those it controls; for one man, or a few, or a multitude, are still men, and consequently not fit to be trusted with unlimited power. The misfortune is, that men cannot be trusted with the power of doing right, without having the power of doing wrong too, and the more you limit them, the more they pant for greater latitude. However, the more they are limited, the farther they have to go before they acquire the boundless latitude they long for. These are some of my visions, which the experience of all ages and countries have shown are such as scarce ever have been realized.

Saturday, 26th.[3]

I had written the above on Wednesday; but on seeing our Lord on Thursday,[4] did not finish it. Well, Madam, you must hate only

2. Unofficial notice reached London on 21 Jan. that the preliminary articles of peace between Great Britain and France and Great Britain and Spain had been signed 'on Saturday the 18th' (Grantham to George III 21 Jan., *Corr. Geo. III* vi. 217); they were signed at Versailles on 20 Jan. 1783 (articles with the United States had been signed 30 Nov. 1782); the official courier did not arrive in London until Thursday evening, 23 Jan. See HW to Mann 23 Jan. 1783; *Last Journals* ii. 476; *London Chronicle* 23–25 Jan., liii. 81. For the text, see ibid. 28–30 Jan., liii. 97–9; *Journals of the House of Commons* xxxix. 113–18, *sub* 27 Jan.

3. Saturday was the 25th.

4. Parliament had met, after the recess, on Tuesday, 21 Jan. (*Journals of the House of Commons* xxxix. 39).