the Dutch.[5] The French and Spaniards are our good friends, and you may *lawfully* speak well even of the Americans, without being called a rebel and republican, as I was by Marie Alacoque.[6] I know few of the terms of the preliminaries, but that Gibraltar, or Rock-Elliot,[7] is still in the parish of St Martin's in the Fields.[8] When I do learn all the articles, I intend to like all, for I must be so fair as to say that they will be better than I expected we should ever obtain. Nay, if the French had not been as great blunderbusses as we, they might have reduced us much lower long ago. If Ireland has slipped out of our yoke too,[9] the French have no title to boast, who might have had it themselves, if they had thought of it before the Volunteers.[10] Now I hope it will be a perpetual thorn in their sides.

As one is always open to new calamities on the cessation of the old, I now expect that one shall be robbed and murdered two or three times a day, aye, and a night, more than ever, on disbanding the army —and then we shall have such swarms of French, yes, and insolent ones too! What is that to me? Oh! a great deal, Madam; they will come to see Strawberry, perhaps have recommendations, and I must ask them to dine! Is that nothing to a poor superannuated invalid?

I know no news—nay, news are but beginning; news out of Parliament-tide are fruits out of season, have not the true flavour. Besides, when Lord Ossory is in town, I am like a vice-chancellor, who is nobody, when his principal is on the spot—I shall therefore not trespass any longer on his office, but wish your Ladyship good night.

5. With whom no preliminaries had been signed, 'only a suspension of arms' (*Last Journals* ii. 476).

6. Lady Mary Coke; a comparison with St Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647–90). See MASON i. 402 and n. 23.

7. HW uses the phrase also in his letter to Mann 23 Jan. 1782. For Elliot's defence of Gibraltar, see *ante* 1 Oct. 1782.

8. See *ante* 26 Oct. 1781, n. 36.

9. The repeal in 1782 of the Declaratory Act of 6 Geo. I (1719), c. 5, not having satisfied the Irish, Townshend, the home secretary, moved, 22 Jan., for leave to bring in a Bill 'for removing and preventing all doubts which have arisen, or might arise, concerning the exclusive rights of the Parliament and courts of Ireland, in matters of legislation and judicature, and for preventing any writ of error, or appeal, from any of his Majesty's courts in that kingdom, from being received, heard, and adjudged in any of his Majesty's courts in the kingdom of Great Britain' (*Journals of the House of Commons* xxxix. 43; Cobbett, *Parl. Hist.* xxiii. 328, 322–42, 730–57). This Renunciation Bill (23 Geo. III, c. 28) was passed.

10. Several companies of Volunteers (First Armagh Volunteers, Belfast Volunteer Company, etc.) had sent addresses to Lord Beauchamp asking for 'a British law, that Great Britain renounces forever, all claim to bind this kingdom, externally or internally, in any case whatever' (*London Chronicle* 18–21 Jan., liii. 68). Similar addresses appear ibid. 21 Jan.–1 Feb. 1783, liii. 75–6, 84, 95, 109.