simply to contain any diversity of attention to puny objects. Sir Isaac Newton, they say, was so absorbed in his pursuits, as to be something of a changeling in worldly matters—and when he descended to earth and conjecture, he was no phenomenon.[11]

I will alight from my altitudes, and confine myself to our own anthill. Have you seen, Madam, the horrible mandate of the Emperor to General Murray?[12] Think of that insect's threatening to sacrifice thousands of his fellow pismires to what he calls *his dignity*! the dignity of a mite, that, supposing itself as superior as an earwig, meditates preventing hosts of its own species[13] from enjoying the happiness and the moment of existence that has been allotted to them in an innumerable succession of ages!—but while scorn, contempt, hatred, kindle against the imperial insect, admiration crowds in for the brave pismires who so pathetically deprecate their doom, yet seem resigned to it! I think I never read anything more noble, more touching, than the remonstrance of the Deputies to Prince Kaunitz.[14]

11. Cf. Bishop Atterbury on Newton: 'Indeed in the whole air of his face and make, there was nothing of that penetrating sagacity which appears in his composures . . . I see M. Fontenelle [in his *éloge* of Newton] speaks warily as to the MSS relating to Antiquity, History, and Divinity, which Sir Isaac left . . . I fear . . . that he will be found to have been a great master only in that one way to which he was by nature inclined. It is enough for us poor limited creatures, if we remarkably excel in any one branch of knowledge' (Atterbury to Thiriot in Atterbury's *Epistolary Correspondence*, 1783–4, i. 180–1, a passage marked by HW in his copy; Hazen, *Cat. of HW's Lib.* 2791; now WSL).

12. Joseph Jacob Murray (1718–1802), Graf Murray de Melgum, officer in the Austrian army; commanding general in the Netherlands, 1780, and governor of the Austrian Netherlands 1785–7 (Constant von Wurzbach, *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*, Vienna, 1856–91, xix. 467–70). On 15 Aug. 1787 'the States of Austrian Flanders appeared before' the Emperor 'to justify their conduct . . . His Majesty's answer was stern, ungracious, and unconciliating.' His orders of 16 Aug. list seven stipulations, the first of which is 'that in all the provinces of the Low Countries everything should be restored to the footing on which it stood before the first of April of this year.' 'My dignity renders all these preliminary re-establishments absolutely indispensable, . . . But if it shall happen against all expectation, that any one shall dare to oppose this restitution . . . I authorize you . . . to employ for this purpose all the means of authority which I have confided in you, and which, but with much regret, though I find it to be necessary, I am obliged to augment as far as the occasion shall require' (*London Chronicle* 4–6 Sept., lxii. 228; GM 1787, lvii pt ii. 825, the translation differing slightly).

13. MS reads 'specie'; cf. OED, *sub* specie, 76.

14. Wenzel Anton Kaunitz (1711–94), Graf von Rietberg, Fürst Kaunitz; chancellor and chief minister 1753–92, under Maria Theresa, Joseph II, and Leopold II (MANN i. 37 n. 2 *et passim*). The memorial to Kaunitz, which had no immediate effect on Joseph II (although he later relaxed his demands), urged Joseph not 'to revenge himself' for 'his insulted dignity' (*London Chronicle* 4–6 Sept., lxii. 228; GM 1787, lvii. pt ii. 826).