

for a peace, they have nothing to go to market with but Minorca. In short, if they cannot strike some desperate blow in this island or Ireland,⁷ they are undone: the loss of 20,000 men to do us some mischief, would be cheap. I should even think Madame Pompadour in danger of being torn to pieces, if they did not make some attempt. Madame Maintenon, not half so unpopular, mentions in one of her letters her unwillingness to trust her niece Mlle Aumale⁸ on the road, for fear of some such accident.⁹ You will smile perhaps at all this reasoning and pedantry; but it tends to this—If desperation should send the French somewhere, and the wind should force them to your coast, which I do not suppose their object, and you should be out of the way, you know what your enemies would say; and, strange as it is, even you have been proved to have enemies. My dear Sir, think of this! Wolfe,¹⁰ as I am convinced, has fallen a sacrifice to his rash blame of you.¹¹ If I understand anything in the world, his letter that came on Sunday¹² said this: 'Quebec is impregnable; it is flinging away the lives of brave men to attempt it. I am in the situation of Conway at Rochfort; but having blamed him, I must do what I now see he was in the right to see was wrong, and yet what he would have done; and as I am commander, which he was not, I have the melancholy power of doing what he was prevented doing.'¹³ Poor

7. HW thought Ireland more likely to be their destination (MANN v. 336).

8. Marie-Jeanne d'Aumale (1683–1756), dau. of Jacques d'Aumale, Seigneur de Mareuil in Picardy; educated at St-Cyr and Madame de Maintenon's secretary and companion 1705–15, although not her 'niece' (Comte d'Haussonville and G. Hantoux, *Souvenirs sur Madame de Maintenon*, [1902–?1904], i. pp. x–xi, xv, xciii).

9. Mme de Maintenon wrote to Mlle de la Viefville, Abbess of Gomerfontaine, 23 Feb. 1709: 'Vous allez être bien fâchée de n'avoir point Mlle d'Aumale: mais il nous a pris, à elle et à moi, une crainte de quelque aventure désagréable sur le grand chemin: la famine met le peuple dans un mouvement, auquel il ne se faut pas exposer: le mal est à un point à ne pouvoir durer: et j'espère que les soins, que le roi prend pour faire trouver du blé, ramèneront la tranquillité' (*Lettres de Madame de Maintenon*, Amsterdam, 1756, iii. 84;

HW's copy, with marginalia throughout, now WSL, is Hazen, *Cat. of HW's Lib.*, No. 1280).

10. James Wolfe (1727 – 13 Sept. 1759), Maj.-Gen., 1759, the hero of Quebec.

11. Wolfe, who had been fiercely critical of the conduct of the Rochefort expedition, had appeared as a witness against Conway and Mordaunt at the inquiry in Nov. 1757 and as a witness for the prosecution in Mordaunt's subsequent court martial (MANN v. 267, n. 5).

12. To Pitt; it was dated 2 Sept.; extracts from it were printed in a *London Gazette Extraordinary* 16 Oct. Several paragraphs were so despondent that they were ordered to be 'omitted in the paper to be published' (Newcastle to Hardwicke 15 Oct., BM Add. MSS 32897, f. 88), and even those printed were pessimistic enough to give the impression that the siege would fail (MANN v. 336).

13. HW's imaginative interpretation of