

upon these islands, and is frightened lest we should not be so well prepared to repel invasions as to make them; he says, 'What will it avail us if we gain the whole world and lose our own soul?'

I am here alone, Madam, and know nothing to tell you; I came from town on Saturday for the worst cold I ever had in my life, and what I care less to own even to myself, a cough. I hope Lord Chesterfield will not speak more truth in what I have quoted, than in his assertion, that one need not cough if one did not please. It has pulled me extremely, and you may believe I do not look very plump, when I am more emaciated than usual. However, I have taken James's powder<sup>8</sup> for four nights, and have found great benefit from it, and if Miss Conway<sup>9</sup> does not come back with *soixante et douze quartiers*,<sup>10</sup> and the hauteur of a landgravine, I think I shall still be able to run down the precipices at Park Place with her—this is to be understood, supposing that we have any summer. Yesterday was the first moment that did not feel like Thule: not a glimpse of spring or green, except a miserable almond-tree, half opening one bud, like my Lord Powerscourt's<sup>11</sup> eye.

It will be warmer, I hope, by the King's Birthday,<sup>12</sup> or the old ladies will catch their deaths. There is a court-dress to be instituted (to thin the Drawing-Rooms) stiff-bodied gowns, and bare shoulders. What dreadful discoveries will be made both on fat and lean! I recommend to you the idea of Mrs Cavendish,<sup>13</sup> when half-stark; and I might fill the rest of my paper with such images, but your imagination will supply them; and you shall excuse me though I

8. HW's favourite remedy, the fever powder and cure-all of Dr Robert James (1705-76) (COLE i. 337, n. 1). HW was soon to suffer his third major attack of the gout; see *post* 20 May 1762; MONTAGU ii. 29, 31.

9. Who was with her parents at Osnabrück, winter quarters of the English infantry (*Operations of the Allied Army*, p. 241).

10. *Quartier* here signifies 'chaque degré de descendance dans une famille noble, tant du côté paternel que du côté maternel' (Littré, *Dictionnaire*, 1962, vi. 672). HW is perhaps alluding to a passage in Chapter XV of *Candide* (published 1759; HW's copy Hazen, *Cat. of HW's Lib.*, No. 1307): 'Vous, insolent! répondit le baron, vous auriez l'impudence d'épouser

ma sœur, qui a soixante-douze quartiers.'

11. Edward Wingfield (1729-64), 2d Vct Powerscourt; M.P. Stockbridge 1756-61.

12. 4 June.

13. Elizabeth Cavendish (d. 1779), m. (1732) Richard Chandler, later Cavendish (SELWYN 270, n. 13). HW, in a letter to Lady Hervey, 3 Oct. 1765, refers to the 'more' than 'common size' of Mrs Cavendish (MORE 53), and in his copy (now in the New York Public Library) of a satiric print published 2 July 1772 by J. Brotherton, entitled 'Masquerade Scene, Kensington Gardens,' identifies her as the enormously fat woman (who is a sailor in disguise) pursuing a young woman (*ibid.*, n. 18). HW jokes about her size also *post* 17 June 1771.