

shall be kept there till the general election.⁸ It has rained this whole month, and we have got another inundation. The Thames is as broad as your Danube, and all my meadows are under water. Lady Browne⁹ and I, coming last Sunday night from Lady Blandford's, were in a piteous plight.¹⁰ The ferry-boat¹¹ was turned round by the current, and carried to Isleworth. Then we ran against the piers of our new bridge,¹² and the horses were frightened. Luckily my cicis-bea was a Catholic, and screamed to so many saints, that some of them at the nearest alehouse came and saved us, or I should have had no more gout, or what I dreaded I should; for I concluded we should be carried ashore somewhere, and be forced to wade through the mud up to my middle. So you see one may wrap one's self up in flannel and be in danger, without visiting all the armies on the face of the globe, and putting the immortality of one's chaise to the proof.

I am ashamed of sending you but three sides of smaller paper in answer to seven large¹³—but what can I do? I see nothing, know nothing, do nothing. My castle is finished,¹⁴ I have nothing new to read, I am tired of writing, I have no new or old bit for my printer.¹⁵ I have only black hoods around me;¹⁶ or, if I go to town, the family-party¹⁷ in Grosvenor Street. One trait will give you a sample of how I pass my time, and made me laugh, as it put me in mind of you, at least as it was a fit of absence, much more likely to have happened to you than to me. I was playing at eighteen-penny tredille with the Duchess of Newcastle and Lady Browne, and certainly not much interested in the game. I cannot recollect nor conceive what I was thinking of, but I pushed the cards very gravely to the Duchess, and

8. The two leading families in Montgomeryshire were the Wynns of Wynnstay and the Herberts of Powis Castle, and in the 1774 election Sir Watkin Williams Wynn supported the candidacy of his cousin, Watkin Williams, the incumbent, against that of William Mostyn Owen, put forward by Lady Powis; after a bitter campaign Owen was returned 14 Oct. by a vote of 700 to 624 (Namier and Brooke i. 466, iii. 242, 644, 671; see also *Collections . . . Relating to Montgomeryshire*, 1875, viii. 8–13).

9. Frances Sheldon (1714–90), m. 1 (1736) Henry Fermor; m. 2 Sir George Browne, 3d Bt, 1751; HW's correspondent (OSSORY ii. 37, n. 26).

10. See HW to Craufurd 26 Sept. 1774.

11. From Richmond to Twickenham.

12. Under construction to take the place of the ferry; see *ante* 23 June 1774 and n. 12.

13. Missing.

14. HW was to add the 'Beauclerk Tower' to the house in 1776 (W. S. Lewis, 'Genesis of Strawberry Hill,' *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, 1934, v pt i. 82).

15. The printing of the *Description of . . . Strawberry Hill* had been completed ca July, and nothing more was printed till the following June (COLE i. 338; HW's *Journal of the Printing Office at Strawberry Hill*, ed. Toynbee, 1923, p. 17).

16. 'By age and situation I live at this time of year with nothing but old women' (HW to Craufurd 26 Sept. 1774).

17. Lord Hertford's.