

PS. If you ever hear from, or write to, such a person as Lady A., pray tell her she is worse to me in point of correspondence than ever you said I was to you,<sup>36</sup> and that she sends me everything but letters.

### TO LADY AILESBUURY, Sunday 27 September 1761

Printed from the MS now WSL; first printed, with omissions, *Works* v. 555-8, and in full Toynbee v. 117-21 and *Supp.* ii. 122-3. For the history of the MS see *ante* 23 Aug. 1760; it was marked by HW for inclusion in *Works*.

Strawberry Hill, Sept. 27, 1761.

**Y**OU are a mean mercenary woman: if you did not want histories of weddings and coronations, and had not jobs to be executed about muslins and a bit of china and counterband goods,<sup>1</sup> one should never hear of you. When you don't want a body, you can frisk about with greffiers and burgomasters, and be as merry in a dyke as my Lady Frog herself. The moment your curiosity is agog, or your cambric seized, you recollect a good cousin in England, and as folks said two hundred years ago, begin to write *upon the knees of your heart*.<sup>2</sup> Well! I am a sweet-tempered creature, I forgive you; I have already writ to a little friend in the Custom House,<sup>3</sup> and will try what can be done; though by Mr Amyand's<sup>4</sup> report to the Duchess of Richmond, I fear your case is desperate. For the genealogies, I have turned over all my books to no purpose; I can meet with no Lady Howard that married a Carey, nor a Lady Seymour that married a Caufield.

the Haymarket, while the Prince of Wales and a large group of nobility were supporting another company in opposition at Lincoln's Inn Fields; see John, Lord Hervev, *Memoirs*, ed. Sedgwick, New York, 1963, pp. 42-3.

<sup>36</sup> Conway in letters of 27 July, 21 Aug., and 5 Oct. to the D. of Devonshire complained of the slowness of the mails and the 'idleness' of his friends (Chatsworth MSS, 416/70, 71, 72).

<sup>1</sup> As HW to Lady Ailesbury *post* 10 Oct. in conjunction with this letter makes clear, some cloth or clothing that Lady Ailesbury had sent to England, probably for her daughter the Ds of Richmond, had been seized as contraband.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

<sup>3</sup> HW describes him *post* 10 Oct. as 'one of the most sensible and experienced men in the Custom House.' The letter is missing, but it may have been addressed to Benjamin Scott (?d. before Nov. 1761), Deputy Collector of the Customs Inward for the Port of London, in which HW held a sinecure (*Court and City Register* 1761, p. 123).

<sup>4</sup> Claudius Amyand (1718-74), M.P. Tregony 1747-54, Sandwich 1754-6; undersecretary of state 1750-6; commissioner of the customs 1756-65; receiver of land taxes for London and Middlesex 1765-74 (MONTAGU i. 138, n. 7, corrected by Namier and Brooke ii. 20).