

TO LORD LYTTTELTON, Sunday 25 June 1758

Printed from *Memoirs and Correspondence of George, Lord Lyttelton*, ed. Robert Phillimore, 1845, ii. 576–7, where the letter (misdated 'June 20th 1758') was first printed. Reprinted, Cunningham iii. 145 (closing and signature omitted); Toynbee iv. 150 (likewise misdated in both). The MS was sold Sotheby's 27 Feb. 1882 (Valuable Collection of Autograph Letters Sale), lot 170, to Doeg; not further traced.

Dated by the description of the MS in the Sotheby's auction catalogue cited above, which is corroborated by HW to H. S. Conway 16 June 1758 (see n. 2 below).

Strawberry Hill, June 2[5]th 1758.

My Lord,

I WAS unluckily at Park Place¹ when your Lordship sent to my house in town; and I more unluckily still left Park Place the very day your Lordship was expected there.² I twice waited on you in Hill Street,³ to thank you for the great favour of lending me your history,⁴ which I am sorry I kept longer than you intended; but you must not wonder. I read it with as great attention as pleasure: it is not a book to skim, but to learn by heart, if one means to learn anything of England—you call it the history of Henry II. It is literally the history of our constitution, and will last much longer than I fear the latter will; for alas! my Lord, your style, which will fix and preserve our language, cannot do what language cannot do, reform the nature of man. I beg to know whither I shall send this book, too valuable to be left in a careless manner with a servant. I repeat my warmest thanks, and am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's much obliged,

and most obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE

1. The seat of HW's cousin Henry Seymour Conway, near Henley.

2. HW wrote Conway 16 June 1758: 'The Churchills will be with you next Wednesday [21 June], and I believe I too; . . . I must be back at Strawberry on Friday night' (CONWAY i. 537).

3. Lyttelton's house in Berkeley Square.

4. The printing of Lyttelton's *History of the Life of King Henry the Second* was apparently proceeding while the work was being written, since the four volumes were not published until 1767–71 (*ante* 30 Sept. 1754, n. 5, and 31 Aug. 1757).