

*'While you have been with concerts of nightingales I have been sitting over a smoky fire... all the graces we have we expect from you, after the Duchess of Buccleugh [sic] is brought to bed [she gave birth to a daughter a week later].*

*'I have been putting new glass into my best chamber and it has greatly enlightened it; and the sun now has his levee there, who never was within these doors since the house was built... I have given him admittance.... I have been pulled to pieces for throwing away my money upon another man's house, but while I live here I must see, and save sea-coal.'*

In another gossipy letter on 27th August he mentions *'I have done nothing here but planting my garden.'* He was much taken up with visiting Lord Guilford at Wroxton. *'Lord North comes there in a few days to be gracious at Banbury...'* North was M.P. for the Borough, and, although there was no election in 1769 and he was always returned unopposed, it was politic to keep in with the Corporation and townsfolk.

Whilst HW was visiting Paris in September, GM wrote on 18th, *'I have had such a house full of schoolboys for a week that their noise still tingles in my ears. Thank God their holidays are over and they are gone. ...Our weather is charming, and I am out all day and perfectly well. The boys have brought me to youth again...'*; his guests had discovered a play of HW's and *'had no patience till they finished it and we read the acts amongst us...'* HW replied with irritation: *'I am sorry those boys got at my tragedy. I beg you would keep it under lock and key; it is not at all food for the public...'* GM mollified him: *'My boys have only stole a few passages, but I will take care they come to no harm; but they would have got them by heart while I was asleep.'*

Just before Christmas, he was writing again:

*'I hope I shall find you well in London, where I purpose being the beginning of January. I shall leave the country with regret, as our weather is charming and I have my health always well here; and little Graces in my neighbourhood I am often with and on an agreeable footing... They [the Duke's sisters and a friend were visitors] make me play at loo [a card game with penalties] with them and frighten me more than they hurt me.'*

GM returned from London by 27th March 1770: *'I had an extremely good journey and got over my seventy miles and arrived at my old mansion by six in the evening. I already find the benefit of the country air.'*