

On 18th June he wrote again: *'We have had no earthly summer yet but what I have passed by my fireside,'* and follows this with an entertaining account of a visit he had paid to Blenheim: *'The water is now amazingly beautiful and puts the bridge's nose out of joint...'*

Unexpectedly, HW writes on 29th June:

'Since the sharp mountain will not come to the little hill, the little hill must go to the Mont-aigu. In short, what do you think of seeing me walk into your parlour a few hours after this epistle? I had not time to notify myself sooner.' [Princess Amalie (Amelia, second daughter of George II) had summoned HW to accompany her on a visit to Stowe.¹²] *'Now as it would be extremely inconvenient to my indolence to be dressed ... by six o'clock in the morning, ... I trust you will be charitable enough to give me a bed at Atterbury [sic] for one night, whence I can arrive at Stowe in a decent time...'*

The inevitable happened. GM was with Lord Guilford at Wroxton: HW writes again, *'Adderbury, Sunday night, July 1st, 1770:*

'You will be enough surprised to receive a letter from me dated from your own house, and may judge my mortification at not finding you here – exactly as it happened two years ago. In short here I am [he then repeats his reason for the visit]. Well, I could not come so near, and not call upon you... for it would have been horrid to set out at seven o'clock in the morning... and to step out of my chaise into a drawing-room. I wrote to you on Friday, the soonest I could after this was settled, to notify myself to you, but find I am arrived before my letter. Mrs White [perhaps the housekeeper, or an in-joke] is all goodness; and being the first of July, and consequently the middle of winter, has given me a good fire and some excellent coffee and bread and butter, and I am as comfortable as possible, except in having missed you. She insists on acquainting you, which makes me write this to prevent your coming, for as I must depart at twelve o'clock tomorrow, it would be dragging you home before your time for only half an hour... I have treated your house like an inn, and it will not be friendly, if you do not make as free with me. I would much rather take it for a visit that you ought to repay.... pity

¹² 'Walpole's tone of studied amusement is reflective of his ambiguous feelings towards Amelia. A member of her inner circle of acquaintances for fifty years, he wavered continually between being inordinately proud and flattered to be a favourite and being sharply critical of character and behaviour.' E.H. Chalus, *Oxford D.N.B.*: 'Princess Amelia (1711-1786)'.