

but was deceived: in the scenes of rage and jealousy he was seldom inferior to Quin; in the parts of tenderness and sorrow far above him. These latter seem to be his peculiarly: his action is not very various, but rarely improper, or without dignity, and some of his attitudes are really fine. He is not perfect to be sure, but I think may make a better player than any now on the stage in a little while. However to see a man in one character, and but once, is not sufficient, so I rather ask your opinion by this, than give you mine.

I annex (as you desired) another ode.<sup>5</sup> All it pretends to with you is, that it is mine, and that you never saw it before, and that it is not so long as t'other.<sup>6</sup>

Lo, where the rosy-bosomed hours,  
Fair Venus' train, appear,  
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,  
And wake the purple year!  
The Attic warbler pours her throat  
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,  
The untaught harmony of spring:  
While whisp'ring pleasure as they fly  
Cool zephyrs through the clear blue sky  
Their gathered fragrance fling.

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch  
A broader browner shade;  
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech  
O'er-canopies the glade;<sup>7</sup>  
Beside some water's rushy brink  
With me the muse shall sit, and think  
(At ease reclined in rustic state)  
How vain the ardour of the crowd,  
How low, how indigent the proud,  
How little are the great!<sup>8</sup>

5. 'Ode on the Spring,' originally called 'Noontide, an Ode.' Gray enclosed it in the letter he wrote to West (not knowing that he was already dead) ca 3 June 1742 (*Gray's Corr.* i. 213, 250).

6. *An Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* (post ca 15 June 1747), which Gray sent to HW before 3 Oct., since a copy was sent by HW to Conway in his letter of 3 Oct. 1746.

7. '— a bank [. . .]  
O'er-canopied with luscious woodbine—  
Shakesp: Mids: Night's Dream' (Gray's marginal note).

The reference is to Act II, Scene i, lines 249–51.

8. In the 1768 edn of Gray's *Poems* the lines were changed to:

'How low, how little are the proud,  
How indigent the great!'