

Still is the toiling hand of care:  
 The panting herds repose.  
 Yet hark, how through the peopled air  
 The busy murmur glows!  
 The insect-youth are on the wing  
 Eager to taste the honeyed spring,  
 And float amid the liquid noon:<sup>9</sup>  
 Some lightly o'er the current skim,  
 Some show their gaily-gilded trim  
 Quick-glancing to the sun.  
 To contemplation's sober eye  
 Such is the race of man:  
 And they that creep, and they that fly,  
 Shall end where they began.  
 Alike the busy and the gay  
 But flutter through life's little day,  
 In fortune's varying colours dressed:  
 Brushed by the hand of rough mischance,  
 Or chilled by age, their airy dance  
 They leave, in dust to rest.  
 Methinks I hear in accents low  
 The sportive kind reply.  
 Poor moralist! and what are thou?  
 A solitary fly!  
 Thy joys no glittering female meets,  
 No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,  
 No painted plumage to display:  
 On hasty wings thy youth is flown,  
 Thy sun is set; thy spring is gone:  
 We frolic, while 'tis May.

My compliments to Ashton.<sup>10</sup> Adieu, I am

Sincerely yours,

T. G.

9. 'Nare per æstatem liquidam. Virg.' (Gray's marginal note). The reference is to *Georg.* iv. 59.

10. Ashton, through the influence of Sir Robert Walpole, was as early as 10 Dec. 1745 Fellow of Eton College (see letter of

'old' Horace Walpole to Edward Weston, *Etoniana* 1 May 1925, No. 38, p. 607). Ashton was perhaps in residence (he preached in Eton Chapel 10 Aug., see MONTAGU i. 44), and since HW was living at Windsor he was Ashton's neighbour.