Susanna Blamire, â??Hopeâ?•

Description

SUSANNA BLAMIRE

â??Hopeâ?•

SEE, from yonder hill descending,
Hope, with all her train attending!
â??Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles;â?•
Fancies light that tread on air,
Building fairy castles there;
Aeolus his harp new stringing,
Tuning to the breezes singing;
Zephâ??rus sweeping softest chords;
Fancy setting airs to words;
Words that seem another sound,
And lighter than a breath are found.
Here Morpheus comes, a wandering guest,
By plaintive murmurs lullâ??d to rest;
Round him painted vapours stream,
Weaving soft the chequerâ??d dream,
Which on silken wings they spread,
Shaking oâ??er his drowsy head;
Subtile fumes waft round the brain,
And fan these joys so light and vain,
Which soft slumber loves to dress
In long robes of happiness.
See where come the dancing Hours,
Sprinkling Hopeâ??s gay path with flowers;
â??Thyme that loves the brown hillâ??s side,â?•
Heath in lasting colours dyed;
Feathery sprays that softly blow,
And load the sweet gales as they go
Unheeded,â??though the scented air
Fragrance steals we know not where.
Sweet Hope! lightly dost thou tread,
Bending not the weak flowerâ??s head;
Watching every changeful scene,
Sliding gilded shows between
Where new prospects open still,

Rising fair behind the hill.
â??Tis true stern Reason scorns thy sway,
Nor basks beneath thy sunny ray;
Nor hears thy accents clear and sweet,
Where sprightly airs and softness meet,
Mixing with harmonic chords,
Pouring melody on words.
Nor will his fixâ??d eye deign to glance
On the mirthful mazy dance,
When the Hours, all hand in hand,
Link with thee, a jocund band;
When thy white robes float on air,
Catching rays that tremble there,
Tinted with the varying beam,
Ending in prismatic stream.
On thy head a wreath of flowers
Nods in time to dancing Hours,
Feathery-footed, trim, and light,
Flitting round from morn till night;
From morn till night, thou gaily leads
Through dark green woods and painted meads,
With rose-tingâ??d cheeks, and clear blue eye
Looking through another sky,
Till we reach thâ?? enamellâ??d lawn
Round which a river journeys on,
Where many a bridge is taught to please
Gothic eyes, or gay Chinese,
Thrown in every point of view
Arch can add a beauty to,
While here and there an ashling weaves
Verdant knots of summer leaves.
Now we reach thy mansion high,
Spiral turrets climb the sky,
Gilding clouds of varied light,
Changing underneath the sight.
See what crowds surround the gate,
See what Expectations wait;
And, running out, surround their queen,
Ask all at once where she has been ;
And if the promisâ??d Hours were found
With Elysian garlands crownâ??d;
Or if yet sheâ??d leave to tell
Where true Happiness would dwell;
Or yet had seen the promisâ??d Day
When Expectation, grave or gay,
In happy, blissful bands should be
United into Certainty.
She sweetly smilâ??d, and wavâ??d her hand,

At which a specious flattering band
(Quick through the ear their credence reaches)
Bowâ??d round, â??and, full of soothing speeches
Declarâ??d the Hours would soon appear;
Then, whispering softly in the ear,
Taught smiles along the cheek to glow,
As if those Hours they well did know.
Ye Promises! ye Flatterers vain!
That dress out Hope and varnish Pain,
And make the dullest things appear
Of shining surface, smooth and clear;
Handing the cup to Hopeâ??s sweet lip,
Of which we guests so fondly sip,
While seeing all the bottom shine,
Neâ??er think thereâ??s poison in the wine:â??
Dark Letheâ??s cup each grief subdues,
That used on former joys to muse;
For to Hopeâ??s enchanted dome
Dreaded Ills dare never come;
Not one maskâ??d Sorrow can you see
In all her court of revelry: â??
What though ye pull the careless sleeve,
And would tempt us to believe
These noon-joys are waning fast,
Formâ??d only for an hour to last;
Hence, miscreants!â??let me, while I may,
Enjoy the gewgaws of my day.
Descend, sweet Hope, from thy bright throne
Glittering with each precious stone,â??
Rubies red, and sapphires blue,
Amethysts of purple hue,
Topazes of sun-like blaze,
And diamonds with their thousand rays;
Descend! and mount yon hill with me,
There let me opening prospects see,
Which, step by step, shall fairer grow
The while as fades this scene below.
Forests of immortal oak;
Rocks by tumbling torrents broke;
â??Shallow brooks, and rivers wide,
Verdant meads, with daisies pied;â?•
Distant cities, large and proud;
Mountains dim, that seem a cloud;
Castles high, that live on hills;
Little cots, that seek the rills;
Upland grounds, where flocks are seen
Mixing white with darkest green;
What! though painted on the air,

Still they look serene and fair.
Though my foot be left to tread
Barren heaths with brambles spread,
Yet if thou check one falling tear,
Or bathe the eye till it grow clear,
Iâ??ll freely pardon all thy wiles,
And fancy good in all thy smiles;
Still pleasâ??d to find the ills we dread
Thy fairy wing can overspread;
And though thy promises deceive,
Bless my kind stars that I believe;
Thy cranks and wiles who would not see!
For happy they who doubt not thee.

NOTES:

3 *Quips, and cranks â??*A sharp, sarcastic, or cutting remark, esp. one cleverly or wittily phrasedâ?• (*OED*).

3-4 A quotation from John Miltonâ??s â??Lâ??Allegro,â?• ll. 27-28.

7 *Aeolus* Greek keeper of the winds, and king of the island of Aeolia. His musical instrument was a harp played by the winds instead of human hands (*OED*).

9 *Zephâ??rus* Greek god of the West Wind (*OED*).

13 *Morpheus* Greek god associated with sleep and dreams; in Ovidâ??s *Metamorphosis* he is the son of Sleep (*OED*).

19 *Subtile* Variant spelling of â??subtleâ?• (*OED*).

25 A variant quotation from John Langhorneâ??s â??Owen of Carron:â?• â??With thyme that loves the brown hillâ??s breast,â?• l. 105 (*The Poetical Works of J. Langhorne, D. D. with the Life of the Author* [London, (1789?)], p. 104).

44 *mazy â??*Giddy, dizzy, confusedâ?• (*OED*).

46 *jocund* â??Feeling, expressing, or communicating mirth or cheerfulnessâ?• (*OED*).

50 *prismatic* â??Brightly colored, colorful, brilliantâ?• (*OED*).

56 *painted meads* Meadows, bright and picturesque (*OED*).

62 *Gothic* â??Belonging to, or characteristic of, the Middle Ages; mediÃ¦val, â??romanticâ??, as opposed to classical. A style of architectureâ?•; *Chinese* From Chinoiserie, â??a Western decorative style, popular in the 18th century, that drew from Chinese forms, motifs and sometimes techniques,â?• and which was part of a trend of Orientalist architecture (*OED*).

65 *ashling* A young ash tree (*OED*).

76 *Elysian* â??Relating to Elysium, an imagined, idyllic place often identified with Pastoral poetry; indicates Pastoral qualitiesâ?• (*OED*).

99 *Dark Letheâ??s cup* â??In Greek mythology Lethe is a river within Hades, whose water, when drunk, produces forgetfulnessâ?• (*OED*).

110 g*ewgaws* â??A gaudy trifle, plaything, or ornament, a pretty thing of little value, a toy or baubleâ?• (*OED*).

118 *prospects* â??The view (of a landscape, etc.) afforded by a particular location or position; a vista; an extensive or commanding range of sightâ?• (*OED*).

123-124 A quotation from John Miltonâ??s â??Lâ??Allegro,â?• ll. 75-76.

124 *with daisies pied* Daisies multiplied.

128 *Little cots* A small house, a little cottage, now chiefly poetical, and connoting smallness and humbleness; *rills* A small stream, a rivulet, or a brook (*OED*).

SOURCE: *The Poetical Works of Miss Susanna Blamire* (Edinburgh, 1842), pp. 148-153. [HathiTrust]

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