

Susanna Blamire, "Hope"

Description

SUSANNA BLAMIRE

• "Hope" •

•

SEE, from yonder hill descending,
Hope, with all her train attending!
"Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles;"
Fancies light that tread on air, • • • • •
• • • • • 5
Building fairy castles there;
Aeolus his harp new stringing,
Tuning to the breezes singing;
Zeph'rus sweeping softest chords;
Fancy setting airs to words; • • • • •
• • • • • 10
Words that seem another sound,
And lighter than a breath are found.
Here Morpheus comes, a wandering guest,
By plaintive murmurs lull'd to rest;
Round him painted vapours stream, • • • • •
• • • • • 15
Weaving soft the chequer'd dream,
Which on silken wings they spread,
Shaking o'er his drowsy head;
Subtile fumes waft round the brain,
And fan these joys so light and vain, • • • • •
• • • • • 20
Which soft slumber loves to dress
In long robes of happiness.
See where come the dancing Hours,
Sprinkling Hope's gay path with flowers;
"Thyme that loves the brown hill's side," • • • • •
• • • • • 25
Heath in lasting colours dyed;
Feathery sprays that softly blow,
And load the sweet gales as they go
Unheeded," though the scented air
Fragrance steals we know not

where. 30

Sweet Hope! lightly dost thou tread,
Bending not the weak flower's head;
Watching every changeful scene,
Sliding gilded shows between

Where new prospects open
still, 35

Rising fair behind the hill.

 '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 fix'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-ting'd cheeks, and clear blue eye

Looking through another sky,
Till we reach th' enamell'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 65

What though ye pull the careless sleeve, Â
Â Â Â 105

And would tempt us to believe
These noon-joys are waning fast,
Form'd only for an hour to last;
Hence, miscreants!â€™let me, while I may,
Enjoy the gewgaws of my day. Â
Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 110

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, Â
Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 115

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. Â
Â Â Â Â Â Â 120

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; Â
Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 125

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; Â
Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 130

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, Â
Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 135

Or bathe the eye till it grow clear,
Iâ€™ll freely pardon all thy wiles,
And fancy good in all thy smiles;
Still pleas'd to find the ills we dread
Thy fairy wing can overspread; Â
Â Â Â Â Â Â Â 140

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€œA sharp, sarcastic, or cutting remark, esp. one cleverly or wittily phrasedâ€•(OED).

3-4 A quotation from John Miltonâ€™s *Allegro*, ll. 27-28.

7 *Aeolus* â€œGreek 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 *Zephyrus* 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 *subtle* (OED).

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

44 *mazy* â€œGiddy, dizzy, confusedâ€•(OED).

46 *jocund* â€œFeeling, expressing, or communicating mirth or cheerfulnessâ€•(OED).

50 *prismatic* â€œBrightly colored, colorful, brilliantâ€•(OED).

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

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

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

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

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

110 *gewgaws* â€œA gaudy trifle, plaything, or ornament, a pretty thing of little value, a toy or baubleâ€•(OED).

118 *prospects* â€œThe 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 *Allegro*, 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]

Edited by Emily Nicol