

BRAMHAM PARK

TO

ROBERT LANE ESQ.

The themes of war to bolder bards belong,
Calm scenes of peace invite my humble song,
Lane, whom kind heav'n has with mild manners grac'd,
And bless'd with true hereditary taste,
Your blooming virtues these light lays demand,
Wrote in the gardens which your grandsire plan'd.
When vernal breezes had the glebe unbound,
And universal verdure cloath'd the ground,
Profusely wild the flowers began to spring,
The trees to blossom, and the birds to sing :
As careless thro' those groves I took my way,
Where Bramham gives new beauty to the day,
(What time Aurora, rising from the main,
With rosy lustre spangled o'er the plain)
The sylvan scenes a secret joy inspir'd,
And with soft rapture all my bosom fir'd ;
When, lo' my eyes a lovely nymph survey'd,
With modest step advancing thro' the glade :
Her bloom divine, and sweet attractive grace,
Confes'd the guardian Dryad of the place :
The wind that gave her azure robe to flow,
Reveal'd a bosom white as Alpine snow ;

A flowery wreath around her neck she wore,
And in her hand a branch of olive bore :
Adown her shoulders fell her auburn hair,
That buxom air ambrosial odours shed,
And sweets immortal breath'd around her head.
My eager eyes o'er all her beauties ran,
When thus the guardian of the woods began.
' Thrice happy ! whom the fates propitious give
' Secure in these sequester'd groves to live,
' Where Health, fair goddess, keeps her blooming court,
' And all the nymphs, all the graces sport :
How beautifully chang'd the scene appears
' Within the compass of a thousand years !
' Then fierce Bellona drench'd these plains in blood,
' Then virtue wander'd in the lonely wood
' But hear ! while I mysterious truths disclose,
' Whose dire remembrance wakens all my woes.
' In ancient days when Alfred , sacred name !
' (Alfred the first in virtue as in fame)
' This barbarous isle with liberal arts refin'd,
' Taught wholesome laws, and moraliz'd mankind ;
' The ruthless Danes o'er all the country ran,
' They levell'd cities and they murder'd man :
' Nor fields, nor fanes, nor sex, nor age were free
' From fire and sword , from lust and cruelty.
' To tend my father's flock was then my care,
' And country swains were wont to call me fair.

‘ Not hence far distant I secur’d my charms,
‘ Till rous’d from danger by the din of arms
‘ To a lone cave, with nymphs a chosen few,
‘ Secret I fled, conceal’d from human view,
‘ Secret and safe, till (storm’d the country round)
‘ Our close retreat the fierce barbarians found.
‘ What could we do the furious foe to shun ?
‘ To die seem’d better than to be undone.
‘ Diana, huntress of the woodland shades,
‘ Chaste guardian of the purity of maids,
‘ With silver bows supplied the virgin train,
‘ And manly courage to repel the Dane.
‘ But what , alas ! avails the manly heart,
‘ When female force emits the feeble dart ?
‘ Tho’ thrice three victims to our vengeance fell,
‘ Tho’ my keen shafts dispatch’d their chief to hell ;
‘ Too soon our fate with anguish we deplor’d,
‘ Doom’d to the slaughter of the conquering sword,
‘ But happy they whose sufferings heav’n approves ;
‘ Heav’n will reward that virtue which it loves.
‘ The queen who makes bright chastity her care,
‘ Thus to almighty Jove prefer’d her prayer ;
‘ That we for ever in these shades might rove,
‘ Nymph of the wood, and guardians of the grove.
‘ Well I remember, as trembling I lay,
‘ Pale, and deathless, cold , expiring on the day,
‘ How by degrees my mortal frame refin’d,

' Nor left one earthly particle behind ;
' In every nerve a pleasing change began,
' And thro' my veins the streams immortal ran:
' Soft on my mind ecstatic visions stole,
' And heav'n-felt raptures, dawn'd upon my soul :
' E'er since I guard the groves, the woods, the plain,
' Chief Dryad of the tutelary train ;
' Supremely bless'd where all conspires to please,
' War, civil war alone disturbs my ease.
' How did my soul recoil with secret dread
' When bold Northumberland his army led,
' Ill-fated Britons, whom he brought from afar,
' Against his sovereign waging horrid war !
' I saw the combat on the neighbouring plain,
' A knight victorious, old Percy slain ;
' I saw his visage, that with anguish frown'd,
' And seem'd in rage to roll its eyes around,
' Borne in mock triumph from the fatal field;
' The azure lion on the golden shield.
' Wav'd vainly rampant. But what horrors chill'd
' My heaving heart, and thro' my bosom thrill'd !
' When direful discord Britain's sons compell'd
' To war on Towton's memorable field.
' I see the ranks embattel'd on the plain,
' Torrents of blood, and mountains of the slain ;
' See kindred hosts with rival rage contend,
' Deaf to the names of father, and of friend ;

' The brother by brother's sword expires,
' And sons are slain by unrelenting fires.
' The brook, that flow'd a scanty stream before,
' Swell'd to a river red with human gore :
' Verbeia then in wild amazement stood,
' To see her silver urn distain'd with blood ;
' Verbeia, erst her waters wont to lead
' In peaceful murmurs thro' the flowery mead,
' To purge her currents from the crimson stain,
' Swift pour'd her waves to mingle with the main.
' Oft, as with shining share he plows the field,
' The swain astonish'd finds the maffy shield,
' On whose broad boss, sad source of various woes,
' He views engrav'd the long-disputed Rose.
' Huge human bones the fretful furrows hide
' Of once-fam'd heroes that in battle died :
' Now all dire feuds, and curst contentations o'er,
' They sleep in peace, and kindle wars no more :
' The friend, the foe, the noble, and the slave,
' Rest undistinguished in one common grave.
' But let us now, since genial spring invites,
' And lavish nature varies her delights,
' Partake the general joy, and sweetly stray,
' Where birds warble, and the waters play ;
' Where Flora decks the dewy dale with flowers,
' And beeches twine their branches into bowers,
' The warbling birds, the gales that gently blow,

' May tune thy reed, and teach the verse to flow.'

Thus spoke the nymph with soft alluring grace,
And led me round the flow'r-embroider'd place ;

Thro' every variegated rural scene

Of shady forest, and of meadow green,

Of winding valleys, and of rising hills,

Of mossy fountains and of rising hills,

Where downs, or level lawns expanded wide,

The groves, the garden, and the wood divide;

Where walks by long extended-walls are crost,

And alleys in meandering alleys lost;

The dubious traces intricately run,

And end erroneous where they first begun :

Where Saxon fanes in that fair order rife,

With elegant simplicity surprize.

Where'er the nymph directs my ravish'd sight,

New scenes appear that give a new delight :

Here spiry firs extend their lengthen'd ranks,

Their violets blossom on the sunny banks ;

Here horn-beam hedges regularly grow,

There hawthorns whiten, and white roses blow.

Luxuriant Flora paints the purple plain,

And in the gardens waves the golden grain ;

Curl'd round tall tufted trees the woodbine weaves

In fond embrace its tendrils with the leaves :

Sweet scented shrubs a rich perfume exhale,

And health ambrosial floats on every gale.

From rushy-fringed founts rise sparkling rills
That glide in mazy windings down the hills:
Or under pendent shades of oziers flow,
Dispensing moisture to the plants below :
Now, hard by the flowery turf they pass
Ingulph'd, now sport along with the velvet grass,
With many an error slowly-lingering stray,
And murmuring in their course reluctant roll away ;
Thence into lucid lakes profusely fall
Foaming, or form the beautiful canal,
So smooth, so level, that it well might pass
For Cytherea's face-reflecting glass,
(Save when mild zephyrs o'er the surface stray,
Curl the light waves, and on its bosom play)
Yet to the bottom so distinctly clear,
The eye might number every pebble there ;
And every fish that quickly glances glides,
Sports in the stream, and shows his silver sides.
If thro' the glades I turn my raptur'd eyes,
What various views, what lovely landskips rise ?
Here a once-hospitable mansion stands
' Midst fruitful plains, and cultivated lands ;
There russet heaths , with fields of corn between,
And peaceful cotts, and hamlets intervene :
These far-stretch'd views direct me to admire
A tower dismantled, or a lofty spire,
Or farm imbosom'd in some aged wood,

Or lowing herds that crop the flowery food ;
Thro' these, irriguous vales, and lawns appear,
And fleecy flocks, and nimble footed deer :
Sun-glittering villas, and bright streams are seen,
Gay meads, rough rocks, hoar hills, and forests green.
As when Belinda works, with art devine,
In the rich screen some curious, gay design ;
Quick as the fair the nimble needle plies,
Cotts, churches, towers, or villages arise ;
A varied group of flocks, and herds, and swains,
Groves, fountains, fields, and daisy painted plains ;
At Bramham thus with ravish'd eyes we see
How order strives with sweet variety :
Nature, kind goddess, joins the aid of art
To plan, to form, and finish every part.
But now beneath the beechen shade reclin'd,
Whose tall top trembling dances in the wind,
Fast by the falling of a hoarse cascade,
What glowing transports all my breast invade ?
Down channel'd stone collected currents flow,
And steal obliquely thro' the vale below ;
The feather'd songsters on the trees above
Attune their voices to the notes of love,
Notes so melodiously distinct and clear,
They charm my soul, and make it heav'n to hear.
O ! what descriptive eloquence can tell
The woods, and the winding walks of Bescobell ?

The various vistas, and the grassy glades,
The bowery coverts in sequester'd shades ?
Or where the wondering eye with pleasure sees !
A spacious amphitheatre of trees ?
Or where the differing avenues unite,
Conducting to more pompous scenes the sight ?
Lo ! what high mounds immense divide the moor,
Stretch'd from the southern to the northern shore !
These are but relics of the Roman way,
Where the firm legions march'd in dread array,
Where rode the hero in his iron car,
And big with vengeance roll'd the mighty war :
Here oft the Curious coins and urns explore,
Which future Meads and Pembrokes shall explore,
To me more pleasing far yon tranquil dell
Where Labour, Health and sweet Contentment dwell ;
More pleasing far beside yon aged oaks
Grotesque and wild the cottage chimney smokes.
Fair to the view old Ebor's temple stands,
The work of ages, rais'd by holy hands ;
How firm the venerable pile appears!
Reverend with age, but not impair'd by years.
O ! could I build the heav'n-directed rhyme,
Strong as thy fabrick , as thy tow'rs sublime ;
Then would the muse on bolder pinions rise,
And make thy turrets emulate the skies.
Such are the scenes where woodland nymphs resort,

And such the gardens where the Graces sport :
Would Fate this verse to future times prolong,
These scenes should bloom for ever in my song,
Not Tempe's plains so beautiful appear,
Nor flow Castalia's sacred springs so clear ;
The Muses, had they known this lov'd retreat,
Had left Parnassus for a nobler seat.
Well may these groves in elegance excel,
When Lane completes what Bingley plann'd so well
Bids crystal currents sweetly murmuring flow,
Fair temples rise, and future navies grow.
Here D---n and idle hour employ,
And those diversions, which he loves, enjoy ;
With wary spaniels furrow'd fields beset,
And close the partridge in the silken net :
Or search the woods, and with unerring aim
With leaden wounds transfix the flying game :
Or with staunch hounds the wily fox persue,
And trace his footsteps o'er the tainted dew.
With what delight would friendly N---y change
Don's fertile vallies for this ampler range.
And with the music of th' enlivening horn
Cheer the fleet pack, and wake the lingering morn.
But lo ! faint Phoebus darts a languid ray,
And gold-edged clouds foretell the close of day ;
The nymph observant took her airy flight,
And, like a vision vanish'd from my sight.

