

Windsor–Forest

Alexander Pope

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To the Right Honourable GEORGE Lord Lansdown.

Non injussa cano: Te nostrae Vare myricae
Te Nemus omne canet; nec Phoebus gratior ulla est
Quam sibi quae Vari praescripsit pagina nomen.
Virg.

Thy forests, *Windsor!* and thy green retreats,
At once the Monarch's and the Muse's seats,
Invite my lays. Be present, sylvan maids!
Unlock your springs, and open all your shades.
Granville commands; your aid O Muses bring!
What Muse for *Granville* can refuse to sing?
The groves of *Eden*, vanish'd now so long,
Live in description, and look green in song:
These, were my breast inspir'd with equal flame,
Like them in beauty, should be like in fame.
Here hills and vales, the woodland and the plain,
Here earth and water, seem to strive again;
Not *Chaos* like together crush'd and bruis'd,
But as the world, harmoniously confus'd:
Where order in variety we see,
And where, tho' all things differ, all agree.
Here waving groves a checquer'd scene display,
And part admit, and part exclude the day;
As some coy nymph her lover's warm address
Nor quite indulges, nor can quite repress.
There, interspers'd in lawns and opening glades,
Thin trees arise that shun each other's shades.
Here in full light the russet plains extend;
There wrapt in clouds the blueish hills ascend.
Ev'n the wild heath displays her purple dyes,
And 'midst the desert fruitful fields arise,
That crown'd with tufted trees and springing corn,
Like verdant isles the sable waste adorn.
Let *India* boast her plants, nor envy we
The weeping amber or the balmy tree,
While by our oaks the precious loads are born,
And realms commanded which those trees adorn.
Not proud *Olympus* yields a nobler sight,

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Tho' Gods assembled grace his tow'ring height,
Than what more humble mountains offer here,
Where, in their blessings, all those Gods appear.
See *Pan* with flocks, with fruits *Pomona* crown'd,
Here blushing *Flora* paints th' enamel'd ground,
Here *Ceres'* gifts in waving prospect stand,
And nodding tempt the joyful reaper's hand;
Rich Industry sits smiling on the plains,
And peace and plenty tell, a *Stuart* reigns.

Not thus the land appear'd in ages past,
A dreary desart and a gloomy waste,
To savage beasts and savage laws a prey,
And kings more furious and severe than they;
Who claim'd the skies, dispeopled air and floods,
The lonely lords of empty wilds and woods:
Cities laid waste, they storm'd the dens and caves,
(For wiser brutes were backward to be slaves.)
What could be free, when lawless beasts obey'd,
And ev'n the elements a Tyrant sway'd?
In vain kind seasons swell'd the teeming grain,
Soft show'rs distill'd, and suns grew warm in vain;
The swain with tears his frustrate labour yields,
And famish'd dies amidst his ripen'd fields.
What wonder then, a beast or subject slain
Were equal crimes in a despotick reign?
Both doom'd alike, for sportive Tyrants bled,
But that the subject starv'd, the beast was fed.
Proud *Nimrod* first the bloody chace began,
A mighty hunter, and his prey was man:
Our haughty *Norman* boasts that barb'rous name,
And makes his trembling slaves the royal game.
The fields are ravish'd from th' industrious swains,
From men their cities, and from Gods their fanes:
The levell'd towns with weeds lie cover'd o'er;
The hollow winds thro' naked temples roar;
Round broken columns clasping ivy twin'd;
O'er heaps of ruin stalk'd the stately hind;
The fox obscene to gaping tombs retires,
And savage howlings fill the sacred quires.
Aw'd by his Nobles, by his Commons curst,
Th' Oppressor rul'd tyrannic where he durst,
Stretch'd o'er the Poor and Church his iron rod,
And serv'd alike his Vassals and his God.
Whom ev'n the *Saxon* spar'd, and bloody *Dane*,
The wanton victims of his sport remain.
But see, the man who spacious regions gave
A waste for beasts, himself deny'd a grave!
Stretch'd on the lawn, his second hope survey,
At once the chaser, and at once the prey:
Lo *Rufus*, tugging at the deadly dart,

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Bleeds in the forest, like a wounded hart.
Succeeding Monarchs heard the subjects cries,
Nor saw displeas'd the peaceful cottage rise.
Then gath'ring flocks on unknown mountains fed,
O'er sandy wilds were yellow harvests spread,
The forests wonder'd at th' unusual grain,
And secret transport touch'd the conscious swain.
Fair Liberty, *Britannia's* Goddess, rears
Her chearful head, and leads the golden years.

Ye vig'rous swains! while youth ferments your blood,
And purer spirits swell the sprightly flood,
Now range the hills, the thickest woods beset,
Wind the shrill horn, or spread the waving net.
When milder autumn summer's heat succeeds,
And in the new–shorn field the partridge feeds,
Before his lord the ready spaniel bounds,
Panting with hope, he tries the furrow'd grounds;
But when the tainted gales the game betray,
Couch'd close he lies, and meditates the prey:
Secure they trust th' unfaithful field, beset,
Till hov'ring o'er 'em sweeps the swelling net.
Thus (if small things we may with great compare)
When *Albion* sends her eager sons to war,
Some thoughtless Town, with ease and plenty blest,
Near, and more near, the closing lines invest;
Sudden they seize th' amaz'd, defenceless prize,
And high in air *Britannia's* standard flies.

See! from the brake the whirring pheasant springs,
And mounts exulting on triumphant wings:
Short is his joy; he feels the fiery wound,
Flutters in blood, and panting beats the ground.
Ah! what avail his glossy, varying dyes,
His purple crest, and scarlet–circled eyes,
The vivid green his shining plumes unfold,
His painted wings, and breast that flames with gold?

Nor yet, when moist *Arcturus* clouds the sky,
The woods and fields their pleasing toils deny.
To plains with well–breath'd beagles we repair,
And trace the mazes of the circling hare:
(Beasts, urg'd by us, their fellow–beasts pursue,
And learn of man each other to undo.)
With slaught'ring guns th' unwear'd fowler roves,
When frosts have whiten'd all the naked groves;
Where doves in flocks the leafless trees o'ershade,
And lonely woodcocks haunt the wat'ry glade.
He lifts the tube, and levels with his eye;
Strait a short thunder breaks the frozen sky:
Oft', as in airy rings they skim the heath,

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The clam'rous plovers feel the leaden death:
Oft', as the mounting larks their notes prepare,
They fall, and leave their little lives in air.

In genial spring, beneath the quiv'ring shade,
Where cooling vapours breathe along the mead,
The patient fisher takes his silent stand,
Intent, his angle trembling in his hand;
With looks unmov'd, he hopes the scaly breed,
And eyes the dancing cork, and bending reed.
Our plenteous streams a various race supply,
The bright–ey'd perch with fins of *Tyrian* dye,
The silver eel, in shining volumes roll'd,
The yellow carp, in scales bedrop'd with gold,
Swift trouts, diversify'd with crimson stains,
And pykes, the tyrants of the watry plains.

Now *Cancer* glows with *Phoebus'* fiery car;
The youth rush eager to the sylvan war,
Swarm o'er the lawns, the forest walks surround,
Rouze the fleet hart, and chear the opening hound.
Th' impatient courser pants in ev'ry vein,
And pawing, seems to beat the distant plain;
Hills, vales, and floods appear already cross'd,
And e'er he starts, a thousand steps are lost.
See! the bold youth strain up the threat'ning steep,
Rush thro' the thickets, down the valleys sweep,
Hang o'er their coursers heads with eager speed,
And earth rolls back beneath the flying steed.
Let old *Arcadia* boast her ample plain,
Th' immortal huntress, and her virgin–train;
Nor envy, *Windsor!* since thy shades have seen
As bright a Goddess, and as chaste a Queen;
Whose care, like hers, protects the sylvan reign,
The Earth's fair light, and Empress of the main.

Here, as old bards have sung, *Diana* stray'd,
Bath'd in the springs, or sought the cooling shade;
Here arm'd with silver bows, in early dawn,
Her buskin'd Virgins trac'd the dewy lawn.

Above the rest a rural nymph was fam'd,
Thy offspring, *Thames!* the fair *Lodona* nam'd;
(*Lodona's* fate, in long oblivion cast,
The Muse shall sing, and what she sings shall last.)
Scarce could the Goddess from her nymph be known,
But by the crescent and the golden zone.
She scorn'd the praise of beauty, and the care,
A belt her waist, a fillet binds her hair,
A painted quiver on her shoulder sounds,
And with her dart the flying deer she wounds.

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It chanc'd, as eager of the chace, the maid
Beyond the forest's verdant limits stray'd,
Pan saw and lov'd, and burning with desire
Pursu'd her flight, her flight increas'd his fire.
Not half so swift the trembling doves can fly,
When the fierce eagle cleaves the liquid sky;
Not half so swiftly the fierce eagle moves,
When thro' the clouds he drives the trembling doves;
As from the God she flew with furious pace,
Or as the God, more furious, urg'd the chace.
Now fainting, sinking, pale, the nymph appears;
Now close behind, his sounding steps she hears;
And now his shadow reach'd her as she run,
His shadow lengthen'd by the setting sun;
And now his shorter breath, with sultry air,
Pants on her neck, and fans her parting hair.
In vain on father *Thames* she call'd for aid,
Nor could *Diana* help her injur'd maid.
Faint, breathless, thus she pray'd, nor pray'd in vain;
"Ah *Cynthia*! ah tho' banish'd from thy train,
"Let me, O let me, to the shades repair,
"My native shades there weep, and murmur there.
She said, and melting as in tears she lay,
In a soft, silver stream dissolv'd away.
The silver stream her virgin coldness keeps,
For ever murmurs, and for ever weeps;
Still bears the name the hapless virgin bore,
And bathes the forest where she rang'd before.
In her chaste current oft' the Goddess laves,
And with celestial tears augments the waves.
Oft' in her glass the musing shepherd spies
The headlong mountains and the downward skies,
The watry landskip of the pendant woods,
And absent trees that tremble in the floods;
In the clear azure gleam the flocks are seen,
And floating forests paint the waves with green.
Thro' the fair scene rowl slow the ling'ring streams,
Then foaming pour along, and rush into the *Thames*.

Thou too, great father of the *British* floods!
With joyful pride survey'st our lofty woods;
Where tow'ring oaks their spreading honours rear,
And future navies on thy shores appear.
Not *Neptune's* self from all his streams receives
A wealthier tribute, than to thine he gives.
No seas so rich, so gay no banks appear,
No lake so gentle, and no spring so clear.
Not fabled *Po* more swells the poet's lays,
While thro' the skies his shining current strays,
Than thine, which visits *Windsor's* fam'd abodes,
To grace the mansion of our earthly Gods:

Nor all his stars a brighter lustre show,
 Than the fair nymphs that grace thy side below:
 Here *Jove* himself, subdu'd by beauty still,
 Might change *Olympus* for a nobler hill.

Happy the man whom this bright Court approves,
 His Sov'reign favours, and his Country loves:
 Happy next him, who to these shades retires,
 Whom Nature charms, and whom the Muse inspires;
 Whom humbler joys of home–felt quiet please,
 Successive study, exercise, and ease.
 He gathers health from herbs the forest yields,
 And of their fragrant physic spoils the fields:
 With chymic art exalts the min'ral pow'rs,
 And draws the aromatic souls of flow'rs:
 Now marks the course of rolling orbs on high;
 O'er figur'd worlds now travels with his eye:
 Of ancient writ unlocks the learned store,
 Consults the dead, and lives past ages o'er:
 Or wand'ring thoughtful in the silent wood,
 Attends the duties of the wise and good,
 T'observe a mean, be to himself a friend,
 To follow nature, and regard his end;
 Or looks on heav'n with more than mortal eyes,
 Bids his free soul expatiate in the skies,
 Amid her kindred stars familiar roam,
 Survey the region, and confess her home!
 Such was the life great *Scipio* once admir'd,
 Thus *Atticus*, and *Trumbal* thus retir'd.

Ye sacred Nine! that all my soul possess,
 Whose raptures fire me, and whose visions bless,
 Bear me, oh bear me to sequester'd scenes,
 The bow'ry mazes, and surrounding greens;
 To *Thames's* banks which fragrant breezes fill,
 Or where ye Muses sport on *Cooper's* hill.
 (On *Cooper's* hill eternal wreaths shall grow,
 While lasts the mountain, or while *Thames* shall flow)
 I seem thro' consecrated walks to rove,
 I hear soft music die along the grove;
 Led by the sound, I roam from shade to shade,
 By god–like Poets venerable made:
 Here his first lays majestic *Denham* sung;
 There the last numbers flow'd from *Cowley's* tongue.
 O early lost! what tears the river shed,
 When the sad pomp along his banks was led?
 His drooping swans on ev'ry note expire,
 And on his willows hung each Muse's lyre.

Since fate relentless stop'd their heav'nly voice,
 No more the forests ring, or groves rejoice;

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Who now shall charm the shades, where *Cowley* strung
His living harp, and lofty *Denham* sung?
But hark! the groves rejoice, the forest rings!
Are these reviv'd? or is it *Granville* sings?

'Tis yours, my Lord, to bless our soft retreats,
And call the Muses to their ancient seats;
To paint anew the flow'ry sylvan scenes,
To crown the forests with immortal greens,
Make *Windsor*–hills in lofty numbers rise,
And lift her turrets nearer to the skies;
To sing those honours you deserve to wear,
And add new lustre to her silver star.

Here noble *Surrey* felt the sacred rage,
Surrey, the *Granville* of a former age:
Matchless his pen, victorious was his lance,
Bold in the lists, and graceful in the dance:
In the same shades the *Cupids* tun'd his lyre,
To the same notes, of love, and soft desire:
Fair *Geraldine*, bright object of his vow,
Then fill'd the groves, as heav'nly *Myra* now.

Oh would'st thou sing what Heroes *Windsor* bore,
What Kings first breath'd upon her winding shore,
Or raise old warriors, whose ador'd remains
In weeping vaults her hallow'd earth contains!
With *Edward's* acts adorn the shining page,
Stretch his long triumphs down thro' ev'ry age,
Draw Monarchs chain'd, and *Cressi's* glorious field,
The lillies blazing on the regal shield:
Then, from her roofs when *Verrio's* colours fall,
And leave inanimate the naked wall,
Still in thy song should vanquish'd *France* appear,
And bleed for ever under *Britain's* spear.

Let softer strains ill–fated *Henry* mourn,
And palms eternal flourish round his urn.
Here o'er the martyr–King the marble weeps,
And fast beside him, once–fear'd *Edward* sleeps:
Whom not th' extended *Albion* could contain,
From old *Belerium* to the northern main,
The grave unites; where ev'n the Great find rest,
And blended lie th' oppressor and th' opprest!

Make sacred *Charles's* tomb for ever known,
(Obscure the place, and un–inscrib'd the stone)
Oh fact accurst! what tears has *Albion* shed,
Heav'ns, what new wounds! and how her old have bled?
She saw her sons with purple deaths expire,
Her sacred domes involv'd in rolling fire,

A dreadful series of intestine wars,
 Inglorious triumphs, and dishonest scars.
 At length great *Anna* said "Let Discord cease!"
 She said, the World obey'd, and all was Peace!

In that blest moment, from his oozy bed
 Old father *Thames* advanc'd his rev'rend head.
 His tresses drop'd with dews, and o'er the stream
 His shining horns diffus'd a golden gleam:
 Grav'd on his urn, appear'd the Moon that guides
 His swelling waters, and alternate tydes;
 The figur'd streams in waves of silver roll'd,
 And on their banks *Augusta* rose in gold.
 Around his throne the sea–born brothers stood,
 Who swell with tributary urns his flood:
 First the fam'd authors of his ancient name,
 The winding *Isis* and the fruitful *Tame*:
 The *Kennet* swift, for silver eels renown'd;
 The *Loddon* slow, with verdant alders crown'd;
Cole, whose clear streams his flow'ry islands lave;
 And chalky *Wey*, that rolls a milky wave:
 The blue, transparent *Vandalis* appears;
 The gulphy *Lee* his sedgy tresses rears;
 And sullen *Mole*, that hides his diving flood;
 And silent *Darent*, stain'd with *Danish* blood.

High in the midst, upon his urn reclin'd,
 (His sea–green mantle waving with the wind)
 The God appear'd: he turn'd his azure eyes
 Where *Windsor*–domes and pompous turrets rise;
 Then bow'd and spoke; the winds forget to roar,
 And the hush'd waves glide softly to the shore.

Hail, sacred Peace! hail long–expected days,
 That *Thames*'s glory to the stars shall raise!
 Tho' *Tyber*'s streams immortal *Rome* behold,
 Tho' foaming *Hermus* swells with tydes of gold,
 From heav'n itself tho' sev'n–fold *Nilus* flows,
 And harvests on a hundred realms bestows;
 These now no more shall be the Muse's themes,
 Lost in my fame, as in the sea their streams.
 Let *Volga*'s banks with iron squadrons shine,
 And groves of lances glitter on the *Rhine*,
 Let barb'rous *Ganges* arm a servile train;
 Be mine the blessings of a peaceful reign.
 No more my sons shall dye with *British* blood
 Red *Iber*'s sands, or *Ister*'s foaming flood;
 Safe on my shore each unmolested swain
 Shall tend the flocks, or reap the bearded grain;
 The shady empire shall retain no trace
 Of war or blood, but in the sylvan chace;

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The trumpet sleep, while chearful horns are blown,
And arms employ'd on birds and beasts alone.
Behold! th' ascending *Villa's* on my side,
Project long shadows o'er the crystal tyde.
Behold! *Augusta's* glitt'ring spires increase,
And temples rise, the beauteous works of Peace.
I see, I see where two fair cities bend
Their ample bow, a new *White–ball* ascend!
There mighty nations shall enquire their doom,
The world's great Oracle in times to come;
There Kings shall sue, and suppliant States be seen
Once more to bend before a *British* Queen.

Thy trees, fair *Windsor!* now shall leave their woods,
And half thy forests rush into my floods,
Bear *Britain's* thunder, and her Cross display,
To the bright regions of the rising day;
Tempt icy seas, where scarce the waters roll,
Where clearer flames glow round the frozen Pole;
Or under southern skies exalt their sails,
Led by new stars, and borne by spicy gales!
For me the balm shall bleed, and amber flow,
The coral redden, and the ruby glow,
The pearly shell its lucid globe infold,
And *Phoebus* warm the ripening ore to gold.
The time shall come, when free as seas or wind
Unbounded *Thames* shall flow for all mankind,
Whole nations enter with each swelling tyde,
And seas but join the regions they divide;
Earth's distant ends our glory shall behold,
And the new world launch forth to seek the old.
Then ships of uncouth form shall stem the tyde,
And feather'd people croud my wealthy side,
And naked youths and painted chiefs admire
Our speech, our colour, and our strange attire!
Oh stretch thy reign, fair Peace! from shore to shore,
'Till Conquest cease, and slav'ry be no more;
'Till the freed *Indians* in their native groves
Reap their own fruits, and woo their sable loves,
Peru once more a race of Kings behold,
And other *Mexico's* be roof'd with gold.
Exil'd by thee from earth to deepest hell,
In brazen bonds shall barb'rous Discord dwell:
Gigantic Pride, pale Terror, gloomy Care,
And mad Ambition, shall attend her there:
There purple Vengeance bath'd in gore retires,
Her weapons blunted, and extinct her fires:
There hateful Envy her own snakes shall feel,
And Persecution mourn her broken wheel:
There Faction roar, Rebellion bite her chain,
And gasping Furies thirst for blood in vain.

Windsor–Forest

Here cease thy flight, nor with unhallow'd lays
Touch the fair fame of *Albion's* golden days:
The thoughts of Gods let *Granville's* verse recite,
And bring the scenes of opening fate to light.
My humble Muse, in unambitious strains,
Paints the green forests and the flow'ry plains,
Where Peace descending bids her olives spring,
And scatters blessings from her dove-like wing.
Ev'n I more sweetly pass my careless days,
Pleas'd in the silent shade with empty praise;
Enough for me, that to the list'ning swains
First in these fields I sung the sylvan strains.