

Idyll-

Fled are those times, when in harmonious strains
The rustic poet praised his native plains
No shepherds now, in smooth alternate verse,
Their country's beauty or their nymphs' rehearse. ¹

Dear Sarah,

I'm travelling into the city, approaching the North Downs, swathes of white chalk variegate the brown fields against an edging of serpentine woodland. Dappled things please the eye. I wonder how fragile the trees are: the bastion oaks? A few pickers yet, huddled in hoarfrost-picturesque toil cloaks old labour removed to exotic clime. I should arrive in about 35 minutes, Stephen.

¹ G. Crabbe, 1914