

IN PRAISE OF A COUNTRY LIFE.

Young shoots with patient skill ; or strolleth out
To view his lowing herds wandering about
In lonely vales ; or stores his honey, prest,
In new-made jars ; or shears with keenest zest
His tender sheep. Or when the air is sweet
With scent of clover, and young lovers meet
Under a golden moon, and Autumn comes
Laden with mellow fruit to rural homes,
How doth his heart with gratitude run o'er
While gathering grafted pears, ripe to the core,
And grapes so luscious in their purple hue,
With which he may bring loving tribute due
To thee, O bounteous Priapus, and thee,
Sylvanus, guardian of the sacred tree !
Sometimes he lies, with hands beneath his head,
Under an aged elm, sometimes a bed
Of matted grass tempts him to dreamy ease :
The silent waters glide along ; the bees
Go droning by ; the birds in leafy wold
Warble unseen ; the fountains, bubbling cold
From secret springs, mingle their murmuring fall
With music of the running streams ; and all