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A N  
E S S A Y  
ON THE  
PICTURESQUE,  
AS COMPARED WITH THE  
SUBLIME AND THE BEAUTIFUL;  
AND, ON THE  
USE OF STUDYING PICTURES,  
FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
IMPROVING REAL LANDSCAPE.

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By *UVEDALE PRICE*, Esq.

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QUAM MULTA VIDENT PICTORES IN UMBRIS, ET IN  
EMINENTIA, QUÆ NOS NON VIDEMUS.

*Cicero.*

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A NEW EDITION,  
WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS.

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L O N D O N :  
Printed for J. ROBSON, NEW BOND-STREET.

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M.DCCC.XCVI.



## P R E F A C E.

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**A**S the general plan and intention of my work have been a good deal misunderstood, I wish to give a short account of them both.

The title itself might have shewn that I aimed at something more than a mere book of gardening; some, however, have conceived that I ought to have begun by setting forth all my ideas of lawns, shrubberies, gravel walks, &c.; and as my arrangement did not coincide with their notions of what it ought to have been, they seem to have concluded that I had no plan at all.

I have in this essay undertaken to treat of two subjects, distinct, but intimately connected, and which, as I conceive, throw a reciprocal light on each other. I have be-

gun with that which is last mentioned, as I thought some previous discussion with regard to pictures and picturesque scenery, would most naturally lead to a particular examination of the character itself. In the first chapter, I have stated the general reasons for studying the works of eminent landscape painters, and the principles of their art, with a view to the improvement of real scenery; and in order to shew how little those works, or the principles they contain, have been attended to, I have supposed the scenery in the landscape of a great painter, to be new-modelled according to the taste of Mr. Brown. Having shewn this contrast between dressed scenery, and a picture of the most ornamented kind, I have in the second chapter compared together two real scenes; the one in its picturesque and unimproved state, the other when dressed and improved according to the present fashion. The picturesque circumstances detailed in this scene, very naturally lead me, in the third chapter, to investigate

†

their

their general causes and effects; and in that, and the six following chapters, I have traced them, as far as my observation would enable me, through all the works of art, and of nature.

This part, the most curious and interesting to a speculative mind, will be least so to those who think only of what has a direct and immediate reference to the arrangement of scenery: that indeed it has not; but it is a discussion well calculated to give just and enlarged ideas, of what is of no slight importance—the general character of each place, and the particular character of each part of its scenery. Every place, and every scene that are worth observing, must have something of the sublime, the beautiful, or the picturesque; and every man will allow that he would wish to preserve and to heighten, certainly not to weaken or destroy, their prevailing character. The most obvious method of succeeding in the one, and of avoiding the other, is by studying their causes and effects;

fects; but to confine that study to scenery only, would, like all confined studies for a particular purpose, tend to contract the mind; at least when compared with a more comprehensive view of the subject; I have therefore endeavoured to take the most enlarged view possible, and to include in it whatever had any relation to the character I was occupied in tracing, or which shewed its distinction from those which a very superior mind had already investigated; and sure I am, that he who studies the various effects and characters of form, colour, and light and shadow, and examines and compares those characters and effects, and the manner in which they are combined and disposed, both in pictures and in nature,—will be better qualified to arrange, certainly to enjoy, his own and every scenery, than he who has only thought of the most fashionable arrangement of objects; or has looked at nature alone, without having acquired any just principles of selection.

I be-

I believe, however, that this part of my Essay, and the very title of it, may have given a false bias to the minds of many of my readers; nor am I surprised at such an effect. It is a very natural conclusion, and often justified, that an author is partial to the particular subject on which he has written; but mine is a particular case. The two characters which Mr. Burke has so ably discussed, had, it is true, great need of investigation; but they did not want to be recommended to our attention. What is really sublime or beautiful, must always attract and command it; but the picturesque is much less obvious, less generally attractive, and had been totally neglected and despised by professed improvers: my business therefore was to draw forth, and to dwell upon those less observed beauties. From that circumstance it has been conceived (or at least asserted) that I not only preferred such scenes as were merely rude and picturesque, but excluded all others.

The second part is built upon the foundations laid in the first, for I have examined the leading features of modern gardening (in its more extended sense) on the general principles of painting ; and I have shewn in several instances, especially in all that relates to the banks of artificial water, how much the character of the picturesque has been neglected, or sacrificed to a false idea of beauty.

But though I take no slight interest in whatever concerns the taste of gardening in this, and every other country, and am particularly anxious to preserve those picturesque circumstances, which are so frequently, and irrecoverably destroyed ; yet in writing this Essay, I have had a more comprehensive object in view : I have been desirous of opening new sources of innocent, and easily attained pleasures, or at least of pointing out how a much higher relish may be acquired for those, which, though known, are neglected : and it has given me no small pleasure to find that  
both



both my objects have in some degree been attained.

That painters do see effects in nature, which men in general do not see, we have, in the motto I have prefixed to this essay, the testimony of no common observer ; of one, who was sufficiently vain of his own talents and discernment in every way, and not likely to acknowledge those of other men without strong conviction. It is not a mere observation of Cicero ; it is an exclamation : *Quam multa vident pictores !* it marks his surprize at the extreme difference which the study of nature, by means of the art of painting, seems to make almost in the sight itself. It may likewise be observed, that his remark does not extend to form, in which the ancient painters are acknowledged to be our superiors : not to colour, in which they are also conceived to be at least our rivals ; but to light and shadow, the supposed triumph of modern over ancient art ; on which account the professors of painting, since its revival, have a still better  
right

right to the compliment of so illustrious a panegyrist, than those of his age.

If there were no other means of seeing with the eyes of painters, than by acquiring the practical skill of their hands, the generality of mankind must of course give up the point; but luckily we may gain no little insight into their method of considering nature, and no inconsiderable share of their relish for her beauties, by an easier process—by studying their works. This study has one great advantage over most others; there are no dry elements to struggle with. Pictures, as likewise drawings and prints, have in them what is suited to all ages and capacities: many of them, like Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, display the most fertile and brilliant imagination, joined to the most accurate judgment and selection, and the deepest knowledge of nature: like that extraordinary work, they are at once the amusement of childhood and ignorance, and the delight, instruction, and admiration of the highest and most cultivated minds.

It is not, however, to be supposed, that theory and observation alone will enable us to judge either of pictures or of nature, with the same skill as those, who join the practical knowledge of their art, to habitual reflection on its principles, and its productions: between such artists, and the mere lover of painting, there will always be a sufficient difference to justify the remark of Cicero \*: but by means of the study I have so earnestly recommended, we may greatly diminish the immense distance that exists between the eye of a first rate painter, and that of a man who has never

\* There is an anecdote of S. Rosa, which shews the very just and natural opinion that painters of eminence entertain of their superior judgment with regard to their own art: it is also highly characteristic of the lively impetuous manner of the artist of whom it is related, and whose words might no less justly be applied to real objects, than to the imitation of them. *Salvator Rosa, essendogli mostrata una singolar pittura da un dilettante, che insieme in estremo la lodava; egli con un di quei suoi soliti gesti spiritosi esclamò: O pensa quel che tu diresti, se tu la videresti con gli occhi di Salvator Rosa.*

thought

thought on the subject. Were it, indeed, possible that a painter of great and general excellence, a Titian, or a Carach, could at once bestow on such a man, not his power of imitating, but of distinguishing and feeling the effects and combinations of form, colour, and light, and shadow, it would hardly be too much to assert that a new appearance of things, a new world would suddenly be opened to him; and the bestower might preface the miraculous gift, with the words in which Venus addresses her son, when she removes the mortal film from his eyes,

*Aspice, namque omnem quæ nunc obducta tuenti  
Mortales hebetat visus tibi & humida circum  
Caligat, nubem eripiam.*

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## ERRATA.

Page 55. *between lines 15 and 16 the word than omitted.*

125. l. 9. *for seldoms, read seldom.*

207. l. 17. *for opposites, read opposite.*

238. l. 3. *for an, read and.*

249. l. 13. *for what a multitude, read what such a multitude.*

290. l. 3. *for well, read dwell.*

291. l. 3. *for can be, read is.*

— l. 4. *for be, read can be.*

360. note, l. 5. *from the bottom, for have, read hath.*

367. l. ult. *for have, read hath.*

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ON THE  
PICTURESQUE, &c.

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THERE is no country, I believe (if we except China) where the art of laying out grounds is so much cultivated as it now is in England. Formerly the decorations near the house were infinitely more magnificent and expensive than they are at present; but the embellishments of what are called the grounds, and of all the extensive scenery round the place, was much less attended to; and, in general, the park, with all its timber and thickets, was left in a state

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of

of wealthy neglect: as these embellishments are now extended over a whole district, and as they give a new and peculiar character to the general face of the country, it is well worth considering whether they give a natural and a beautiful one, and whether the present system of improving (to use a short though often an inaccurate term) is founded on any just principles of taste.

In order to examine this question, the first enquiry will naturally be, whether there is any standard, to which in point of grouping, and of general composition, works of this sort can be referred; any authority higher than that of the persons who have gained the most general and popular reputation by those works, and whose method of conducting them has had the most extensive influence on the general taste? I think there is a standard; there are authorities of an infinitely higher kind; the authorities of those

great artists who have most diligently studied the beauties of nature, both in their grandest and most general effects, and in their minutest detail; who have observed every variety of form and of colour, have been able to select and combine, and then, by the magic of their art, to fix upon the canvas all these various beauties.

But, however highly I may think of the art of painting, compared with that of improving, nothing can be farther from my intention (and I wish to impress it in the strongest manner on the reader's mind) than to recommend the study of pictures in preference to that of nature, much less to the exclusion of it. Whoever studies art alone, will have a narrow pedantic manner of considering all objects, and of referring them solely to the minute and particular purposes of that art to which his attention has been particularly directed; this is what improves

have done : and if every thing is to be referred to art, at least let it be referred to one, whose variety, compared to the monotony of what is called improvement, appears infinite, but which again falls as short of the boundless variety of the mistress of all art.

The use, therefore, of studying pictures is not merely to make us acquainted with the combinations and effects that are contained in them, but to guide us by means of those general heads (as they may be called) of composition, in our search of the numberless and untouched varieties and beauties of nature; for as he who studies art only will have a confined taste, so he who looks at nature only, will have a vague and unsettled one; and in this more extended sense I should interpret the Italian proverb, "*Cbi s'insegna, ha un pazzo per maestro* : He is a fool who does not profit by the experience of others."

We



We are therefore to profit by the experience contained in pictures, but not to content ourselves with that experience only; nor are we to consider even those of the highest class as absolute and infallible standards, but as the best and only ones we have; as compositions, which, like those of the great classical authors, have been consecrated by long uninterrupted admiration, and which therefore have a similar claim to influence our judgment, and to form our taste in all that is within their province. These are the reasons for studying *copies* of nature, though the *original* is before us, that we may not lose the benefit of what is of such great moment in all arts and sciences, the accumulated experience of past ages; and, with respect to the art of improving, we may look upon pictures as a set of experiments of the different ways in which trees, buildings, water, &c. may be dis-

posed, grouped, and accompanied in the most beautiful and striking manner, and in every style, from the most simple and rural to the grandest and most ornamental : many of those objects, that are scarcely marked as they lie scattered over the face of nature, when brought together in the compass of a small space of canvas, are forcibly impressed upon the eye, which by that means learns how to separate, to select, and combine.

Who can doubt whether Shakespeare and Fielding had not infinitely more amusement from society, in all its various views, than common observers? I believe it can be as little doubted, that the having read such authors must give any man (however acute his penetration) more enlarged views of human nature in general, as well as a more intimate acquaintance with particular characters, than he would have had from the observation of nature only ; that many  
groups

groups of characters, many combinations of incidents, which might otherwise have escaped his notice, would forcibly strike him, from the recollection of scenes and passages from such writers ; that in all these cases the pleasure we receive from what passes in real life is rendered infinitely more poignant by a resemblance to what we have read or have seen on the stage. But will any man argue from thence that these characters and incidents have no intrinsic merit, but merely that which is derived from their having been made use of by great and admired authors? The parallel between this and the assistance which painting gives towards an accurate as well as a comprehensive view of nature is so obvious as hardly to require pointing out.

I am therefore persuaded that those men's minds will be the most amused (and perhaps not the least usefully employed) to

whom "all the world's a stage," who remark wherever they go (and habit will give a rapid and unobserved facility in doing it) not only the characters of all individuals, but their effect on each other. Such an observer will not divide what passes into scenes and chapters, and be pleased with it in proportion as it will do for a novel or a play, but he will be pleased on the same principles as Shakespeare or Fielding would have been. This appears to me a true and exact statement of the mutual relation that painting and nature bear to each other.

Had the art of improving been cultivated for as long a time, and upon as settled principles, as that of painting, and were there extant various works of genius, which, like those of the other art, had stood the test of ages (though from the great change which the growth and decay of trees must produce in the original design of the artist, this

is hardly possible) there would not be the same necessity of referring and comparing the works of reality to those of imitation ; but as the case stands at present, the only models of composition that approach to perfection, the only *fixed* and *unchanging* selections from the works of nature, united with those of art, are in the pictures and designs of the most eminent masters.

But although certain happy compositions, detached from the general mass of objects, and considered by themselves have the greatest and most lasting effect, both in nature or painting ; and though the painter, in respect to his own art, may think of those only, and give himself no concern about the rest, he cannot do so if he is an improver as well as a painter ; for he might then neglect or injure what was essential to the whole, by attending only to a part, and in that consists the great and obvious difference

rence between the practice, not the general principles, of the two arts: there is another also that leads to the same point, and which has not been sufficiently attended to; the difference between looking at nature merely with a view to making pictures, and looking at pictures with a view to the improvement of our ideas of nature; the former often does contract the taste when pursued too closely, the latter I believe as generally refines and enlarges it. The greatest painters were men of enlarged and liberal minds, and well acquainted with many arts besides their own. L. da Vinci, M. Angelo, Raphael, Titian, were not merely patronized by the sovereigns of that period; they were considered almost as friends by such men as Leo, Francis, and Charles, and were intimately connected with Aretino, Castiglione, and all the eminent wits of that time. Those great artists (nor need I have gone so far back

back for examples) considered pictures and nature as throwing a reciprocal light on each other, and as connected with history, poetry, and all the fine arts; but the practice of too many lovers of painting has been very different, and has, I believe, contributed in a great degree, and with great reason, to give a prejudice against the study of pictures as a preparation to that of nature. In the same manner that many painters consider natural scenery merely with a reference to their own practice, many connoisseurs consider pictures merely with a reference to other pictures, as a school in which they may learn the routine of connoisseurship, that is, an acquaintance with the most prominent marks and peculiarities of different masters; but they rarely look upon them in that point of view in which alone they can produce any real advantage,—as a school in which we may learn to enlarge, refine,

and

and correct our ideas of nature, and in return, may qualify ourselves by this more liberal course of study, to be real judges of what is excellent in imitation. This reflection may account for what otherwise seems quite unaccountable, namely, that many enthusiastic admirers and collectors of Claude, Poussin, &c. should have suffered professed improvers to deprive the general and extended scenery of their places, of all that those painters would have most admired and copied. Should the narrow and perverse application of so excellent a study be produced as an argument against the study altogether, that of the holy gospel might on the same ground be objected to, for certainly its pure and exalted doctrines have been by some less industriously applied to enlarge, correct, and refine our nature, than to furnish matter for scholastic distinctions, and all that vain and fruitless parade which in theology and in every other

art



art and science answers so well to the cant  
of connoisseurship in painting. He who can  
in any degree contribute to direct studies to  
their proper object, even in matters of less  
moment, deserves well of mankind; with  
respect to improvement in its most compre-  
hensive sense, the great object of enquiry  
seems to be, what is that mode of study  
which will best enable a man of a liberal  
and intelligent mind to judge of the forms,  
colours, effects, and combinations of visible  
objects; to judge of them either as single  
compositions, which may be considered by  
themselves without reference to what sur-  
rounds them; or else as parts of scenery, the  
arrangement of which must be more or less  
regulated and restrained by what joins them,  
and the connection of which with the general  
scenery must be constantly attended to. Such  
knowledge and judgment comprehend the  
whole science of improvement with regard

to

to its effect on the eye, and I believe can never be perfectly acquired, unless to the study of natural scenery, and of the various styles of gardening in different periods, the improver adds the theory at least of that art, the very essence of which is connection: a principle most adapted to correct the chief defects of improvers; a principle always present to the painter's mind, if he deserves that name; and by the guidance of which he considers all sets of objects, whatever may be their character or boundaries, from the most extensive prospect to the most confined wood scene: neither referring every thing to the narrow limits of his canvas, nor despising what will not suit it, unless, indeed, the limits of his mind be equally narrow and contracted; for when I speak of a painter, I mean an artist, not a mechanic.

Whatever minute and partial objections  
may

may be made to the study of pictures for the purpose of improvement, (many of which I have already discussed in my letter to Mr. Repton,) yet certainly the great leading principles of the one art, as general composition—grouping the separate parts—harmony of tints—unity of character, are equally applicable to the other: I may add also, what is so very essential to the painter, though at first sight it seems hardly within the province of the improver—breadth and effect of light and shade.

These are called the principles of painting, because that art has pointed them out more clearly, by separating what was most striking and well combined, from the less interesting and scattered objects of general scenery; but they are in reality the general principles on which the effect of all visible objects must depend, and to which it must be referred.

Nothing

Nothing can be more directly at war with all these principles (founded as they are in truth and in nature) than the present system of laying out grounds. A painter, or whoever views objects with a painter's eye\*, looks with indifference, if not with disgust, at the clumps, the belts, the made water, and the eternal smoothness and sameness of a finished place; an improver, on the other hand, considers these as the most perfect embellishments, as the last finishing touches that nature can receive from art; and consequently must think the finest composition of Claude (and I mention him as

\* When I speak of a painter, I do not mean merely a professor, but any man (artist or not) of a liberal mind, with a strong feeling for nature as well as art, who has been in the habit of comparing both together.

A man of a narrow mind and little sensibility, in or out of a profession, is always a bad judge; and possibly (as that ingenious critic the Abbé du Bos has well explained) a worse judge for being an artist.

the

the most ornamented of all the great masters) comparatively rude and imperfect ; though he probably might allow, in Mr. Brown's phrase, that it had " capabilities."

No one, I believe, has yet been daring enough to improve a picture of Claude \*, or at least to acknowledge it ; but I do not think it extravagant to suppose that a man,

\* The account in *Peregrine Pickle*, of the gentleman who had improved Vandyke's portraits of his ancestors, used to strike me as rather *outré*; but I met with a similar instance some years ago, that makes it appear much less so. I was looking at a collection of pictures with Gainborough ; among the rest the housekeeper shewed us a portrait of her master, which she said was by Sir Joshua Reynolds : we both stared, for not only the touch and the colouring, but the whole style of the drapery and the general effect, had no resemblance to his manner. Upon examining the housekeeper more particularly, we discovered that her master had had every thing but the face—not re-touched from the colours having faded—but totally changed, and newly composed, as well as painted, by another, and, I need not add, an inferior hand.

Such a man would have felt as little scruple in making a Claude like his own place, as in making his own portrait like a scare-crow.

thoroughly persuaded, from his own taste, and from the authority of such a writer as Mr. Walpole\*, that an art, unknown to

\* I can hardly think it necessary to make any excuse for calling Lord Orford Mr. Walpole; it is the name by which he is best known in the literary world, and to which his writings have given a celebrity much beyond what any hereditary honour can bestow. It is more necessary, perhaps, to make an apology for the liberty I must take of canvassing with freedom many positions in his very ingenious and entertaining treatise on Modern Gardening. That treatise is written in a very high strain of panegyric on the art of which he gives so amusing a history: mine is a direct and undisguised attack upon it. The greater his authority the more necessary it is to combat the impression which that alone will make on most minds. I do it, however, with great deference and reluctance; for I know how difficult it is to steer between the tameness of over-caution and the appearance of acrimony, or of want of respect towards a person for whom I feel so much, and to whom on so many accounts it is due. But he who is warmly engaged in a cause, and has to fight against strongly-rooted opinions, upheld by powerful supporters, must, if he hopes to vanquish them, take every fair advantage of his opponents, and not seem too timid and fearful of giving offence where he means none.

every

every age and climate, that of creating landscapes, had advanced with master-steps to vigorous perfection ; that enough had been done to establish such a school of landscape as cannot be found in the rest of the globe ; and that Milton's description of Paradise seems to have been copied from some piece of modern gardening ;—that such a man, full of enthusiasm for this new art, and with little veneration for that of painting, should chuse to shew the world what Claude might have been, had he had the advantage of seeing the works of Mr. Brown. The only difference he would make between improving a picture and a real scene, would be that of employing a painter instead of a gardener.

What would more immediately strike him would be the total want of that leading feature of all modern improvements, the

clump\*; and of course he would order several of them to be placed in the most open and conspicuous spots, with, perhaps, here and there a patch of larches, as forming a strong contrast, in shape and colour, to the Scotch firs.—His eye, which had been used to see even the natural groups of trees in improved places made as separate and clump-like as possible, would be shocked to see those of Claude, some with their stems half concealed by bushes and thickets; others standing alone, but, by means of those thickets, or of detached trees, connected with other groups of various sizes

\* As some disputes have arisen about the meaning of the word *clump*, it may not be improper to define what I mean by it. My idea of a clump, in contra-distinction to a group, is, *any close mass of trees of the same age and growth, totally detached from all others*. I have generally supposed them to be of a round, or at least of a regular form: their size of course must vary, and no rule can well be given when such a detached mass ceases to be a clump, and may be called a plantation.

and



and shapes. All this rubbish must be cleared away\*, the ground made every where quite smooth and level, and each group left upon the grass perfectly distinct and separate.—Having been accustomed to whiten all distant buildings, those of Claude, from the effect of his soft vapoury atmosphere, would appear to him too indistinct; the painter of course would be ordered to give them a smarter appearance, which might possibly be communicated to the nearer buildings also.—Few modern houses or ornamental buildings are so placed among trees, and partially hid by them, as to conceal much of the skill of the architect, or the expence of the possessor; but in Claude, not only ruins, but temples and palaces, are often

\* I do not mean by this, that *nothing* should be cleared; on the contrary, a proper degree and style of clearing adds as much to beauty and effect as it does to neatness. But of this I shall say more hereafter.

so mixed with trees, that the tops overhang their balustrades, and the luxuriant branches shoot between the openings of their magnificent columns and porticos: as he would not suffer his own buildings to be so masked, neither would he those of Claude; and these luxuriant boughs, and all that obstructed a full view of them, the painter would be told to expunge, and carefully to restore the ornaments they had hid.—The last finishing both to places and pictures is water: in Claude it partakes of the general softness and dressed appearance of his scenes, and the accompaniments have, perhaps, less of rudeness than in any other master\*; yet, compared

\* One of my countrymen at Rome was observing that the water in the Colonna Claude had rather too dressed and artificial an appearance. A Frenchman, who was also looking at the picture, cried out, “Cependant, Monsieur, on pourroit y donner une si belle fête!” This was very characteristic of that gay nation, but it is equally so

compared with those of a piece of made water, or of an improved river, his banks are perfectly savage; parts of them covered with trees and bushes that hang over the water; and near the edge of it tuftucks of rushes, large stones, and stumps; the ground sometimes smooth, sometimes broken and abrupt, and seldom keeping, for a long space, the same level from the water: no curves that answer each other; no resemblance, in short, to what he had been used to admire: a few strokes of the painter's brush would reduce the bank on each side to one level, to one green; would make curve answer curve, without bush or tree to hinder the eye from enjoying the uniform smoothness and verdure, and from pursuing, without interruption, the conti-

so of a number of Claude's pictures. They have an *air de fête* beyond all others; and there is no painter whose works ought to be so much studied for highly dressed yet varied nature.

nued sweep of these serpentine lines ;—a little cleaning and polishing of the foreground would give the last touches of improvement, and complete the picture.

There is not a person in the smallest degree conversant with painting, who would not, at the same time, be shocked and diverted at the black spots and the white spots,—the naked water,—the naked buildings,—the scattered unconnected groups of trees, and all the gross and glaring violations of every principle of the art ; and yet this, without any exaggeration, is the method in which many scenes, worthy of Claude's pencil, have been improved. Is it then possible to imagine that the beauties of imitation should be so distinct from those of reality, nay, so completely at variance, that what disgraces and makes a picture ridiculous, should become ornamental when applied to nature ?

## CHAPTER II.



**I**T seems to me, that the neglect, which prevails in the works of modern improvers, of all that is picturesque, is owing to their exclusive attention to high polish and flowing lines, the charms of which they are so engaged in contemplating, as to make them overlook two of the most fruitful sources of human pleasure ; the first, that great and universal source of pleasure, variety, whose power is independent of beauty, but without which even beauty itself soon ceases to please ; the other, intricacy, a quality which, though distinct from variety, is so

connected

\*

connected and blended with it, that the one can hardly exist without the other.

According to the idea I have formed of it, intricacy in landscape might be defined, *that disposition of objects which, by a partial and uncertain concealment, excites and nourishes curiosity* \*. Variety can hardly require a definition, though, from the practice of many layers-out of ground, one might suppose it did. Upon the whole, it appears to me, that as intricacy in the disposition, and variety in the forms, the

\* Many persons, who take little concern in the intricacy of oaks, beeches, and thorns, may feel the effects of partial concealment in more interesting objects, and may have experienced how differently the passions are moved by an open licentious display of beauties, and by the unguarded disorder which sometimes escapes the care of modesty, and which coquetry so successfully imitates :

Parte appar delle mamme acerbe & crude,  
 Parte altrui ne ricuopre invida veste ;  
 Invida sì, ma se agli occhi il varco chiude,  
 L'amoroso pensier già non s'arresta.

tints,

tints, and the lights and shadows of objects, are the great characteristics of picturesque scenery ; so monotony and baldness are the greatest defects of improved places.

Nothing would place this in so distinct a point of view as a comparison between some familiar scene in its natural and picturesque, and in what would be its improved state, according to the present principles of gardening. All painters, who have imitated the more confined scenes of nature, have been fond of making studies from old neglected bye roads and hollow ways ; and, perhaps, there are few spots that, in so small a compass, have a greater variety of that sort of beauty called picturesque ; but, I believe, the instances are very rare of painters, who have turned out volunteers into a gentleman's walk or drive, either when made between artificial banks,

or

or when the natural fides or banks have been improved. I shall endeavour to examine whence it happens, that a picturesque eye looks coldly on what is very generally admired, and discovers a thousand interesting objects where a common eye sees nothing but ruts and rubbish ; and whether the pleasure of the one, and the indifference of the other, arise from the causes I have assigned.

Perhaps, what is most immediately striking in a lane of this kind is its intricacy ; any winding road, indeed (especially where there are banks) must necessarily have some degree of intricacy ; but in a dressed lane every effort of art seems directed against that disposition of the ground : the fides are so regularly sloped, so regularly planted, and the space (when there is any) between them and the road so uniformly levelled ; the sweeps of the road so plainly artificial,



artificial, the verges of grafs that bound it so nicely edged ; the whole, in short, has such an appearance of having been made by a receipt, that curiosity, that most active principle of pleasure, is almost extinguished.

But in these hollow lanes and bye roads all the leading features, and a thousand circumstances of detail, promote the natural intricacy of the ground ; the turns are sudden and unprepared ; the banks sometimes broken and abrupt ; sometimes smooth, and gently but not uniformly sloping ; now wildly over-hung with thickets of trees and bushes ; now loosely skirted with wood ; no regular verge of grafs, no cut edges, no distinct lines of separation ; all is mixed and blended together, and the border \* of the road itself, shaped by the  
mere

\* It may be observed, that whenever a border, or such a separation of the general covering of the surface (whether

mere tread of passengers and animals, is as unconstrained as the footsteps that formed it: even the tracks of the wheels (for no circumstance is indifferent) contribute to the picturesque effect of the whole; the lines they describe are full of variety; they just mark the way among trees and bushes, while any obstacle, a cluster of low thorns, a furze-bush, a tussuck, a large stone, will force the wheels into sudden and intricate turns, at the same time those obstacles themselves, either wholly or partially concealing the former tracks, add to that variety and intricacy; often a group of trees, or a

ther grass, moss, heath, &c.) as discovers the soil, is formed by the action of water, of frost, or by the tread of animals, it is free from that edginess, that cutting liny appearance, the spade always leaves, and which of all things is most destructive of variety and intricacy: this, I think, accounts for the attachment of painters to what is called broken ground, and to the natural banks of rivers, as well as for their contempt for those of artificial water.

thicket,

thicket, will occasion the road to separate in two parts, leaving a sort of island in the middle \*, and of these and numberless other accidents painters have continually availed themselves.

\* In the Abbè de Lille's exquisite poem on gardens, (which I had not read when I published my essay, but which I have hardly ceased to read since I had it in my possession) there are some lines that very beautifully describe, or rather indicate the same circumstance in the separation of a brook : I am tempted to transcribe part of the passage, as it affords a very happy example how much the motion, the transparency, and the various charms of water, add life and animation to a scene comparatively dead.

Plus loin il se separe en deux ruisseaux agiles ;  
Que se suivant l'un l'autre avec rapidité,  
Disputent de vitesse, & de limpidité.

The whole passage is excellent, and the poem altogether full of the justest taste, and the nicest discriminations, as well as the most brilliant imagery, and the whole expressed in the happiest, and most poetical style. I should have thought myself very ungrateful, if in a second edition I had not acknowledged the very great pleasure and instruction I had received from it, and added my testimony to that I believe of every other reader.

In

In forests particularly, it is inconceivable how much the various routes in all directions, through the wild thickets, and among the trunks of old trees, add to the intricacy and perplexed appearance of the scenery; an effect that would be totally destroyed if the tracks were all smoothed and made level, and a gravel road, with easy sweeps, made in their room.

It is a singular circumstance, that some of the most striking varieties of form, of colour, and of light and shade, should, in these, as in many other scenes, be owing to the indiscriminate hacking of the peasant, nay, to the very decay that is occasioned by it. When opposed to the tameness of the poor pinioned trees of a gentleman's plantation drawn up strait and even together, there is often a sort of spirit and animation in the manner in which old neglected pollards stretch out their immense limbs

limbs quite across one of these hollow roads, and in every wild and irregular direction: on some the large knots and protuberances add to the ruggedness of their twisted trunks; in others, the deep hollow of the inside, the mosses on the bark, the rich yellow of the touch-wood, with the blackness of the more decayed substance, afford such variety of tints, of brilliant and mellow lights, with deep and peculiar shades, as the finest timber tree (however beautiful in other respects) with all its health and vigour, cannot exhibit.

This careless method of cutting, just as the farmer happened to want a few stakes or poles, gives infinite variety to the general outline of the banks: near to one of these “unwedgeable and gnarled oaks” often rises the slender elegant form of a young beech, ash, or birch, that had escaped the axe, and whose tender bark and

light foliage appear still more delicate and airy when seen sideways against the rough bark and massy head of the oak. Sometimes it rises alone from the bank; sometimes from amidst a cluster of rich hollies or wild junipers; sometimes its light and upright stem is embraced by the projecting cedar-like boughs of the yew.

The ground itself, in these lanes, is as much varied in form, tint, and light and shade, as the plants that grow upon it; this, as usual, instead of owing any thing to art, is, on the contrary, occasioned by accident and neglect \*. The winter torrents,

\* The manner in which improvers may profit by the *lucky* effects of accident and neglect (for I do not mean to say that they are always lucky) is fully discussed in my letter to Mr. Repton. The principle, which is here exemplified in trees and hollow lanes, extends to objects of much greater importance, to every species of improvement, even to the highest and most important of all, that of government. Neither improvers nor legislators will  
leave

rents, in some places wash down the mould from the upper grounds, and form projections of various shapes, which, from the fatness of the soil, are generally enriched with the most luxuriant vegetation; in other parts, they tear the banks into deep hollows, discovering the different \* strata of earth, and the shaggy roots of trees; these hollows are frequently overgrown with wild roses, with honeysuckles, periwinkles,

leave every thing to neglect and accident; but it certainly is wise in both, by carefully observing all the effects which have arisen from them, to learn how to take advantage of future changes, and, above all, to learn that most useful lesson, not to suppress the workings of nature, but to watch, and take indications from them; for who would choose to settle in that place, or under that government, where the warnings, indications, and all the free efforts of nature, were forcibly counteracted and suppressed.

\* Mr. Gilpin, in his *Observations on the River Wye* (page 21.) has, with his usual accuracy, described the variety of broken ground, and of the colours of the different strata.

and other trailing plants, whose flowers and pendent branches have quite a different effect when hanging loosely over one of these recesses, opposed to its deep shade, and mixed with the fantastic roots of trees, and the varied tints of the soil, from those that are cut into bushes, or crawl along the uniform slope of a mowed or dug shrubbery. In the summer time these little caverns afford a cool retreat for the sheep; and it is difficult to imagine a more beautiful fore-ground than is formed by the different groups of them in one of these lanes; some feeding on the patches of turf that in the wider parts lie between the fern and the bushes; some lying in the niches they have worn in the banks among the roots of trees, and to which they have made many side-long paths; some reposing in these deep recesses, their bowers,

O'er-canopied with luscious eglantine.

Near



Near the house picturesque beauty must, in many cases, be sacrificed to neatness; but it is a sacrifice, and one which should not wantonly be made. A gravel walk cannot have the playful variety of a bye road; there must be a border to the gravel, and that and the sweeps must, in great measure, be regular, and consequently formal: I am convinced, however, that many of the circumstances, which give variety and spirit to a wild spot, might be successfully imitated in a dressed place; but it must be done by attending to the principles, not by copying the particulars. It is not necessary to model a gravel walk, or drive after a sheep track or a cart rut, though very useful hints may be taken from them both; and without having water-docks or thistles before one's door, their effect, in a painter's fore-ground, may be produced by plants that are considered as ornamental. I am

equally persuaded that a dressed appearance might be given to one of these lanes, without destroying its peculiar and characteristic beauties.

I have said little of the superior variety and effect of light and shade in scenes of this kind, as they of course must follow variety of forms and of masses, and intricacy of disposition: I wished to avoid all detail that did not appear to me necessary to explain or illustrate some general principles; but when general principles are put crudely without examples, they not only are dry, but obscure, and make no impression.

There are several ways in which a spot of this kind, near a gentleman's place, would probably be improved; for even in the monotony of what is called improvement there is a variety of bad. Some, perhaps, would cut down the old pollards, clear the rubbish, and leave only the maiden  
trees

trees standing; some might plant up the whole; others grub up every thing, and make a shrubbery on each side; others put clumps of shrubs, or of firs; but there is one improvement that I am afraid almost all who had not been used to look at objects with a painter's eye would adopt, and which alone would entirely destroy its character; that is smoothing and \* leveling

\* To level, in a very usual sense of the word, means to take away all distinctions; a principle that, when made general, and brought into action by any determined improver, either of grounds or governments, occasions such mischiefs as time slowly, if ever, repairs, and which are hardly more dreaded by monarchs than painters.

A good landscape is that in which all the parts are free and unconstrained, but in which, though some are prominent and highly illuminated, and others in shade and retirement; some rough, and others more smooth and polished, yet they are all necessary to the beauty, energy, effect, and harmony of the whole. I do not see how a good government can be more exactly defined; and as this definition suits every style of landscape, from

D † the

ling the ground: the moment this mechanical common-place operation (by which Mr. Brown and his followers have gained so much credit) is begun, adieu to all that the painter admires—to all intricacies—to all the beautiful varieties of form, tint, and light and shade; every deep recess—every bold projection—the fantastic roots of trees—the winding paths of sheep—all must go; in a few hours, the rash hand of false taste completely demolishes what time only, and a thousand lucky accidents, can mature, so as to make it become the admiration and study of a Ruysdal or a Gainsborough, and reduces it to such a thing as an Oilman

the plainest and simplest to the most splendid and complicated, and excludes nothing but tameness and confusion, so it equally suits all free governments, and only excludes anarchy and despotism. It must be always remembered however, that despotism is the most complete leveller; and he who clears and levels every thing round his own lofty mansion, seems to me to have very Turkish principles of improvement.

in Thames-street may at any time contract for by the yard at Ilington or Mile-End.

I had lately an opportunity of observing the progress of improvement in one lane, and the effect of it in another, both unfortunately bordering on gentlemen's pleasure grounds. The first had on one side a high bank full of the beauties I have described; I was particularly struck with a beech which stood single on one part of it, and with the effect and character that its spreading roots gave, both to the bank and to the tree itself \*: the sheep also had

\* There is something wonderfully picturesque and characteristic in the large roots of trees, and in none more than in those of the beech; they seem to fasten on the earth with their dragon claws; a huge oak too, whose spurs strongly divide from the trunk, shews what are the rivets that enable him to defy the tempest, et quanta radice ad Tartara tendit.

When these roots and spurs are moulded up, from that prevailing fashion of making every thing smooth and level, the tree looks like an enormous post stuck in the ground.

made

made their sidelong paths to this spot, and often lay in the little compartments between the roots. One day I found a great many labourers wheeling mould to this place; by degrees they filled up all inequalities, and completely covered the roots and pathways; one would have supposed they were working for my Uncle Toby, under the direction of Corporal Trim \*, for they had converted this varied bank

\* These worthy pioneers, their employment, and their employers, are very aptly described in two verses of Tasso, and especially if the word *guastatori* ‡ is taken in its most obvious sense :

*Inanzi i guastatori avea mandati*

*I vuoti luoghi empir', & spianar gli erci.*

This is a most complete receipt for spoiling a picturesque spot; and one might suppose, from this military style having been so generally adopted, and every thing laid open, that our improvers are fearful of an enemy being in ambuscade among the bushes of a gravel pit, or lurking in some intricate group of trees. In that respect, it must be owned, the clump has infinite merit;

‡ Spoilers.

for,

bank into a perfect glacis, only the gazons were omitted. They had however worked up the mould they had wheeled into a fort of a mortar, and had laid it as smooth from top to bottom as a mason could have done with his trowel. From the number of men employed, the quantity of earth wheeled, and the nicety with which this operation was performed, I am persuaded it was in a great measure done for the sake of beauty.

The improved part of the other lane I never saw in its original state, but by what remains untouched, and by the accounts I heard, it must have afforded noble studies for a painter. The banks are higher and the trees are larger than in the other lane, and their branches, stretching from side to side,

“ High over arch’d imbower.”

---

for, besides its compact soldier-like appearance, it may be commanded from every point, and the enemy easily dislodged.

I heard

I heard a vast deal from the gardener of the place near it, about the large ugly roots that appeared above ground, the large holes the sheep used to lie in, and the rubbish of all kinds that used to grow about them. The last possessor took care to fill up and clean, as far as his property went; and that every thing might look regular, he put, as a boundary to the road, a row of white pales at the foot of the bank on each side and on that next his house he raised a peat wall as upright as it could well stand, by way of a facing to the old bank, and in the middle of this peat wall planted a row of laurels: this row the gardener used to cut quite flat at top, and the cattle, reaching over the pales, and browsing the lower shoots within their bite, kept it as even at bottom, so that it formed one projecting lump in the middle, and had just as picturesque an appearance as a bushy wig squeezed



squeezed between the hat and the cape. I should add, that these two specimens of dressed lanes are not in a distant county, but within thirty miles of London, and in a district full of expensive embellishments.

I am afraid many of my readers will think that I have been a long while getting through these lanes, but in them, and in old quarries, and in chalk and gravel pits that have been long neglected, a great deal of what constitutes, and what destroys picturesque beauty, is strongly exemplified within a small compass, and in spots easily resorted to; the causes too are as clearly marked, and may be as successfully studied as where the higher styles of it (often mixed with the sublime) are displayed among forests, rocks, and mountains.

## CHAPTER III.



**T**HERE are few words whose meaning has been less accurately determined than that of the word Picturesque.

In general, I believe, it is applied to every object, and every kind of scenery, which has been, or might be represented with good effect in painting; just as the word beautiful (when we speak of visible nature) is applied to every object, and every kind of scenery, that in any way give pleasure to the eye; and these seem to be the significations of both words, taken in their most extended and popular sense. A more precise and distinct idea of beauty has  
been

been given in an essay, the early splendor of which, not even the full meridian blaze of its illustrious author has been able to extinguish: but the picturesque, considered as a separate character, has never yet been accurately distinguished from the sublime and the beautiful; though as no one has ever pretended that it is synonymous with either (for it is sometimes used in contradistinction to them both) such a distinction must exist.

Mr. Gilpin \*, from whose very ingenious and extensive observations on this subject I have received great pleasure and instruction, appears to have adopted this common acceptation, not merely as such, but as giving an exact and determinate idea of the word; for he defines pic-

\* All the notes, which relate to the difference of opinion between me and Mr. Gilpin, including that on Findar's celebrated description of the eagle, are in the appendix, page 39f.

turesque objects to be those “ which  
 “ please from some quality capable of be-  
 “ ing illustrated in painting \*,” or, as he  
 again defines it in his Letter to Sir Joshua  
 Reynolds “ such objects as are proper sub-  
 “ jects for painting †.” Both these defini-  
 tions seem to me (what may perhaps ap-  
 pear a contradiction) at once too vague, and  
 too confined ; for though we are not to  
 expect any definition to be so accurate and  
 comprehensive, as both to supply the place,  
 and stand the test of investigation, yet if it  
 does not in some degree separate the thing  
 defined from all others, it differs little from  
 any general truth on the same subject. For  
 instance, it is very true, that picturesque  
 objects do please from some quality capable  
 of being illustrated in painting ; but so also  
 does every object that is represented in

\* Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 1.

† End of Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 36.

painting if it pleases at all, otherwise it would not have been painted ; and hence we ought to conclude (what certainly is not meant) that all objects which please in pictures are therefore picturesque, for no distinction or exclusion is made. Were any other person to define picturesque objects to be those which please from some striking effect of form, colour, or light and shadow,—such a definition would indeed give but a very indistinct idea of the thing defined ; but, though hardly more vague than the others, it would be much less confined, for it would not have an exclusive reference to art.

I hope to shew, in the course of this work, that the picturesque has a character not less separate and distinct than either the sublime or the beautiful, nor less independent of the art of painting. It has indeed been pointed out and illustrated by

that art, and is one of its most striking ornaments ; but has not beauty been pointed out and illustrated by that art also ; may, according to the poet, brought into existence by it ?

Si Venerem Cous nunquam posuisset Apelles  
Merita sub æquoreis illa lateret aquis.

Examine the forms of those painters who lived before the age of Raphael, or in a country where the study of the antique (operating as it did at Rome on minds highly prepared for its influence) had not yet taught them to separate what is beautiful from the general mass ; we might almost conclude that beauty did not then exist ; yet those painters were capable of exact imitation, but not of selection. Examine *grandeur* of form in the same manner ; look at the dry, meagre forms of A. Durer (a man of genius even in Raphael's estimation) of P. Perugino, A. Mantegna, &c.

and

and compare them with those of M. Angelo and Raphael: Nature was not more dry and meagre in Germany or Perugia than at Rome.—Compare the landscapes and back grounds of such artists with those of Titian; Nature was not changed, but a mind of a higher cast, and instructed by the experience of all who had gone before, rejected minute detail, and pointed out, by means of such selections and such combinations, as were congenial to its own sublime conceptions, in what forms, in what colours, and in what effects, grandeur in landscape consisted. Can it then be doubted but that grandeur and beauty have been pointed out and illustrated by painting as well as picturesqueness \*? Yet, would it be a just

\* I have ventured to make use of this word, which I believe does not occur in any writer, from what appeared to me the necessity of having some one word to oppose to beauty and sublimity, in a work where they are so often compared.

definition of sublime or of beautiful objects to say, that they were such (and, let the words be taken in their most liberal construction) as *pleased from some quality capable of being illustrated in painting, or, that were proper subjects for that art?* The ancients, indeed, not only referred beauty of *form* to painting, but even beauty of *colour*; and the poet who could describe his mistress's complexion, by comparing it to the tints of Apelles's pictures, must have thought that beauty of every kind was highly illustrated by the art he referred to.

The principles of those two leading characters in nature, the sublime and the beautiful, have been fully illustrated and discriminated by a great master; but even when I first read that most original work, I felt that there were numberless objects which give great delight to the eye, and  
yet



yet differ as widely from the beautiful, as from the sublime. The reflections I have since been led to make, have convinced me that these objects form a distinct class, and belong to what may properly be called the picturesque.

That term (as we may judge from its etymology) is applied only to objects of sight, and indeed in so confined a manner as to be supposed merely to have a reference to the art from which it is named. I am well convinced, however, that the name and reference only, are limited and uncertain, and that the qualities which make objects picturesque, are not only as distinct as those which make them beautiful or sublime, but are equally extended to all our sensations, by whatever organs they are received ; and that music (though it appears like a solecism) may be as truly picturesque, according to the general principles

of picturesqueness, as it may be beautiful or sublime, according to those of beauty or sublimity.

But there is one circumstance particularly adverse to this part of my essay; I mean the manifest derivation of the word picturesque. The Italian *pittoreesco* is, I imagine, of earlier date than either the English or the French word, the latter of which, *pittoresque*, is clearly taken from it, having, no analogy to its own tongue. *Pittoreesco* is derived, not like the English word, from the thing painted, but from the painter; and this difference is not wholly immaterial; for the one refers to a particular imitation, and the objects, which may suit it; the other to those objects, which, from the habit of examining all the peculiar effects, as well as the general appearance of nature, an artist may be struck with, though a common observer may not; and *that* independently  
of

of the power of representing them. The English word naturally draws the reader's mind towards pictures, and from that partial and confined view of the subject, what is in truth only an illustration of picturesque, becomes the foundation of it. The words sublime and beautiful have not the same etymological reference to any one visible art, and therefore are applied to objects of the other senses : sublime indeed, in the language from which it is taken, and in its plain sense, means high, and therefore, perhaps, in strictness, should relate to objects of sight only ; yet we no more scruple to call one of Handel's chorusses sublime, Corelli's famous *pastorale* beautiful ; but should any person simply, and without any qualifying expressions, call a capricious movement of Scarlatti or Haydn *picturesque*, he would, with great reason, be laughed at, for it is not a term applied to sounds ; yet

such a movement, from its sudden, unexpected, and abrupt transitions,—from a certain playful wildness of character, and an appearance of irregularity, is no less analogous to similar scenery in nature, than the concerto, or the chorus, to what is grand, or beautiful to the eye.

There is, indeed, a general harmony and correspondence in all our sensations when they arise from similar causes, though they affect us by means of different senses; and these causes (as Mr. Burke has admirably explained \*) can never be so clearly ascertained when we confine our observations to one sense only.

I must here observe (and I wish the reader to keep it in his mind) that the enquiry is not in what sense certain words are used in the best authors, still less what

\* Sublime and Beautiful, page 236.

is their common, and vulgar use, and abuse ; but whether there are certain qualities which uniformly produce the same effects in all visible objects, and, according to the same analogy, in objects of hearing, and of all the other senses ; and which qualities (though frequently blended and united with others in the same object or set of objects) may be separated from them, and assigned to the class to which they belong.

If it can be shewn that a character composed of these qualities, and distinct from all others, does prevail through all nature,—if it can be traced in the different objects of art and of nature, and appears consistent throughout,—it surely deserves a distinct title ; but with respect to the real ground of enquiry, it matters little whether such a character, or the set of objects belonging to it, be called beautiful, sublime, or picturesque,

resque, or by any other name, or by *no* name at all.

Beauty is so much the most enchanting and popular quality, that it is often applied as the highest commendation to *whatever* gives us pleasure, or raises our admiration, be the cause what it will. Mr. Burke has pointed out many instances of these ill-judged applications, and of the confusion of ideas which result from them ; but there is nothing more ill-judged, or more likely to create confusion (if we agree with Mr. Burke in his idea of beauty) than the joining it to the word picturesque, and calling the character by the title of Picturesque Beauty.

I must observe, however, that I by no means object to the expression itself, I only object to it as a general term for the *character*, and as comprehending every kind  
of

of scenery, and every set of objects which look well in a picture: That is the sense (as far as I have observed) in which it is very commonly used, and, consequently, an old hovel, an old cart horse, or an old woman, are often, in that sense, full of picturesque *beauty*; and certainly the application of the last term to such objects must tend to confuse our ideas; but were the expression restrained to those objects only in which the picturesque and the beautiful are mixed together, and so mixed, that the result, according to common apprehension, is beautiful; and were it never used when the picturesque (as it no less frequently happens) is mixed solely with what is terrible, ugly, or deformed, I should highly approve of the expression, and wish for more distinctions of the same kind.

In reality, the picturesque not only dif-  
 \* fers

fers from the beautiful in those qualities which Mr. Burke has so justly ascribed to it, but arises from qualities the most diametrically opposite.

According to Mr. Burke, one of the most essential qualities of beauty is smoothness; now as the perfection of smoothness is absolute equality and uniformity of surface, wherever that prevails there can be but little variety or intricacy; as, for instance, in smooth level banks, on a small, or in naked downs, on a large scale. Another essential quality of beauty is gradual variation; that is (to make use of Mr. Burke's expression) where the lines do not vary in a sudden and broken manner, and where there is no sudden protuberance: It requires but little reflection to perceive, that the exclusion of all but flowing lines cannot promote variety; and that sudden protuberances, and lines that cross each  
other



other in a sudden and broken manner, are among the most fruitful causes of intricacy.

I am therefore persuaded, that the two opposite qualities of roughness \*, and of sudden variation, joined to that of irregularity, are the most efficient causes of the picturesque.

This, I think, will appear very clearly, if we take a view of those objects, both natural and artificial, that are allowed to be picturesque, and compare them with those which are as generally allowed to be beautiful.

\* I have followed Mr. Gilpin's example in using roughness as a general term; he observes, however, that, "properly speaking, roughness relates only to the *surface* of bodies; and that when we speak of their *delineation* we use the word ruggedness." In making roughness (in this general sense) a very principal distinction between the beautiful and the picturesque, I believe I am supported by the general opinion of all who have considered the subject, as well as by Mr. Gilpin's authority.

A temple

A temple or palace of Grecian architecture in its perfect entire state, and with its surface and colour smooth and even, either in painting or reality, is beautiful ; in ruin it is picturesque. Observe the process by which time (the great author of such changes) converts a beautiful object into a picturesque one. First, by means of weather stains, partial incrustations, mosses, &c. it at the same time takes off from the uniformity of its surface, and of its colour ; that is, gives it a degree of roughness, and variety of tint. Next, the various accidents of weather loosen the stones themselves ; they tumble in irregular masses upon what was perhaps smooth turf or pavement, or nicely trimmed walks and shrubberies ; now mixed and overgrown with wild plants and creepers, that crawl over, and shoot among the fallen ruins. Sedums, wall-flowers, and other vegetables  
that

that bear drought, find nourishment in the decayed cement from which the stones have been detached: Birds convey their food into the chinks, and yew, elder, and other berried plants project from the sides; while the ivy mantles over other parts, and crowns the top. The even regular lines of the doors and windows are broken, and, through their ivy-fringed openings is displayed, in a more broken and picturesque manner, that striking image in Virgil:

*Apparet domus intus, & atria longa patefcunt;  
Apparent Priami & veterum penetralia regum.*

Gothic architecture is generally confidered as more picturesque, though less beautiful, than Grecian, and, upon the same principle that a ruin is more so than a new edifice. The first thing that strikes the eye in approaching any building is the general outline against the sky (or whatever it may be opposed to) and the effect of the openings: in Grecian buildings the general  
lines

lines of the roof are strait, and even when varied and adorned by a dome or a pediment, the whole has a character of symmetry and regularity.

Symmetry, which in works of art particularly, accords with the beautiful, is in the same degree adverse to the picturesque, and among the various causes of the superior picturesqueness of ruins, compared with entire buildings, the destruction of symmetry is by no means the least powerful.

In Gothic buildings, the outline of the summit presents such a variety of forms, of turrets and pinnacles, some open, some fretted and variously enriched, that even where there is an exact correspondence of parts, it is often disguised by an appearance of splendid confusion and irregularity \*. In

\* There is a line in Dryden's *Palamon and Arcite*, which might be interpreted according to this idea, though I do not suppose he intended to convey any such meaning :

“ And all *appeared* irregularly great.”

the

the doors and windows of Gothic churches, the pointed arch has as much variety as any regular figure can well have; the eye too is not so strongly conducted from the top of the one, to that of the other, as by the parallel lines of the Grecian; and every person must be struck with the extreme richness and intricacy, of some of the principal windows of our cathedrals and ruined abbeys. In these last is displayed the triumph of the picturesque; and its charms to a painter's eye are often so great as to rival those of beauty itself\*.

Some people may, perhaps, be unwilling

\* I hope it will not be supposed, that by admiring the picturesque circumstances of the Gothic, I mean to undervalue the symmetry and beauty of Grecian buildings: whatever comes to us from the Greeks, has an irresistible claim to our admiration; that distinguished people seized on the true points both of beauty and grandeur in all the arts, and their architecture has justly obtained the same high pre-eminence, as their sculpture, poetry, and eloquence.

to allow, that in ruins of Grecian and Gothic architecture, any considerable part of the spectator's pleasure arises from the picturesque circumstances, and may choose to attribute the whole, to what may justly claim a great share in that pleasure—the elegance or grandeur of their forms—the veneration of high antiquity—or the solemnity of religious awe; in a word, to the mixture of the two other characters: but were this true, yet there are many buildings, highly interesting to all who have united the study of art with that of nature, in which beauty and grandeur are equally out of the question; such as hovels, cottages, mills, ragged insides of old barns and stables, &c. whenever they have any marked and peculiar effect of form, tint, or light and shadow. In mills particularly, such is the extreme intricacy of the wheels and the wood work; such the singular variety of forms,

forms, and of lights and shadows, of mosses and weather stains from the constant moisture; of plants springing from the rough joints of the stones; such the assemblage of every thing which most conduces to picturesqueness, that even without the addition of water, an old mill has the greatest charm for a painter.

It is owing to the same causes that a building with scaffolding has often a more picturesque appearance, than the building itself, when the scaffolding is taken away—that old, mossy, rough-hewn park pales of unequal heights, are an ornament to landscape, especially when they are partially concealed by thickets; while a neat post and rail, regularly continued round a field, and seen without any interruption, is one of the most unpicturesque, as being one of the most uniform of all boundaries.

But among all the objects of nature,

F 2

there

there is none in which roughness and smoothness more strongly mark the distinction between the two characters, than in water. A calm, clear lake, with the reflections of all that surrounds it, seen under the influence of a setting sun, at the close of an evening clear and serene as its own surface, is, perhaps, of all scenes, the most congenial to our ideas of beauty in its strictest and in its most general sense.

Nay, though the scenery around should be the most wild and picturesque (I might almost say the most savage) every thing is so softened and melted together by the reflection of such a mirror, that the prevailing idea, even then, might possibly be that of beauty, so long as the water itself was chiefly regarded. On the other hand, all water whose surface is broken, and whose motion is abrupt and irregular, as universally accords with our ideas of the picturesque ;



tureſque; and whenever the word is mentioned, rapid and ſtony torrents and cata-racts, and the waves daſhing againſt rocks, are among the firſt images that preſent themſelves to our imagination. The two characters alſo approach and balance each other, as roughneſs or ſmoothneſs, as gentle undulation or abruptneſs prevail.

Among trees, it is not the ſmooth young beech, or the freſh and tender aſh \*, but the

\* As the young aſh (though at any age by no means a popular tree) is a favourite with painters, it muſt ſeem inconſiſtent to thoſe who refer the term to art only, that I ſhould deny it to be pictureſque. But as I have before remarked, if all the objects which painters have been fond of repreſenting were therefore to be called pictureſque, it would be a term of little diſtinction. The young aſh has every principle of beauty; freſhneſs and delicacy of foliage, ſmoothneſs of bark, elegance of form; nor am I ſurpriſed that Virgil, whoſe poetry has ſo much of thoſe qualities, ſhould call the aſh the moſt beautiful tree in the woods; but when its own leaves are changed to the autumnal tint, and when contraſted with ruder or more maſſive ſhapes or colours, it becomes part of a pictureſque circumſtance, without changing its own nature.

rugged old oak, or knotty wych elm, that are picturesque; nor is it necessary they should be of great bulk; it is sufficient if they are rough, mossy, with a character of age, and with sudden variations in their forms. The limbs of huge trees, shattered by lightning or tempestuous winds, are in the highest degree picturesque; but whatever is caused by those dreaded powers of destruction, must always have a tincture of the sublime \*.

If

\* There is a simile in Ariosto, in which the two characters are finely united:

Quale sfordito, et stupido aratore,  
 Poi ch'è passato il fulmine; si leva  
 Di là, dove l'altissimo fragore  
 Presso agli uccisi buoi steso l'aveva;  
 Che mira senza fronde, et senza onore  
 Il Pin che da lontan vedâr soleva  
 'Tal si levo'l Pagano.

Milton seems to have thought of this simile; but the sublimity both of his subject, and of his own genius, made him reject those picturesque circumstances, whose variety,  
 while

If we next take a view of those animals that are called picturesque, the same qualities will be found to prevail. The ass is eminently so, much more than the horse; and among horses, it is the wild forester with his rough coat, his mane and tail ragged and uneven, or the worn-out cart-horse with his staring bones. The sleek, pampered steed, with his high arched crest, and flowing mane, is frequently represented in painting, but his prevailing character whether there, or in reality, is that of beauty.

Among dogs, the Pomeranian and the rough water-dog, are more picturesque than the smooth spaniel, or greyhound; the while it amuses, distracts the mind, and has kept it fixed on a few grand and awful images :

As when heaven's fire  
Has scath'd the forest oaks, or mountain pines,  
With singed top their stately growth tho' bare  
Stands on the blasted heath.

F 4

shaggy

shaggy goat than the sheep; and these last are more so when their fleeces are ragged, and worn away in parts, than when they are of equal thickness, or when they have lately been shorn. No animal indeed is so constantly introduced in landscape as the sheep, but that (as I observed before) does not prove superior picturesqueness; and I imagine, that besides their innocent character (so suited to pastoral scenes, of which they are the natural inhabitants) it arises from their being of a tint at once brilliant and mellow, and which unites happily with all objects; and also from their producing broader masses of light and shadow than any other animal. The reverse of this is true with regard to deer; their wild appearance, their lively action, their sudden bounds, the intricacy of their branching horns, are circumstances highly picturesque; their effect in groups is apt to be meagre and spotty.

Among

Among savage animals, the lion with his shaggy mane is much more picturesque than the lioness, though she is equally an object of terror.

The effect of smoothness or roughness, in producing the beautiful or the picturesque, is again clearly exemplified in birds. Nothing is more strictly beautiful, or more happily conveys that idea, than their plumage when smooth and undisturbed—when the eye glides over it without interruption. Nothing, on the other hand, has a more picturesque effect than feathers, when they are placed as detached ornaments, or when in their natural state they are ruffled by any accidental circumstance — by any sudden passion in the animal—or when they appear so from their natural arrangement. As all the effects of passion and of strong emotion on the human figure and countenance are picturesque, such likewise are their effects  
on

on the plumage of birds ; when inflamed with anger, or with desire, the first symptoms appear in their ruffled plumage \*. The game cock, when he attacks his rival, raises the feathers of his neck, the purple pheasant his crest, and the peacock, when he feels the return of spring, shews his passion in the same manner,

And every feather shivers with delight.

Many birds have received from nature

\* In all animals the same causes produce the same kind of effect. The bristles of the wild boar, the quills on the fretful porcupine, are suddenly raised by sudden emotions ; and it is curious to observe how all unadvisedly disturbs inward calm, creates a correspondent roughness without.

The first symptoms of the interruption of that state of the mind, which so well answers to the beautiful, is an interruption of outward smoothness. In man, when inflamed with anger, the eye-brows are contracted, the skin wrinkled ; and the most terrible of animals shews the same picturesque marks of rage and fierceness.

Παν δὲ τ' ἐπισκυννὸν κατὰ ἐλκεται ὅσπερ καλῶντων.

the

the same picturesque appearance as in others happens only accidentally : such are the birds whose heads and necks are adorned with ruffs, with crests, and with tufts of plumes; not lying smoothly over each other as those of the back, but loosely and irregularly disposed. These are, perhaps, the most striking and attractive of all birds (and it is the same in all other objects) as having that degree of roughness and irregularity, which gives a spirit to smoothness and symmetry; and as these last qualities prevail, the result of the whole is justly called beautiful.

Birds of prey have generally more of the picturesque, from the angular form of their beaks, the rough feathers on their legs, their crooked talons, their colour (on which I shall say more hereafter) as also from their action and energy; all this counterbalances the general smoothness of the plumage

mage on their backs and wings, which they have in common with the rest of the feathered creation. Lastly, among our own species, beggars, gypsies, and all such rough tattered figures as are merely picturesque, bear a close analogy, in all the qualities that make them so, to old hovels and mills, to the wild forest horse, and other objects of the same kind.

More dignified characters, such as a Belifarius—a Marius in age and exile\*, have the same mixture of picturesqueness, and of decayed grandeur, as the venerable remains of the magnificence of past ages.

If we ascend to the highest order of created beings, as painted by the grandest of our poets, they, in their state of glory

\* The noble picture of Salvator Rosa, at Lord Townsend's, which in the print is called Belifarius, has been thought to be a Marius among the ruins of Carthage.

and



and happiness, raise chiefly ideas of beauty and sublimity : like earthly objects, they become picturesque when \* ruined—when shadows have obscured their original brightness, and that uniform, though angelic expression of pure love and joy, has been destroyed by a variety of warring passions :

Darken'd so, yet shone  
Above them all the archangel ; but his face  
Deep scars of thunder had entrench'd, and care  
Sat on his faded cheek ; but under brows  
Of dauntless courage and considerate pride  
Waiting revenge ; cruel his eye, but cast  
Signs of remorse and passion.

If from nature we turn to that art from which the expression itself is taken, we shall find all the principles of picturesqueness confirmed. Among painters, Salvator

\* Nor appear'd  
Less than archangel *ruin'd*, and the excess  
Of glory obscured.

Rosa

Rosa is one of the most remarkable for his picturesque effects, and in no other master are seen such abrupt and rugged forms, such sudden deviations both in his figures and his landscapes; and the roughness and broken touches of his pencilling, admirably accord with the objects they characterise.

Guido, on the other hand, was as eminent for beauty; in his celestial countenances are the happiest examples of gradual variation—of lines that melt, and flow into each other; no sudden break—nothing that can disturb that pleasing languor which the union of all that constitutes beauty impresses on the soul. The stile of his hair is as smooth as its own character, and its effect in accompanying the face will allow; the flow of his drapery—the sweetness and equality of his pencilling—and the silvery clearness and  
purity

purity of his tints, are all examples of the justness of Mr. Burke's principles of beauty. But the works even of this great master, shew us how unavoidably an attention to mere beauty, and flow of outline, will lead towards sameness and insipidity. If this has happened to a painter of such high excellence, who so well knew the value of all that belongs to his art, and whose touch, when he painted a St. Peter or a St. Jerome, was as much admired for its spirited and characteristic roughness, as for its equality and smoothness in his angels and madonnas,—what must be the case with men who have been tethered all their lives in a clump or a belt?

There is another instance of contrast between two eminent painters, which I cannot forbear mentioning, as it confirms the alliance between roughness and picturesque,

refqueness, and between smoothness and beauty, and shews, in the latter case, the consequent danger of sameness. Of all the painters who have left behind them a high reputation, none, perhaps, was more uniformly smooth than Albano, or less deviated into abruptness of any kind; none also have greater monotony of character; but, from the extreme beauty and delicacy of his forms, and his tints (particularly in his children) and his exquisite finishing, few pictures are more generally captivating.

His scholar, Mola, (and that circumstance makes it more singular) is as remarkable for many of those opposite qualities which distinguish S. Rosa, though he has not the boldness and animation of that original genius. There is hardly any painter whose pictures more immediately catch the eye of a connoisseur, than those

§

of

of Mola, or that less attract the notice of a person unused to painting. Salvator has a savage grandeur, often in the highest degree sublime; and sublimity, in any shape, will command attention; but Mola's scenes and figures, for the most part, are neither sublime nor beautiful; they are purely picturesque: his touch is less rough than Salvator's; his colouring has, in general, more richness and variety; and his pictures seem to me the most perfect examples of the higher stile of picturesqueness: infinitely removed from vulgar nature, but having neither the softness and delicacy of beauty, nor that grandeur of conception which produces the sublime.

## CHAPTER IV.

FROM all that has been stated in the last chapter, picturesqueness appears to hold a station between beauty and sublimity; and on that account, perhaps, is more frequently, and more happily blended with them both, than they are with each other. It is, however, perfectly distinct from either; for in the first place it is evident that picturesqueness and beauty are founded on very opposite qualities; the one on smoothness\*, the

\* Baldness seems to be an exception, as there smoothness is picturesque, and not beautiful. It is, however, an exception, which, instead of weakening, confirms what I have said, and shews the constant opposition of the two characters, even where their causes appear to be confounded.

Baldness, is the smoothness of age and decay, not of youth, health, and freshness: it is picturesque, from producing

the other on roughness;—the one on gradual, the other on sudden variation;—the one on ideas of youth and freshness, the other on that of age, and even of decay.

But as most of the qualities of visible beauty (excepting colour) are made known to us through the medium of another sense, the sight itself is hardly more to be attended to than the touch, in regard to all those sensations which are excited by beautiful forms; and the distinction between the beautiful and the picturesque will, perhaps, be most strongly pointed out by means of the latter sense. I am

ducing variety and peculiarity of character; from destroying the usual symmetry and regularity of the face, and substituting an uncertain, instead of a certain boundary.

When a bald head is well plaistered and flowered, and the boundary of the forehead distinctly marked in pomatum and powder, it has as little pretension to picturesqueness as to beauty.

aware that this is liable to a gross and obvious ridicule; but for that reason none but gross and common-place minds will dwell upon it.

Mr. Burke has observed, that \* “ men are carried to the sex, in general, as it is the sex, and by the common law of nature; but they are attached to particulars by personal *beauty* ;” he adds, “ I call beauty a social quality; for where women and men, and not only they, but when other animals give us a sense of joy and pleasure in beholding them (and there are many that do so) they inspire us with sentiments of tenderness and affection towards their persons; we like to have them near us, and we enter willingly into a kind of relation with them.”

These sentiments of tenderness and affection, nature has taught us to express by

\* Sublime and Beautiful, p. 66.

caresses,



caresses, by gentle pressure ; these are the endearments we make use of (where sex is totally out of the question) to beautiful children, to beautiful animals, and even to things inanimate ; and where the size and character (as in trees, buildings, &c.) exclude any such relation, still something of the same difference of sensation between them, and rugged objects, appears to subsist ; that sensation however is diminished as the size of any beautiful object is increased ; and as it approaches towards grandeur and magnificence, it recedes from loveliness.

As the eye borrows many of its sensations from the touch, so that again seems to borrow others from the sight. Soft, fresh, and beautiful colours, though “ not sensible to feeling as to sight,” give us an inclination to try their effect on the touch ; whereas, if the colour be not beautiful,

that inclination, I believe, is always diminished, and, in objects merely picturesque, and void of all beauty, is rarely excited \*.

I observed in a former part, that symmetry, which perfectly accords with the beautiful, is in the same degree adverse to the picturesque: *irregularity* is therefore a strongly marked distinction between the two characters. The general symmetry which prevails in the forms of animals, is obvious, but as no precise standard of it in each species has been made, or acknowledged, any slight deviation from what is most usual, is scarcely attended to. In the human form, from our being more nearly interested in all that belongs to it, symme-

\* I have read, indeed, in some fairy tale, of a country, where age and wrinkles were loved and caressed, and youth and freshness neglected; but in real life, I fancy, the most picturesque old woman, however her admirer may ogle her on that account, is perfectly safe from his caresses.

try has been more accurately defined ; and as far as human observation and selection can fix a standard for beauty, that standard has been fixed by the Grecian sculptors, and is acknowledged in all the most civilized parts of Europe : a near approach to that standard makes the person to be called *regularly* beautiful ; a departure from it, (whatever striking and attractive peculiarity it may bestow) is still a departure from that perfection of ideal beauty, so diligently sought after, and so nearly attained by those great artists ; from the few precious remains of whose works, we have learned the rudiments of that science (as it might almost be called) which gave birth to them, the science of distinguishing what is most exquisite and perfect, from the more ordinary degrees of excellence.

There are some expressions in the language of a neighbouring people of lively

imagination, among whom gallantry and attention to the other sex has been particularly cultivated, which seem to imply an uncertain idea of some character, which was not precisely beauty, but which, from whatever causes, produced striking and pleasing effects: such are *une physionomie de fantaisie*, and the well known expression of *un certain je ne sais quoi*; it is also common to say of a woman—*que sans être belle elle est piquante*—a word by the bye that in many points answers very exactly to picturesque. The amusing history of Roxalana and the Sultan, is at the same time the history of the picturesque or the *piquant*, both in regard to person and manners, and also of its effects. Marmontel certainly did not intend to give the *petit nez retroussé* as a beautiful feature, but to shew how much such a striking *irregularity*, might accord and co-operate with the same sort of irregularity

in

in the character of the mind. The playful, unequal, coquetish Roxalana, full of sudden turns and caprices, is opposed to the beautiful, tender, and constant Elvira; and the effects of irritation, to those of softness and languor: the tendency of the qualities of beauty alone towards monotony, are no less happily insinuated.

Although there are no generally received standards with respect to animals, yet those who have been in the habit of breeding them, and of attending to their forms, have fixed to themselves certain standards of perfection; Mr. Bakewell, like Phidias or Apelles, had probably formed in his mind an idea of perfection \*, beyond what he had  
seen

\*. It may be said, that this perfection relates only to their disposition to produce fat upon the most profitable parts; a very grazier-like, and material idea of beauty it must be fairly owned. But still, if a standard of shape (from whatever cause) be acknowledged, and called  
beautiful,

seen in nature; and which, like them, but by a different process, he was constantly endeavouring to embody. Any departure from the most perfect standard which he had realized, both he, and all those who acknowledged it, would probably consider as an *irregularity* in the form,—as a deviation from their idea of beauty, however striking the animal might be to others in its general appearance. More marked and sudden deviations from the general symmetry of animals, whether arising from particular conformation, from accident, or from the effects of age or disease, often very strongly attract the painter's notice, and are recorded by him; but they never can be thought to make the object more beautiful: many of these would, on the contrary, by most men be called deformi-

beautiful, any departure from that settled correspondence and symmetry of parts, will certainly, within that jurisdiction, be considered as a departure from beauty.

ties,

ties, and not without reason. I shall hereafter have occasion to shew the connection, as well as the distinction that subsists between deformity and picturesqueness.

If we turn from animal to vegetable nature, many of the most beautiful flowers have a high degree of symmetry; so much so, that their colours appear to be laid on after a regular and finished design: but beauty is so much the prevailing character of flowers, that no one seeks for any thing picturesque among them. In trees, on the other hand, every thing appears so loose and irregular, that symmetry seems out of the question; yet still the same analogy subsists. A *beautiful* tree, considered in point of form only, must have a certain correspondence of parts, and a comparative regularity \* and proportion, whereas inequality

\* Cowley has very accurately enumerated the chief qualities of beauty, in his description of what he considers

quality and irregularity alone, will give to a tree a *picturesque* appearance; more especially if the effects of age and decay, as well as of accident are conspicuous; when, for instance, some of the limbs are shattered, and the broken stump remains in the void space; when others, half twisted round by winds, hang downwards; while others again, shoot in an opposite direction, and perhaps some large bough projects sideways

as one of the most beautiful of trees,—the lime. He has not forgot symmetry in the catalogue of its charms, though it is probable that few readers will agree with him in admiring the degree, or the style of it, which is displayed in the lime: but exact symmetry in all things, was then as extravagantly in fashion, as it is now (perhaps too violently) in disgrace.

Stat Philyra; haud omnes formosior altera surgit  
Inter Hamadryades; mollissima, candida, lævis,  
Et viridante comâ, & bene olenti flore superba,  
Spargit odoratam late atque *æqualiter* umbram.

If we take *candida* for clear, as *candidi fontes*; and *viridantè* as peculiarly fresh and verdant, we have every quality of beauty separately considered.

from



from below the stag-headed top, and then as suddenly turns upwards, and rises above it. The general proportion of such trees, whether tall or short, thick or slender, is not material to their character as *picturesque* objects, but where elegance and gracefulness are concerned, a short thick proportion will not give an idea of those qualities. There certainly are a great variety of pleasing forms and proportions in trees, and different men have different predilections, just as they have with respect to their own species; but I never knew any person, who (if he observed at all) was not struck with the gracefulness and elegance of a tree, whose proportion was rather tall, whose stem had an easy sweep, but which returned again in such a manner, that the whole appeared completely poised and balanced, and whose boughs were in some degree pendent, but towards their extremities

ties made a gentle curve upwards :: if to such a form you add fresh and tender foliage and bark, you have every quality assigned to beauty.

In the last chapter I described the process by which a beautiful *artificial* object becomes picturesque ; I will now shew the similar effect of the same kind of process, in *natural* objects ; and what may more pointedly illustrate the subject, will compare at the same moment the effect of that process on animate and inanimate objects. It cannot be said that there is much general analogy between a tree, and a human figure ; but there is a great deal in the particular qualities which make them either beautiful, or picturesque : almost all the qualities of beauty, as it might naturally be expected, belong to youth ; and, among them all, none is more consonant to our ideas of beauty, or gives so general an impression of it,

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it,

it, as freshness : without it, the most perfect form wants its most precious finish ; wherever it begins to fade, wherever marks of age, or of unhealthiness appear,—though other effects, other sympathies, other characters may arise,—there must be a diminution of beauty. Freshness belongs equally to human, and to vegetable beauty, and is diffused over the whole appearance ; many particular parts have likewise a mutual analogy : the luxuriance of foliage, answers to that of hair ; the delicate smoothness of bark\*, to that of the skin ; and the clear, even, and tender colour of it to that of the complexion : there is in both also (though much more sensibly in the skin) another

\* Many sorts of trees, like many individuals of the human species, never have the freshness of youth ; the one in the bark, or the foliage ; the other in the skin, or the complexion, or both of them in their general appearance. I am here supposing the change to be made, from what is in every part, most fresh and beautiful in each.

beauty

beauty arising from a look of softness, and suppleness, so opposite to the hard and *dry* appearance, which, as well as roughness, is brought on by age; and which peculiar softness (arising in this case from the free circulation of juices to every part, and in contra-distinction to what is dry, though yielding to pressure) is well expressed by the Greek word *υγροτης*; a word whose meaning I shall have occasion to dwell more fully upon hereafter\*. The earliest, and most perceptible attacks of time, are made on the bark, and on the skin, which at first, however, merely lose their evenness of surface, and perfect clearness of colour: by degrees, the lines grow stronger in each; the tint more dingy; often unequal and in spots; and in proportion as either trees, or men or women, advance towards decay, the regular progress of time, and often the effects of

\* See Appendix.

accident,

accident, occasion great and partial changes in their forms. In trees, the various hollows and inequalities which are produced by some parts failing, and others in consequence falling in—from accidental marks and protuberances—and from other circumstances, which a long course of years gives rise to, are obvious; and many correspondent changes, and from similar causes, in the human form, are no less obvious. By such changes, that nice symmetry and correspondence of parts, so essential to beauty, is in both destroyed; in both, the hand of time traces still deeper furrows, and roughens their surface; a few leaves, a few hairs, are thinly scattered on their summits; that light, airy, aspiring \* look of youth is gone,

\* With respect to trees I have heard it remarked by timber-merchants, that when the top-shoots of a tree cease to aspire, and seem rather to turn downwards, it will grow no more, however well the buds and leaves may appear.

and both seem shrunk and tottering, and ready to fall with the next blast.

Such is the change from beauty; and to what? surely not to a higher, or an equal degree, or to a different style of beauty, no, nor to any thing that resembles it: and yet, that both these objects, (even in this last state) have often strong attractions for painters—their works afford sufficient testimony; that they are called picturesque—the general application of the term to such objects, makes it equally clear; and that they totally differ from what is beautiful—the common feelings of mankind no less convincingly prove. One misapprehension I would wish to guard against; I do not mean, by the instances I have given, to assert, that an object, to be picturesque, must be old and decayed; but that the most beautiful objects will often become so, by age, and by decay: and I believe it is equally  
true,

true, that those which are naturally of a strongly marked, and peculiar character, are likely to become still more picturesque, by the process I have mentioned.

I have now very fully stated the principal circumstances by which the picturesque, is separated from the beautiful. It is equally distinct from the sublime ; for though there are some qualities common to them both, yet they differ in many essential points, and proceed from very different causes. In the first place, greatness of dimension \* is a powerful cause of the sublime ; the picturesque has no connection with dimension of any kind (in which it differs from the beautiful also) and is as often found in the

\* I would by no means lay too much stress on greatness of dimension ; but what Mr. Burke has observed with regard to buildings, is true of many natural objects, such as rocks, cascades, &c. : Where the scale is too diminutive, no greatness of manner will give them grandeur.

smallest as in the largest objects.—The sublime, being founded on principles of awe and terror, never descends to any thing light, or playful; the picturesque, whose characteristics are intricacy and variety, is equally adapted to the grandest, and to the gayest scenery.—Infinity is one of the most efficient causes of the sublime; the boundless ocean, for that reason, inspires awful sensations: to give it picturesqueness, you must destroy that cause of its sublimity; for it is on the shape, and disposition of its boundaries, that the picturesque must, in great measure, depend.

Uniformity (which is so great an enemy to the picturesque) is not only compatible with the sublime, but often the cause of it. That general, equal gloom which is spread over all nature before a storm, with the stillness, so nobly described by Shakespear, is in the highest degree sublime.



lime \*. The picturesque, requires greater variety, and does not shew itself, till the dreadful thunder has rent the region, has tossed the clouds into a thousand towering forms, and opened (as it were) the recesses of the sky. A blaze of light unmixed with shade, on the same principles, tends to the sublime only: Milton has placed light, in its most glorious brightness, as an inaccessible barrier round the throne of the Almighty:

For God is light,  
And never but in unapproached light,  
Dwelt from eternity.

And such is the power he has given even  
to its diminished splendor,

That the brightest seraphim  
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.

\* And as we often see against a storm  
A silence in the heavens, the wrack stand still,  
The bold winds speechless, and the orb itself  
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder  
Does rend the region.

In one place, indeed, he has introduced very picturesque circumstances in his sublime representation of the deity; but it is of the deity in wrath,—it is when from the weakness and narrowness of our conceptions, we give the names, and the effects of our passions, to the all-perfect Creator :

And clouds began  
To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll  
In dusky wreaths reluctant flames, the sign  
Of wrath awak'd.

In general, however, where the glory, power, or majesty of God are represented, he has avoided that variety of form, and of colouring, which might take off from simple and uniform grandeur, and has encompassed the divine essence with unapproached light, or with the majesty of darkness.

Again, (if we descend to earth) a perpendicular rock of vast bulk and height, though bare and unbroken,—a deep chasm under the same circumstances, are objects  
which

which produce awful sensations; but without some variety and intricacy, either in themselves, or their accompaniments, they will not be picturesque.—Lastly, a most essential difference between the two characters is, that the sublime, by its solemnity, takes off from the loveliness of beauty \*, whereas the picturesque renders it more captivating.

According to Mr. Burke †, the passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*, when those causes operate most powerfully, is astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended with some degree of horror: the sublime also, being founded on ideas of pain and terror, like them operates by stretching the fibres beyond their natural tone.

\* Majesty and love, says the poet who had most studied the art of love, never can dwell together; and therefore Juno, whose beauty was united with majesty, had no captivating charms till she had put on the cestus; that is, till she had changed dignity for coquetry.

† Sublime and Beautiful, Part II. Sect. 1.

The passion excited by beauty, is love and complacency ; it acts by relaxing the fibres somewhat below their natural tone \*, and this is accompanied by an inward sense of melting and languor.

Whether this account of the effects of sublimity and beauty be strictly philosophi-

\* I have heard this part of Mr. Burke's book criticized, on a supposition that pleasure is more generally produced from the fibres being stimulated, than from their being relaxed. To me it appears, that Mr. Burke is right with respect to that pleasure which is the effect of beauty, or whatever has an analogy to beauty, according to the principles he has laid down.

If we examine our feelings on a warm genial day, in a spot full of the softest beauties of nature, the fragrance of spring breathing around us—pleasure then seems to be our natural state ; to be received, not sought after ; it is the happiness of existing to sensations of delight only ; we are unwilling to move, almost to think, and desire only to feel, to enjoy.

How different is that active pursuit of pleasure, when the fibres are braced by a keen air, in a wild, romantic situation ; when the activity of the body, almost keeps pace with that of the mind, and eagerly scales every rocky promontory, explores every new recess. Such is the difference between the beautiful, and the picturesque.

cal,

cal, has, I believe, been questioned; but in any case, whether the fibres are really stretched, or are relaxed, it presents a lively image of the sensations often produced by love and astonishment. To pursue the same train of ideas, I may add, that the effect of the picturesque is curiosity; an effect, which, though less splendid and powerful, has a more general influence; it neither relaxes, nor violently stretches the fibres, but by its active agency keeps them to their full tone; and thus, when mixed with either of the other characters, corrects the languor of beauty, or the horror of sublimity. But as the nature of every corrective must be to take off from the peculiar effect of what it is to correct, so does the picturesque when united to either of the others. It is the coquetry of nature; it makes beauty more amusing, more varied, more playful, but also,

“ Less winning soft, less amiably mild.”

Again,

Again, by its variety, its intricacy, its partial concealments, it excites that active curiosity which gives play to the mind, loosening those iron bonds with which astonishment chains up its faculties\*.

Where characters, however distinct in their nature, are perpetually mixed together in such various degrees and manners, it is not always easy to draw the exact line of separation: I think, however, we may conclude, that where an object, or a set of objects, are without smoothness or grandeur, but from their intricacy, their sudden and irregular deviations, their variety of forms, tints, and lights and shadows, are interesting to a cultivated eye—they are simply picturesque; such, for instance, are the rough banks that often inclose a bye-road, or a hol-

\* This seems to be perfectly applicable to tragedy, and is at once its apology and condemnation. Whatever relieves the mind from a strong impression, of course weakens that impression.

low lane: Imagine the *size* of these banks, and the *space* between them to be increased, till the lane, becomes a deep dell—the coves, large caverns—the peeping stones, hanging rocks, so that the whole may impress an idea of awe and grandeur;—the sublime will then be mixed with the picturesque, though the *scale* only, not the *style* of the scenery, would be changed. On the other hand, if parts of the banks were smooth, and gently sloping—or if in the middle space the turf was soft and close-bitten—or if a gentle stream passed between them, whose clear, broken surface, reflected all their varieties—the beautiful and the picturesque, by means of that softness and smoothness, would then be united.

I may here observe, that as softness is become a *visible* quality, as well as smoothness, so also, from the same kind of sympathy, it is a principle of beauty in many visible

fible objects: but as the hardest bodies, are those which receive the highest polish, and consequently the highest degree of smoothness, there must be a number of objects in which smoothness and softness are for that reason incompatible. The one however is not unfrequently mistaken for the other, and I have more than once heard pictures, which were so smoothly finished that they looked like ivory, commended for their softness.

The skin of a delicate woman, is an example of softness and smoothness united; but if by art, a higher polish is given to the skin, the softness (and in that case I may add the beauty) is destroyed. Fur, moss, hair wool, &c. are comparatively rough; but they are soft, and yield to pressure, and therefore take off from the appearance of hardness, and also of edginess. A stone, or rock, when polished by water, is smoother, but less soft, than when covered with moss; and upon  
this



this principle, the wooded banks of a river, have often a softer general effect, than the bare, shaven border of a canal. There is the same difference between the grass of a pleasure-ground mowed to the quick, and that of a fresh meadow; and it frequently happens, that continual mowing destroys the verdure, as well as the softness. So much does excessive attachment to one principle destroy its own ends.

All this shews, that the two characters, though distinct, are seldom wholly unmixed: for as there are picturesque circumstances in many beautiful, entire buildings; so there are also circumstances of beauty, in many picturesque ruins.

Before I end this chapter, I shall wish to say a few words with respect to my adoption of Mr. Burke's doctrine. It has been asserted, that I have pre-supposed our ideas of the sublime and beautiful, to be clearly settled;

settled \* ; whereas the least attention to what I have written, would have shewn the contrary. As far as my own opinion is concerned, I certainly am convinced of the general truth and accuracy of Mr. Burke's system, for it is the foundation of my own ; but I must be very ignorant of human nature, to suppose " our ideas clearly settled " on any question of that kind : I therefore have always spoken cautiously, and even doubtfully, to avoid the imputation of judging for others ; I have said—*if* we agree with Mr. Burke—*according* to Mr. Burke,—and in the next chapter to this, I have stated that Mr. Burke has done *a great deal towards* settling the vague and contradictory ideas, &c. These passages so very plainly shew, how little I presumed to suppose our ideas were clearly settled, that no person, who had

\* Essay on Design in Gardening, by Mr. George Mason, page 201.

read the book with any degree of attention, could have made such a remark; and I must say, that whoever does venture to criticize what he has not considered, is much more his own enemy, than the author's.

By way of proving that Mr. Burke's ideas of the sublime, are unworthy of being attended to, Mr. G. Mason has the following remark, which I have taken care to copy very exactly; "The majority of thinking and learned men, whom it has been my lot to converse with on such subjects, are as well persuaded of *terror's* being the cause of *sublime*, as that Tenterden steeple is of Goodwin sands." As Mr. Mason seems very conversant with the classics, as well as with English authors, and as the sublime in poetry has been discussed by writers of high authority, and the sublimity of many passages very generally acknowledged—I could wish that he, and his learned friends, would  
take

take the trouble of examining such passages in Homer, Virgil, Shakespear, Milton, and all the poets who are most eminent for their sublimity : and should they find, (as surely they will) that almost all of them are manifestly founded upon terror, or on those modifications of it which Mr. Burke has so admirably pointed out—let them reflect what must have been the depth and penetration of that man's mind, who, scarcely arrived at manhood, clearly saw how one great principle, (the acknowledged cause of the sublime in poetry\*) was likewise the

\* That the sublime in poetry is founded upon terror, seems to be taken for granted (and probably on the authority of Aristotle) by Longinus; for in many places he has used the word *terrible* as almost synonymous with *sublime*. Speaking of a bombast passage, he says, if you examine it ἐκ τῆ φοβερῆ κατ' ὀλίγον υπονοστέι πρὸς τὸ εὐκαταφρόνητον; and again, where he discriminates between a sublime, and a disgusting image, he says, ἡ γὰρ δεινὸν ἐποίησε τὸ εἰδωλόν, ἀλλὰ μυστήν. Should it be said, that δεινὸν signifies also what is excellent, or striking, in various ways,

the most powerful cause of sublimity, in all objects whatsoever ; pursued it through all the works of art, and of nature ; and explained, illustrated, and adorned his dis-

ways, as well as terrible, I should ask how it came by such a signification ? clearly, because terror, in its various modifications, is the cause of all that is most striking. The Italians apply such expressions to any striking words of art ; a fine picture or statue (no matter what the subject) is called *un spavento* ; and the style of the grandest of modern artists is called

Di Michel' Agnol' la *terribil'* via.

A more familiar instance may be given to the English reader, of the use which is continually made of the word terrible, for the purpose of raising our ideas of the objects to which it is applied ; and certainly by persons who never read Aristotle, or Longinus, or even Mr. Burke. Who can hear at a horse race, of *the terrible high bred cattle*, and not feel how universally the same idea has prevailed.

Were it not that some persons, of whom I think very highly, had doubts with regard to particular parts of this subject, which I wished to combat more at large than I could well do in conversation, I should perhaps have contented myself with opposing *the terrible high bred cattle*, to *Tenterden steeple*.

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covery,

covery, with that ingenuity, and that brilliancy of language, in which he stands unrivalled. Then let Mr. Mason read over his own passage of Tenterden steeple, and I wish him no greater humiliation.

A number of sublime passages in poetry will of course present themselves to a person so well read in the classics as Mr. Mason, who, under the title of classical landscapes\*, has proved by so many quotations, that the ancients had eyes just like our own, and were struck and pleased with rocks, woods and water just as we are †. Were I not authorized by his example, and by the ob-

\* Our ideas of *art*, vary in different ages, but those of *natural* scenery remain the same; and in all poets, of every age and country, the descriptions of what is beautiful, or sublime, are founded on the same general notions. Had Mr. Mason undertaken to shew, that among the ancients, Hounslow heath would have been reckoned a paradise, and Richmond and the Thames deserted, it would have been very unfair to have censured the number of his quotations.

† Essay on Design in Gardening, page 28.

jections

jections he has raised, I should really feel ashamed of proving in the same manner, what is hardly less evident; but being so authorised, I will beg leave to put him in mind of a few passages, in which, if terror is not the cause of the sublime, I have no idea of any cause, of any effect.

It is natural to begin by the great father of all poetry, and by one of the passages cited, and particularly dwelt upon by Longinus\*, in his famous treatise on the sublime.

Δεινὸν δ' ἐβρόντησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε  
 Ὑψοθεν· αὐτὰρ ἐνερθε Ποσειδάων ἐτίναξε  
 Γαίαν ἀπειρεσίην, ὄρεων τ' αἰπεῖνα καρήνα.  
 Πάντες δ' ἐσσειοντο ποδὲς πολυπίδακ' Ἰδης,  
 Καὶ κορυφαί, Τρῶων τε πόλεις, καὶ νῆες Ἀχαιῶν.  
 Ἐδδείσεν δ' ὑπερέρθεν ἀναξ ἐνερῶν Αἰδωνεύς,  
 Δείσας δ' ἐκ θρόνου αἴτο, καὶ ἰαχε, μὴ οἱ ὑπερθε  
 Γαίαν ἀναρρήξειε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων,  
 Οἰκίᾳ δὲ θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισι φανείη  
 Σμερδαλέ', εὐρῶντα, τὰ τε στυγεραὶ θεοὶ περ. II. ὅ. 56.

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\* Longinus has only quoted the latter part of this passage, and has begun his quotation by a verse taken from a different part of the same book; but this does not at all affect the argument.

The most sublime passage (according to my idea) in Virgil, or perhaps in any other poet, is that magnificent personification of a thunderstorm.

Ipse Pater, media nimborum in nocte, corusca  
Fulmina molitur dextra, quo maxima motu  
Terra tremet, fugere feræ, & mortalia corda  
Per gentes humilis stravit pavor,—Ille flagranti  
Aut Atho aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo  
Dejicit.

Diveſt theſe two paſſages of terror, what remains? In this laſt particularly, the ſublime oppoſition between the cauſe, and the effect of terror, more ſtrongly than in any other, illuſtrates the principle. And I may here obſerve, that one circumſtance which gives peculiar grandeur to perſonifications, is, the attributing of natural events, to the immediate action of ſome angry, and powerful agent.

Ipſe *Pater* mediâ, &c.  
*Neptunus* muros ſævoque emota tridente  
Fundamenta quatit.

When-



Whenever Dante is mentioned, the inscription over the gates of hell, and the Conte Ugolino, are among the first things which occur. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is wrought up to a higher pitch of awful terror than any other poem; to a mind full of poetical fire, he added the most studied attention to effect; and I think there is a singular instance of that attention, and of the use he made of terror, in one of his most famous similes:

As when the sun new risen,  
Looks through the horizontal misty air  
Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon  
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds  
On half the nations.

These circumstances are perfectly applicable to the fallen archangel; but Milton possibly felt that the sun himself, when shorn of his beams, and in eclipse, was a less magnificent object than when in full

splendour, and therefore added \* that dignified image of terror

And with fear of change  
Perplexes monarchs.

From Shakespear also, a number of detached passages might be quoted, to prove what surely needs no additional argument ; but that most original creator, and most accurate observer, of whom no Englishman can speak without enthusiasm, has furnished a more ample proof of the sublime effect of unremitting terror. Let those who have read, or seen his tragedies, consider which among them all is most strikingly sublime ;

\* It might even be conjectured, that he had literally *added* that last image ; for the pause (which no poet took more pains to vary) is the same as in the preceding line, and the half verse which follows

“ Darken’d so, yet shone”

would do equally well in point of metre, and of sense after

On half the nations.

which

which of them most suspends all our faculties in astonishment : I believe almost every voice will give it for Macbeth\*. In that all is terror ; and therefore either Aristotle, Longinus, Shakespear, and Burke, or Mr. G. Mason, and his learned friends, have been totally wrong in their ideas of the sublime, and of its causes.

That the same principle prevails in all natural scenery, has been so fully, and clearly explained by Mr. Burke, that any further arguments seem superfluous ; yet as it sometimes happens, that what is placed in a different, though less striking light, may

\* The passage from Aristotle, lately prefixed by a poet of great eminence, to a wild and marvellous tale, which he has translated from the German, will not affect the tragedy of Shakespear ; for no one can say that in Macbeth the marvellous *only* prevails. It furnishes, however, another proof (if proofs were wanting) that terrible and sublime were frequently used as nearly synonymous terms. 'Οἱ δὲ, μὴ το φοβερον, αλλα το τερατωδες μόνον παρασκευαζοντες, ουδεν τραγωδιᾳ, κοινωνουσι,

chance to strike particular minds, I will mention a few things which have occurred to me. I am persuaded that it would be difficult to conceive any set of objects, to which, however grand in themselves, an addition of terror, would not give a higher degree of sublimity; and surely that must be a cause, and a principal cause, the increase of which increases the effect; the absence of which, weakens, or destroys it. The sea is at all times a grand object; need I say how much that grandeur is increased by the violence of another element? and again, by thunder and lightning? how ships in distress, and amongst rocks still add to it? Why are rocks and precipices more sublime, when the sea dashes at the foot of them, forbids all access, or cuts off all retreat, than when we can with ease approach, or retire from them? How is it that Shakespear has heightened the sublimity

mity of Dover cliffs, so much beyond what the real scene exhibits? by terror; he has placed terror on the summit, with Gloucester, ready to throw himself down the abyss; he has suspended it in the middle, where

“ Half way down

“ Hangs one who gathers samphire; *dreadful trade.*”

He has again stationed it on the beech below, and has drawn an idea of terror from the comparative deficiency of one sense:

The murmuring furge

That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes

Cannot be *heard* so high; I'll *look* no more

Lest my brain turn.

The nearer any grand and terrible objects in nature press upon the mind (provided that mind is able to contemplate them with awe, but without abject fear \*)

the

\* In what manner, and by what sympathies, terror, in its various degrees and modifications, produces an idea of  
sublimity,

the more sublime will be their effects. The most savage rocks, precipices, and cataracts, as they keep their stations, are only awful; but should an earthquake shake their foundations, and open a new gulph beneath the cataract,—he, who removed from immediate danger, could dare at such a moment, to gaze on such a spectacle, would surely have sensations of a much higher kind, than those which were impressed upon him when all was still and unmoved.

sublimity, is a curious, but not an easy subject of discussion; certain it is, that we never sympathize with what is mean and cowardly, and that the effect of the sublime (however produced) must in all cases be that of exalting the mind of the reader, or spectator. That effect Longinus has described with equal justness and energy.

## CHAPTER V.



OF the three characters, two only, are in any degree subject to the improver ; to *create* the sublime is above our contracted powers, though we may sometimes heighten, and at all times lower its effects by art. It is, therefore, on a proper attention to the beautiful, and the picturesque, that the art of improving real landscapes must depend.

As beauty is the most pleasing of all ideas to the human mind, it is very natural that it should be most sought after, and that the name should have been applied to every species of excellence.

excellence. Mr. Burke has done a great deal towards settling the vague and contradictory ideas which were entertained on that subject, by investigating its principal causes and effects; but as the best things are often perverted to the worst purposes, so his admirable treatise has, perhaps, been one cause of the insipidity which has prevailed under the name of improvement. Few places have any claim to sublimity, and where nature has not given them that character, art is ineffectual; beauty, therefore, is the great object, and improvers have learned from the highest authority, that two of its principal causes are smoothness, and gradual variation; these qualities are in themselves very seducing, but they are still more so (when applied to the surface of ground) from its being in every man's power to produce them; it requires neither taste, nor invention, but merely the mechanical hand  
and



and eye of many a common labourer; and he who can make a nice asparagus bed, has one of the most essential qualifications of an improver, and may soon learn the whole mystery of slopes, and hanging levels.

If the principles of the beautiful, according to Mr. Burke, and those of the picturesque, according to my ideas, are just, it seldom happens that they are perfectly unmixed; and, I believe, it is for want of observing how nature has blended them, and from attempting to make objects beautiful, by dint of smoothness and flowing lines, that so much insipidity has arisen.

The most enchanting object the eye of man can behold—that which immediately presents itself to his imagination when beauty is mentioned—that, in comparison of which all other beauty appears tasteless and uninteresting—is the face of a beautiful woman; but even there, where nature has  
fixed

fixed the throne of beauty, the very seat of its empire, she has guarded it, in her most perfect models, from its two dangerous foes—infriduity and monotony. The Greeks (who cannot be accused of having neglected the study of beauty, or, like Dutch painters, of having servilely copied whatever was before them) judged that a line nearly strait of the nose and forehead, was necessary to give a zest to all the other flowing lines of the face; then the eye brows, and the eyelashes, by their projecting shade over the transparent surface of the eye, and above all the hair, by its comparative roughness, and its partial concealments, accompany and relieve the softness, clearness, and smoothness of all the rest. Where the hair has no natural roughness, it is often artificially curled and crisped \*, and it cannot be supposed

\* The instrument for that purpose is certainly of very ancient date, as Virgil (who probably studied the

posed that both sexes have been so often mistaken in what would best become them.

Flowers are the most delicate and beautiful of all inanimate objects; but their  
queen,

*costume* of the heroic age) supposes it to have been in use at the time of the Trojan war, and makes Turnus speak contemptuously of Æneas, for having his locks perfumed, and as Madame de Sevigné expresses it, *frisés naturellement avec des fers*;

Vibratos calido ferro, myrrhâque madentes.

The *natural* roughness or crispness of hair is often mentioned as a beauty—l'aurée *crespe* crini—capelli *crespe*, & lunghe, & d'oro.

In many points the hair has a striking relation to trees; they resemble each other in their intricacy, their ductility, the quickness of their growth, their seeming to acquire fresh vigour from being cut, and in their being detached from the solid bodies whence they spring; they are the varied boundaries, the loose and airy fringes, without which mere earth, or mere flesh, however beautifully formed, are bald and imperfect, and want their most becoming ornament.

In catholic countries, where those unfortunate victims of avarice and superstition, are supposed to renounce all  
idea

queen, the rose, grows on a rough bush, whose leaves are serrated, and which is full of thorns. The moss rose has the addition of a rough hairy fringe, which almost makes a part of the flower itself. The arbutus, with its fruit, its pendant flowers, and rich glossy foliage, is, perhaps, the most beautiful of all the hardier ever-green shrubs; but the bark of it is rugged, and the leaves (which, like those of the rose, are sawed at the edges) have those edges pointed upwards, and clustering in spikes; and it may possibly be from that circumstance, and from the boughs having the same upright tendency, that Virgil calls it *arbutus horrida*, or, as it stands in some manu-

idea of pleasing our sex, the first ceremony is that of cutting off their hair, as a sacrifice of the most seducing ornament of beauty; and the formal edge of the fillet, which prevents a single hair from escaping, is well contrived to deaden the effect of features.

scripts,

cripts\*, *horrens*. Among the foreign oaks, maples, &c. those are particularly esteemed,

\* This epithet is frequently applied to sharp pointed and jagged objects, in the same upright position—*horrentibus hastis*—*cautibus horrens Caucasus*—*horridior rusco*, &c. The Delphin edition supposes it to be called *horrida*, quia *raris est foliis*; but the *arbutus* is far from being thin of leaves, when in a flourishing state. Ruæus may probably have taken this idea from a verse in the 7th Eclogue—*rarâ tegit arbutus umbrâ*, which he interprets, *raris inumbrat foliis*; but in another place Virgil calls it, *frondentia arbuta*; and if *rarâ*, in the first passage, does mean thin (as Martyn has also rendered it) it accords but ill with *tegit*, and with the shepherd's request—*solstitium pecori defendite*: I therefore imagine *rarâ* may mean, in that place, (as it does in many languages) excellent—*rarum, quod non ubique reperitur, unde pro præstanti sumitur*. *Stef. Thes.* Martyn thinks it is called *horrida* from the roughness of the bark; but an epithet, which applies to the tree in general, is more likely to be given from the general outward form, than from a particular part less apparent, and often entirely hidden. Many plants point their leaves *downwards*, as the lilac, chefnut, Portugal laurel, &c. Whoever will compare the *arbutus*, and the Portugal laurel, both whose

esteemed, whose leaves (according to a common, though perhaps contradictory phrase) are beautifully jagged.

The oriental plane has always been reckoned a tree of the greatest beauty. Xerxes's passion for one of them is well known, as also the high estimation they were held in by the Greeks and Romans. The surface of their leaves is smooth and glossy, and of a bright pleasant green; but they are so deeply indented, and so full of sharp angles, that the tree itself is often distinguished by the name of the true *jagged* oriental plane.

The vine leaf has, in \* all respects, a leaves are ferrated, will find how strongly the epithet, *horrens*, applies to the former. Of the verb *horreo*, Stephens says, *proprie cum pili fetæque in animante eriguntur*. Vulgarly stand an end; *capilli horrent*.

\* The leaf of the Burgundy vine is rough, and its inferiority, in point of beauty, to the smooth-leaved vines, is, I think, very apparent, and clearly owing to that circumstance.

strong

strong resemblance to the leaf of the plane ; and that extreme richness of effect, which every body must be struck with in them both, is greatly owing to those sharp angles, to those sudden variations, so contrary to the idea of beauty when considered by itself.—On the other hand, a cluster of fine grapes, in point of form, tint, and light and shadow, is a specimen of unmixed beauty ; and the vine, with its fruit, may be cited, as one of the most striking instances of the union of the two characters, in which, however, that of beauty infinitely prevails : and who will venture to assert, that the charm of the whole would be greater, by separating them ? by taking off all the angles and sharp points, and making the outline of the leaves, as round and flowing as that of the fruit ?—The effect of these jagged points and angles, is more strongly marked in sculpture, especially of vases of metal ;

where the vine leaf, if imprudently handled, would at least prove that sharpness is very contrary to the beautiful in feeling; and the analogy between the two senses is surely very just. It may also be remarked, that in all such works *sharpness* of execution is a term of high praise.

I must here observe (and I must beg to call the reader's attention to what in my idea throws a strong light on the whole of the subject) that almost all ornaments are rough, and most of them sharp, which is a mode of roughness; and, considered analogically, the most contrary to beauty of any mode. But as the ornaments are rough, so the ground is generally smooth; which shews, that though smoothness is the ground, the essential quality of beauty, without which it can scarcely exist—yet that roughness, in its different modes and degrees, is the ornament, the fringe of beauty

§

that



that which gives it life and spirit, and preserves it from baldness and insipidity \*.

\* The most beautiful, or at least the most touching, and exquisitely modulated of all sounds, that of a fine human voice, appears to the greatest advantage when there is some degree of sharpness in the instrument which accompanies it; as in the harp, the violin, or the harpsichord. The flute, or even the organ, have too much of the same quality of sound; they give no relief to the voice; it is like accompanying smooth water, with smooth banks. Often in the sweetest and most flowing melodies, discords, (which are analogous to angles and sharpness) are introduced, to relieve the ear from that languor and weariness, which long continued smoothness always brings on; yet will any one say, that, considered separately, the sound of a harpsichord is as beautiful as that of a flute, or of a human voice; or that they ought to be classed together? or that discords are as beautiful as concords; or that both are beautiful, because when they are mixed with judgment the whole is more delightful? Does not this shew, that what is very justly called beautiful, from the essential qualities of beauty being predominant, is frequently, nay, generally composite; and that we act against the constant practice of nature, and of judicious art, when we endeavour to make objects more beautiful, by depriving them of what gives beauty some of its most powerful attractions.

The column is smooth, the capital is rough; the facing of a building smooth, the frieze and cornice rough, and suddenly projecting: so it is in vases, in embroidery, in every thing that admits of ornament\*; and as ornament is the most prominent and striking part of a beautiful whole, it is frequently taken for the most essential part, and obtains the first place in descriptions. A plain stone building, without any sharp ornaments, may be very beautiful, and by many persons be thought peculiarly so from its simplicity; but were an architect to ornament the shafts, as well as the capitals of

\* A goblet, rich with gems and *rough* with gold.—  
Pallam signis auroque *rigentem*.

Consider what is the natural, the only process in ornamenting any smooth surface, independently of colour; it must be by making it less smooth, that is, comparatively rough: there must be different degrees and modes of roughness, of sharpness, and this is the character of those ornaments that have been admired for ages.

his

his columns, and all the smooth stone work of his house or temple, there are few people who would not be sensible of the difference between a beautiful building, and one richly ornamented. This, in my mind, is the spirit of that famous reproof of Apelles (among all the painters of antiquity the most renowned for beauty) to one of his scholars who was loading a Helen with ornaments; "Young man," said he, "not being able to paint her beautiful, you have made her rich."

## CHAPTER VI.

AS, notwithstanding the various and striking lights in which Mr. Burke has placed the alliance between smoothness and beauty, and in spite of the very close and convincing arguments he has drawn, by analogy, from the other senses, that position has been doubted \*.— I hope  
it

\* A person of the most unquestioned abilities, and general accuracy of judgment, but who had not paid much attention to this subject, asserted that a variety of objects were beautiful, without the least smoothness; and that the picturesque was always included either in the sublime, or the beautiful. I asked him what he would call an old rugged mossy oak, with branches twisted  
into

it will not be thought presumptuous in me to offer some farther illustrations, on a subject which he has treated so copiously, and in so masterly a manner. I am, indeed, highly interested in the question, for if his principles be false, mine are equally so.

I imagine the doubt to have arisen, from its being supposed that all which strongly attracts and captivates the eye, is included in the sublime, and the beautiful; but I cannot help flattering myself, that the having considered and compared the three characters together, has thrown a reciprocal light on each; and that the picturesque fills up a vacancy between the sublime and the

into sudden and irregular deviations, but which had no character of grandeur? He said, he should call it a pretty tree. He would probably have been surprised if I had called one of Rembrandt's old hags a pretty woman; and yet they are as much alike as a tree and a woman can well be.

beautiful,

beautiful, and accounts for the pleasure we receive from many objects on principles distinct from them both ; which objects should therefore be placed on a separate class.

One principal effect of smoothness (and to which perhaps it owes its so general power of pleasing) is, that it gives an appearance of quiet and repose. Roughness,\* on the contrary, a spirit and animation.

\* By roughness, I mean what is in any way contrary to smoothness ; whatever is rough, rugged, or angular, whether the object be polished, or unpolished. According to this definition, polished surfaces if cut into angles, (as polished steel, glass, or diamond) can no longer be considered as smooth objects, though parts of them will be smooth.

A diamond when smooth, has, like other polished surfaces, a considerable degree of stimulus ; but when its surface is cut into sharp points and angles, it becomes infinitely more stimulating. It is by means of these angles, of these sharp points, that a diamond acquires its distinguished title of a brilliant ; without them a piece of cut-glass (as it is termed) would deserve it better.

Again

mation. These seem to me the most prevailing effects of the beautiful and the picturesque, as likewise the means by which they generally operate: and if these premises be true, it will be just to conclude, that where there is a want of smoothness, there is a want of repose, and consequently of beauty; and on the other hand, that where there is no roughness, there is a want of spirit and stimulus, and consequently of picturesqueness.

The sense of seeing (as I before observed) is so much indebted to that of feeling for a number of its perceptions, that there is no considering the one, abstractedly

Again (to consider broken lights in another point of view) we can bear the full uninterrupted splendor of the setting sun, nay, can gaze on the orb itself with little uneasiness; but when its rays are broken by passing through a thin screen of leaves and branches (as in a lane) no eye is proof against the irritation.

from

from the other : he therefore would reason very ill on the effects of vision, who should leave out our ideas of rough and smooth, of hard and soft, of thickness, distance, &c. because they were originally acquired by the touch. I should on that account suppose, that besides the *real* irritation which they produce by means of broken lights, all broken, rugged surfaces have also, by *sympathy*, something of the same effect on the sight, as on the touch ; and if it be true (as it probably will be acknowledged) that smooth surfaces (where there is no immediate irritation from light) give a repose to the eye ; rugged and broken ones, must produce a contrary impression.

But though it seems highly probable that broken and angular surfaces, both from sympathy, and from real irritation of the organ, stimulate more than such as are smooth,



smooth, yet the stimulus from which the most constant and marked effects proceed—that, which in a peculiar manner belongs to the picturesque, and distinguishes it from the beautiful,—arises principally from its two great characteristics, intricacy and variety, as produced by roughness and sudden deviation; and as opposed to the comparative monotony of smoothness, and flowing lines.

If for instance, we take any smooth object, whose lines are flowing, such as a down of the finest turf, with gently swelling knolls and hillocks of every soft and undulating form—though the eye may repose on this with pleasure, yet the whole is seen at once, and no farther curiosity is excited. But let those swelling knolls (without altering the scale) be changed into bold, broken promontories, with rude overhanging rocks; instead of the smooth turf, let there be furze,  
 heath,

heath, or fern, with open patches between, and fragments of rocks and large stones lying in irregular masses—it is clear, (on the supposition of these two spots being of the same extent, and on the same scale) that the whole of the one may be comprehended immediately, and that if you traverse it in every direction, little new can occur; while in the other, every step changes the whole of the composition. Then each of these broken promontories and fragments, have as many suddenly varying forms and aspects, as they have breaks, even without light and shade; but when the sun does shine upon them, each break is the occasion of some brilliant light, opposed to some sudden shadow: All deep coves, hollows, and fissures (such as are usually found in this style of scenery) invite the eye to penetrate into their recesses, yet keep its curiosity alive, and unsatisfied; whereas in the other,

the

the light and shadow has the same uniform, unbroken character, as the ground itself.

I have in both these scenes avoided any mention of trees; for in all trees of every growth, there is a comparative roughness and intricacy, which, unless counteracted by great skill in the improver, will always prevent absolute monotony: Yet the difference between those which appear planted, or cleared for the purpose of beauty, with the ground made perfectly smooth about them, and those which are wild and uncleared, with the ground of the same character, is very apparent. Take, for instance, any open grove, where the trees, though neither in rows nor at equal distances, are detached from each other, and cleared from all underwood; the turf on which they stand smooth and level; and their stems distinctly seen. Such a grove, of full-grown flourishing trees, that have  
had

had room to extend their heads and branches, is deservedly called beautiful ; and if a gravel road winds easily through it, the whole will be in character.

But whoever has been among forests, and has attentively observed the opposite character of those parts, where wild tangled thickets open into glades, half seen across the stems of old stag-headed oaks, and twisted beeches—has remarked the irregular tracks of wheels, and the foot-paths of men and animals, how they seem to have been seeking and forcing their way, in every direction—must have felt how differently the stimulus of curiosity is excited in two such scenes ; and the effect of the lights and shadows, is exactly in proportion to the intricacy of the objects.

From all this it appears, that as a certain degree of stimulus or irritation is necessary to the picturesque, so, on the other hand,

hand, a soft and pleasing repose, is equally the effect, and the characteristic, of the beautiful.

The peculiar excellence of the painter, who most studied the beautiful in landscape, is characterised by *il riposo di Claudio*; and when the mind of man is in the delightful state of repose, of which Claude's pictures are the image,—when he feels that mild and equal sunshine of the soul, which warms and cheers, but neither inflames nor irritates,—his heart seems to dilate with happiness, he is disposed to every act of kindness and benevolence, to love and cherish all around him. These are the sensations, which beauty, considered generally, and without any distinction of nature, or sex, does, and ought to inspire. A mind in such a state, is like the surface of a pure and tranquil lake; in both, the slightest impulse excites a correspondent motion; and the af-

fections, like the waters, seem gently to expand themselves on every side. But if the heaviest mass be thrown into a rapid stream, the effect is short-lived; if into a river tumbling over stones, or dashing among rocks, it is momentary. The one is an emblem of irritation, as the other of repose.

Irritation \* is indeed the source of our most active and lively pleasures ; but its nature, like the pleasures which spring from it, is eager, hurrying, impetuous : and when the mind, from whatever cause, becomes agitated, those mild and soft emotions which flow from beauty, and of which beauty is the genuine source, are scarcely perceived. Let those who have been used to observe the

\* I am aware that irritation is generally used in a bad sense ; rather as a source of pain, than of pleasure : but that is the case with many words and expressions which relate to our more eager and tumultuous emotions, and seems to point out their distinct nature and origin.

works

works of nature, reflect on their sensations when viewing the smooth and tranquil scene of a beautiful lake,—or the wild, abrupt, and noisy one, of a picturesque river: I think they will own them to have been as different as the scenes themselves, and that nothing but the poverty of language, makes us call two sensations so distinct from each other, by the common name of pleasure.

Having considered the effects of repose and irritation, as caused by the *fixed* properties of *material* objects, I will now examine how they are produced by what is *immaterial* and *uncertain*; and how far the various accidents of light and shadow (two opposite though almost inseparable ideas, and which therefore in the language of painters are often combined into one) correspond with the inherent qualities of objects, and with their operation on the mind.

Nothing is more obvious, than that all strong and brilliant lights, and all sudden contrasts of them with deep shadows, stimulate the organ of sight. It is equally obvious, that all soft quiet lights, such as insensibly melt into shadow, and emerge from it again in the same gradual manner, give a pleasing \* repose to the eye. These positions will be most aptly illustrated, and their application to the beautiful and the picturesque most clearly pointed out, by attending to the practice of two painters, whose works are in the highest esteem, and

\* It is on this charm of repose and of softness, that poets lay so much stress, when they describe the beauties of moon-light; which many of them seem to do with peculiar fondness.

“ Now reigns

“ Full-orb’d the moon, and with more *pleasing* light

“ *Shadowy* sets off the face of things.”

And that feeling passage in Shakespear:

“ How sweet the moon-light *sleeps* upon yon bank.”

of



of which the style and character is established by general consent.

The genius of Rubens was strongly turned to the picturesque disposition of his figures, so as often to sacrifice every other consideration to the intricacy, contrast, and striking variations of his groups. Such a disposition of objects, seems to call for something similar in the management of the light and shade; and accordingly we owe some of the most striking examples of both, to his fertile invention. In point of brilliancy, of such extreme splendour of light as is on the verge of glare\*, no pictures can stand in competition with those of Rubens: sometimes those lights are almost

\* I speak of those pictures (and they are very numerous) in which he aimed at great brilliancy. As no painter possessed more entirely all the principles of his art, the solemn breadth of his light and shade is, on some occasions, no less striking than its force and splendor on others.

unmixed with shade ; at other times they burst from dark shadows, they glance on the different parts of the picture, and produce that flicker (as it sometimes is called) so captivating to the eye ; but so dangerous also, when attempted by inferior artists, or by those who are less thoroughly masters of the principles of harmony, than that great painter. All these dazzling effects are heightened by the spirited management of his pencil, by those sharp, animated touches \*, which give life and energy to every object.

Correggio's

\* Many painters, when they represent any striking effects of light, leave the touches of the pencil more rough and strongly marked, than the quality of the objects themselves seems to justify. Rembrant, who succeeded beyond all others in these forcible effects, carried also this method of creating them farther than any other master. Those who have seen his famous picture in the stadthouse at Amsterdam, may remember a figure highly illuminated, whose dress is a silver tissue, with fringes, tassels, and other ornaments nearly of the same brilliant colour.

Correggio's principal attention (in point of form) was directed to flow of outline and gradual variation: Of this he never entirely lost sight, even in his most capricious fore-shortenings; and the style of his light and shadow is so congenial, that the

colour. It is the most surprising instance I ever saw of the effect of that rough manner of pencilling, in producing what most nearly approaches to the glitter, and to the irritation, which is caused by real light when acting powerfully on any object; and this too, with a due attention to general harmony, and with such a commanding truth of representation, as no high finishing can give.

It seems to me, that this may be accounted for on the principle I have before mentioned, of roughness in material objects being a cause of irritation. Light in itself has nothing that bears any relation to rough or smooth; but when strong, irritates in a high degree: As painting cannot attain to the full splendor even of reflected light, and as that splendor acts by stimulating, it is natural that painters should have helped out the insufficiency of the art by some other stimulus, and by increasing the irritating quality of the object illuminated, have striven to make a nearer approach to that of light itself.

one seems the natural consequence of the other. He is always cited as the most perfect model of those soft and insensible transitions, of that union of effect, which, above every thing else, impresses the general idea of loveliness. The manner of his pencilling is exactly of a piece with the rest ; all seems melted together, but with so nice a judgment, as to avoid, by means of certain free, yet delicate touches, that laboured hardness and insipidity, which arise from what is called high finishing. Correggio's pictures are indeed as far removed from monotony, as from glare ; he seems to have felt beyond all others, the exact degree of brilliancy which accords with the softness of beauty, and to have been, with regard to figures, what Claude was in landscape.

The pictures of Claude are brilliant in a high degree ; but that brilliancy is so diffused over the whole of them, so happily balanced,

balanced, so mellowed and subdued by that almost visible atmosphere, which pervades every part, and unites all together, that nothing in particular catches the eye; the whole is splendor, the whole is repose; every thing lighted up, every thing in sweetest harmony. Rubens in his landscapes differs as strongly from Claude, as he does from Correggio in his figures; they are full of the peculiarities, and picturesque accidents in nature; of striking contrasts of form, colour, and light and shadow: sun-beams bursting through a small opening in a dark wood—a rainbow against a stormy sky—effects of thunder and lightning—torrents rolling down trees torn up by the roots, and the dead bodies of men and animals; with many other sublime and picturesque circumstances. These sudden gleams, these cataracts of light, these bold oppositions of clouds and darkness, which he has so nobly

bly introduced, would destroy all the beauty and elegance of Claude: On the other hand, the mild and equal sun-shine \* of that

\* Nothing is so captivating, or seems so much to accord with our ideas of beauty, as the smiles of a beautiful countenance; yet they have sometimes a striking mixture of the other character. Of this kind are those smiles which break out suddenly from a serious, sometimes from almost a severe countenance, and which, when that gleam is over, leave no trace of it behind—

Brief as the lightning in the collied night,  
That in a spleen unfolds both heaven and earth;  
And e'er a man has time to say, behold!  
The jaws of darkness do devour it up.

This sudden effect is often hinted at by the Italian poets, as appears by their allusion to the most sudden and dazzling of lights;—*gli scintilla un riso—lampeggia un riso—il balenar' d'un riso.*

There is another smile, which seems in the same degree to accord with the ideas of beauty only: It is that smile which proceeds from a mind full of sweetness and sensibility, and which, when it is over, still leaves on the countenance its mild and amiable impression; as after the sun is set, the mild glow of his rays is still diffused  
over

that charming painter, would as ill accord with the twisted and singular forms, and the bold and animated variety of the landscapes of Rubens.

These few instances from the art of painting (and many more might easily be produced) shew in how great a degree softness, smoothness, gradual variation of form, insensible transitions from light to shadow, and general repose, are the characteristic marks of artists, whose works are most celebrated for their beauty; and these causes operate so powerfully when united, that notwithstanding the pure outline, and the happy mixture of the antique character in Raphael; the angelic

over every object. This smile, with the glow that accompanies it, is beautifully painted by Milton, as most becoming an inhabitant of heaven:

To whom the angel, with a smile that glow'd  
Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue,  
Thus answer'd,

air of Guido ; and the peculiar and separate beauties of other painters, I believe that if a variety of persons conversant in painting, were asked what pictures (taking every circumstance together) appeared to them most beautiful, and had left the softest, and most pleasing impression — the majority of them would fix upon Correggio.

In beauty of landscape, Claude stands quite alone, without a competitor.



## CHAPTER VII.

THESE effects of harmony and repose naturally lead me to that great principle of the art of \* painting (for it is the great connecting, and harmonizing principle of nature) breadth of light and shadow.

What is called breadth, seems to bear nearly the same relation to light and sha-

\* Or rather (in a more just and comprehensive view) of that art, which chiefly by means of light and shadow, bodies forth the forms of things from a plain surface, and which, being independent of colours, includes every species of drawing and engraving.

dow,

dow, as smoothness does to material objects; for as all uneven surfaces cause more irritation than those which are smooth, and those most of all which are broken into little inequalities; so those lights and shadows which are scattered and broken, are infinitely more irritating than those which are broad and continued. Every person of the least observation, must have remarked how *broad* the lights and shadows are on a fine evening in nature, or (what is almost the same thing) in a picture of Claude. He must equally have remarked the extreme difference between such lights and shadows, and those meagre and frittered ones, that sometimes disgrace the works of painters, in other respects of great excellence; and which prevail in nature, when the sun-beams, refracted and dispersed in every direction by a number of white flickering clouds, create a perpetual shifting glare,

glare, and keep the eye in a state of constant irritation. All such accidental effects arising from clouds, though they strongly shew the general principle, and are highly proper to be studied by all lovers of painting or of nature, yet not being subject to our controul, are of less use to improvers ; a great deal however *is* subject to our controul, and I believe we may lay it down as a very general maxim, that in proportion as the objects are scattered, unconnected, and in patches, the lights and shadows will be so too ; and vice versa.

If, for instance, we suppose a continued sweep of hills, either entirely wooded, or entirely bare, and under the influence of a low cloudless sun—whatever parts are exposed to that sun, will have one broad light upon them ; whatever are hid from it, one broad shade. If we again suppose this wood to have been thinned in such a manner,

ner,

ner, as to have left masses, groups, and single trees so disposed, as to present a pleasing and connected whole, though with detached parts; or, if we suppose the bare hills to have been planted in the same style—the variety of light and shadow will be greatly increased, and the general breadth still be preserved. Nor would that breadth be injured if an old ruin, a cottage, or any building of a quiet tint, was discovered among the trees. But if the wood were so thinned, as to have a poor, scattered, unconnected appearance; or the hills planted in clumps, patches and detached trees—the lights and shadows would have the same broken and disjointed effect as the objects themselves. If to this were added any harsh contrast (such as clumps of firs and white buildings) the irritation would be greatly increased. In all these cases, the eye, instead of reposing on one broad, connected

nected whole, is stopt and harassed by little disunited, discordant parts : I of course suppose the sun to act on these different objects with equal splendour ; for there are some days, when the whole sky is so full of jarring lights, that the shadiest groves and avenues hardly preserve their solemnity ; and there are others, when the atmosphere (like the last glazing of a picture) softens into mellowness, whatever is crude throughout the landscape.

This is peculiarly the effect of \* twilight ;  
for

\* Milton, whose eyes seem to have been most sensibly affected by every accident, and gradation of light, (and *that* possibly in a great degree from the weakness, and consequently the irritability of those organs) speaks always of twilight with peculiar pleasure. He has even reversed what Socrates did by philosophy ; he has called up twilight from earth, and placed it in heaven :

From that high mount of God whence light and shade  
Spring forth, the face of brightest heaven had chang'd  
To grateful twilight.

VOL. I.

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What

for at that delightful time, even artificial water, however naked, edgy, and tame its banks, will often receive a momentary charm; when all that is scattered and cutting, all that disgusts a painter's eye, is blended together in one broad and soothing harmony of light and shadow. I have more than once, at such a moment, happened to arrive at a place entirely new to me, and have been struck in the highest degree with the appearance of wood, water, and buildings, that seemed to accompany and set off each other, in the happiest

What is also singular, he has in this passage made shade an essence equally with light, not merely a privation of it; a compliment, never, I believe, paid to shadow before, but which might be expected from his aversion to glare, so frequently, and so strongly expressed:

Hide me from day's *garish* eye.

When the sun begins to fling  
His *flaring* beams.

manner;

manner ; and I have felt quite impatient to examine all these beauties by day-light :

“ At length the morn, and cold indifference came.”

The charm which held them together, and made them act so powerfully as a whole, was gone.

It may, perhaps, be said, that the imagination, from a few imperfect hints, may form beauties which have no existence, and that indifference may naturally arise, from those phantoms not being realized. I am far from denying the power of partial concealment and obscurity on the imagination ; but in these cases, the same set of objects, when seen by twilight, is often beautiful as a picture, and would appear highly so, if exactly represented on the canvass ; but in full day-light, the sun, as it were, decomposes what had been so happily mixed together, and separates a

striking whole, into detached unimpressive parts.

Nothing, I believe, would be of more service in forming a taste for general effect, and general composition, than to examine the same scenes, in the full distinctness of day, and again after sun-set. In fact, twilight does, what an improver ought to do; it connects what was before scattered; it fills up staring, meagre vacancies; it destroys edginess; and by giving shadow as well as light to water, at once increases both its brilliancy and softness. It must however be observed, that twilight, while it takes off the edginess of those objects which are *below* the horizon, more sensibly marks the outline of those which are *opposed* to the sky; and consequently discovers the defects, as well as the beauties of their forms. From this circumstance, improvers may learn a very useful lesson, that the outline  
against



against the sky should be particularly attended to, so that nothing lumpy, meagre, or discordant should be there ; for at all times, in such a situation, the form is made out, but most of all when twilight has melted the other parts together. At that time many varied groups, and elegant shapes of trees, which were scarcely noticed in the more general diffusion of light, distinctly appear ; then too the stubborn clump (which before was but too plainly seen) makes a still fouler blot on the horizon : while there is a glimmering of light he maintains his post, nor yields, till even his blackness is at last confounded in the general blackness of night.

These are the powers and effects of that breadth I have been describing, and which may justly be considered as a source of visual pleasure distinct from all others ; for objects, which in themselves are neither beautiful, nor sublime, nor picturesque, are inciden-

tally made to delight the eye, from their being productive of breadth. This seems to account for the pleasure we receive from many massive, heavy objects, which, when deprived of the effect of that harmonizing principle, and considered singly, are even positively ugly. Such, indeed, is the effect of breadth, that pictures or drawings eminently possessed of it (though they should have no other merit) will always attract the attention of a cultivated eye ; while others, where the detail is admirable, but where this master-principle is wanting, will often, at the first view, be passed by without notice. The mind, however, requires to be stimulated as well as soothed, and there is in this, as in so many other instances, a strong analogy between painting and music: the first effect of mere breadth of light and shadow is to the eye, what that of mere harmony of sounds is to the ear ; both produce a pleasing repose, a calm sober delight, which, if not relieved

lieved by something less uniform, soon sinks into distaste and weariness : for repose and sleep, which are often used as synonymous terms, are always nearly allied. But as the principle of harmony must be preserved in the wildest and most eccentric pieces of music, in those where sudden, and quickly varying emotions of the soul are expressed; so must that of breadth be equally attended to in scenes of bustle, and seeming confusion, in those where the wildest scenery, or most violent agitations of nature are represented; and I am here tempted to parody that frequently quoted passage of Shakespeare, “ in the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind of the elements, the artist, in painting them, must acquire a breadth that will give them smoothness.”

There is, however, no small difficulty in uniting breadth, with the detail, the splendid variety, and marked character of

nature. Claude is admirable in this, as in almost every other respect. With the greatest accuracy of detail, and truth of character, his pictures have the breadth of the simplest washed drawing, or aquatinta print; where little else is expressed, or intended. In a strong light, they are full of interesting and entertaining particulars; and as twilight comes on (an effect I have observed with great delight) they have the same gradual fading of the glimmering landscape, as in real nature.

This art of preserving breadth with detail and brilliancy, has been studied with great success by Teniers, Jan Steen, and many of the Dutch masters. Ostade's pictures and etchings are among the happiest examples of it; but above all others, the works of that scarce and wonderful master, Gerard Dow. His eye seems to have had a microscopic power in regard to the minute texture

ture of objects (for in his paintings they bear the severe trial of the strongest magnifier) and at the same time the opposite faculty of excluding all particulars with respect to breadth and general effect. His master, Rembrant, did not attend to minute detail ; but by that commanding manner, so peculiarly his own, and which marked with equal force and justness, the leading character of each object, he produced an idea of detail, much beyond what is really expressed. Many of the great Italian masters have done this also, and with a taste, a grandeur, and a nobleness of style, unknown to the inferior schools ; though none have exceeded, or even equalled Rembrant, in truth, force, and effect. But when artists, neglecting the variety of detail, and those characteristic features that well supply its place, content themselves with *mere* breadth, and propose that as the final object of attainment—their productions,

productions, and the interest excited by them, will be, in comparison of the styles I have mentioned, what a metaphysical treatise is to Shakespeare or Fielding; they will be rather illustrations of a principle, than representations of what is real; a sort of abstract idea of nature, not very unlike Crambe's abstract idea of a lord mayor.

As nothing is more flattering to the vanity and indolence of mankind, than the being able to produce a pleasing general effect, with little labour or study; so nothing more obstructs the progress of the art, than such a facility. Yet still these abstracts are by no means without their comparative merit, and they have their use as well as their danger; they shew how much may be effected by the mere naked principle, and the great superiority *that* alone gives to whatever is formed upon it, over those

those things which are done on no principle at all ; where the separate objects are set down, as it were, article by article ; and where the confusion of lights so perplexes the eye, that one might suppose the artist had looked at them through a multiplying glass.

I may, perhaps, be thought to have dwelt longer on this article, than the principal design of my book seemed to require ; but though (as I mentioned in a former part) the study of light and shadow appears, at first sight, to belong exclusively to the painter, yet, like every thing which relates to that charming art, it will be found of infinite service to the improver. Indeed, the violations of this principle of breadth and harmony of light and shadow, are, perhaps, more frequent, and more disgustingly offensive, than those of any other.

Many people seem to have a sort of callus  
over

over their organs of sight, as others over those of hearing; and as the callous hearers feel nothing in music but kettle-drums and trombones; so the callous se-ers can only be moved by strong oppositions of black and white, or by fiery \* reds. I am therefore so far from laughing at Mr. Locke's blind man for likening scarlet to the sound of a trumpet, that I think he had great reason to pride himself (as he did) on the discovery.

It might reasonably be supposed, that the natural colour of brick were sufficiently stimulating; but I have seen brick houses painted of so much more flaming a red, that (to use Mr. Brown's expression) they put the whole vale in a fever. White, though glaring, has not that hot sultry appearance;;

\* Red properly belongs to colouring, as it cannot be expressed by a mere black and white drawing, or engraving; yet, where a tint is so glaring as to destroy the harmony of colouring, I am apt to think it will have the same effect on breadth of light and shadow.

and



and there is such a look of neatness and gaiety in it, that we cannot be surprised, if, where lime is cheap, only one idea should prevail—that of making every thing as white as possible. Wherever this is the case, the whole landscape is full of little spots, which can only be made pleasing to a painter's eye, by their being almost buried in trees : But where a country is without natural wood, and is improved by dint of white-wash and clumps of firs, a painter (were he confined there) would be absolutely driven to despair ; and feel ready to renounce, not only his art, but his eyesight.

One of the most charming effects of sunshine, is its giving to objects, not merely light, but that mellow golden hue so beautiful in itself, and which, when diffused, as in a fine evening, over the whole landscape, creates that rich union and harmony, so enchanting in nature and in Claude. But if

either

either in Claude, or in nature, any one object should be introduced of so glaring a white, as not to partake of that general hue, the whole attention, in spite of all our efforts to the contrary, will be drawn to that one point ; if there are several, the eye will be distracted among them\*. Again, (to consider it in another view) when the sun breaks out in gleams, there is something that delights and surprises, in seeing an object, before only visible, lighted up in splendor ; and then gradually sinking into shade. But

\* From that analogy so often mentioned, it is usual to say, that an object in a picture, or in nature, is *out of tune*. The expression is perfectly just : in music, one such note will invincibly fix our attention upon it, and several distract it ; and in either case, it is impossible to enjoy the harmony of the rest. There is, however, this difference ; a passing note, however false, is quickly over ; but a glaring object, is like an eternal holding note held firmly out of tune, and which, in that case well deserves the name an unmusical friend once gave to hobbling notes in general ; “ I don’t know what you call them,” said he, “ I mean one of those long noises.”

a whitened

a whitened object is already lighted up ; it remains so when every thing has retired into obscurity ; it still forces itself into notice ; still impudently stares you in the face.

A cottage of a quiet colour, half concealed among trees, with its bit of garden, its pales and orchard, is one of the most tranquil and soothing of all rural objects ; and when the sun strikes upon it, and discovers a number of lively picturesque circumstances, one of the most cheerful : but if cleared, round and whitened, its modest retired character is gone, and succeeded by a perpetual glare.

Sunshine, when it gilds some object of a sober tint, is like a smile that lights up a serene countenance ; a \* whitened object, is like the eternal grin of a fool.

I wish

\* Even very white teeth (where excess of whiteness is least to be feared) if seen too much, have often a kind of silly look that seems to belong to the part itself : nothing

I wish, however, to be understood, that when I speak of white-wash, and whitened buildings, I mean that glaring white which is produced by lime alone, or without a sufficient quantity of any lowering ingredient ; for there cannot be a greater, or a more immediate improvement, than that of giving to a fiery brick building, the tint of a stone one. No person, I believe, has any doubt that stone (such as Bath and Portland, and many others which pass under the general name of free-stone) is the most beautiful material for building ; and I imagine there is no instance of an architect's having painted such stones white, in order to make them more beautiful, though dingy, or red stone may sometimes have been painted of a free stone

thing can be more characteristic of that effect, than the well known expression of, the gentleman with the foolish teeth. Those gentlemen who deal much in pure white-wash, might well be distinguished by the same compliment being paid to their buildings.

colour.

colour. The true object of imitation seems therefore to be the tint of a beautiful stone; and if those who whiten their buildings, would pique themselves on matching exactly the colour of Bath, or Portland stone, so as to be neither whiter, nor yellower, the greatest neatness and gaiety might prevail, without glare.

Besides the glare, there is another circumstance which often renders white-wash extremely offensive to the eye, especially when it is applied to any uneven surface; and that is, a smeared, dirty appearance. This is the case where old, or rough stonework is dabbed with lime, while the dirt is left between the joints; as likewise where the coarse wood-work that separates the plaistered walls of a cottage is brushed over, as well as the smooth walls themselves: in these, however, the object is inconsiderable, and the effect in proportion;

tion ; but when this pitiful taste is employed upon some antient castle-like mansion, or the \* mossy weather-stained tower of an old church, it becomes a sort of sacrilege. Such a building, daubed over and plaistered, is, next to a painted old woman, the most disgusting of all attempts at improvement ; on both, when left in their natural state, time often stamps a pleasing and venerable impression ; but when thus sophisticated, they have neither the freshness of youth, nor the mellow picturesque character of age ; and instead of becoming

\* I must here beg leave to remind the reader, that when I mentioned the great and immediate improvement of giving to a brick building, the colour of stone, it was to a *fiery* brick. When brick becomes weather stained and mossy, it harmonises with the colours that usually accompany it, and has often a richness, mellowness, and variety of tint, infinitely pleasing to a painter's eye ; for the cool colour of the greenish moss lowers all the fiery quality, while the subdued fire beneath, gives a glow to what without it would be cold and insipid.

attractive,

attractive, are only made horribly conspicuous.

I am afraid it will not be easy to check the general passion for distinctness and conspicuity. Each prospect hunter (a most numerous tribe) like the heroic Ajax, forms but one prayer;

*Ποτισαν δ' αἶθρην, δὸς δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδεσθαι.*

Let them see but clearly, and see enough, they are content; and much may be said in their favour; composition, grouping, breadth and effect of light and shadow, harmony of colours, &c. are comparatively attended to and enjoyed by few; but extensive prospects are the most popular of all views, and their respective superiority is generally decided by the number of churches and counties. Distinctness is therefore the great point; a painter may wish several hills of bad shapes, and thousands of uninteresting

acres, to be covered with one general shade; but to him who is to reckon up his counties, the loss of a black or a white spot, of a clump or a gazabo, is the loss of a voucher.

Then again, as the prospect-shewer has great pleasure and vanity in pointing out these vouchers, so the improver, on his side, has full as much in being pointed at; we therefore cannot wonder that so many churches have been converted into these beacons of taste, or that so many hills have been marked with them.



## CHAPTER VIII.

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I HAVE hitherto endeavoured to trace the picturesque, in all that relates to form, and to the effects of light and shade ; I have endeavoured to distinguish it from the beautiful, and from the sublime, and to shew the general influence of breadth on them all. It now remains to examine how far the same general principles hold good with regard to colours.

Mr. Burke's idea of the beautiful in colour, seems to me in the highest degree satisfactory, and to correspond with all his other ideas of beauty. I must observe at the same time, that the beautiful in colour, is of a positive and independent nature ;

whereas the sublime in colour is in a great degree relative, and depends on other circumstances. A beautiful colour, is a common and a just expression; no one hesitates whether he shall give that title to the leaf of a rose, or to the smallest bit of it. But though the deep gloomy tint of the sky before a storm, and its effect on all nature, is sublime, no one would call that colour (whether a dark blue or purple, or whatever it might be) a sublime colour, if simply shewn him without the other accompaniments.

It is as little the custom to speak of picturesque, as of sublime colours; many, however, without impropriety, might be called so; for there are many, which having nothing of the softness, freshness, and delicacy of beauty, are generally found in scenes highly picturesque, and admirably accord with them. As that term has usually

ally a reference (though not an exclusive one) to the art from which it is named, so it may be remarked that painters, from having observed the deep, rich, and mellow effects of these colours, have been particularly fond of introducing them into their pictures; and sometimes to the absolute exclusion of those that are more strictly beautiful: Among the former kind may be reckoned the autumnal hues in all their varieties; the various gradations in the tints of broken ground, and of the decayed parts in old trees; the weather stains, and many of the mosses on stones and trunks of trees; with a thousand more, equally distinct from those which are beautiful. If to these be opposed the soft and tender colours of the stems of young trees, the fresh greens of spring, both in trees and herbage, its flowers and blossoms, it will shew in how many

instances picturesque colours as well as forms, arise from age and decay.

Autumn (which is metaphorically applied to the decline of human life, when “fallen into the fere, the yellow leaf”) and not the spring, the *dolce primavera*, *gioventù dell’ anno*, is generally called the painter’s season. And yet there is something so very delightful in the real charms of spring, as well as in the associated ideas of the renewal of life and vegetation, that it seems a perversion of our natural feelings, to prefer to all its blooming hopes, the first bodings of the approach of winter.

Autumn must therefore have very powerful attractions, though of a different kind, and which must be intimately connected with the art of painting; for that reason, as the picturesque (though equally founded in nature with the beautiful) has been more particularly

particularly pointed out, illustrated, and as it were brought into light by that art, an inquiry into the reasons why autumn, and not spring, is called the painter's season, will, I imagine, give great additional insight into the distinct characters of the picturesque and the beautiful; especially with regard to colour.

If there is any thing in the universal range of the arts, that is peculiarly required to be a whole, it is a picture: in pieces of music, particular movements may, without injury, be separated from the whole; and in every species of poetry, of writing in general, detached scenes, episodes, stanzas, &c. may be considered and enjoyed by themselves; nor, indeed, is it every mind that, in the progress of a work of any length, can observe and retain the connection of the different parts, and their dependance on each other: But  
in

in a picture, the forms, tints, lights and shadows ; all their combinations, effects, agreements, and oppositions, are at once subjected to the eye ; all at one glance brought into comparison : And, therefore, however beautiful particular colours may be—however gay and brilliant the lights—if they want union, breadth, and harmony, the picture wants its most essential quality—it is not a whole. According to my ideas, therefore, it is from this circumstance of union and harmony, joined to that of richness, depth, and mellowness of tint, that the decaying charms of autumn often triumph in the painter's eye, over the fresh and blooming beauties of spring.

The colours of spring deserve the name of beauty in the truest sense of the word ; they have every thing that gives us that idea ; freshness, gaiety, and liveliness, with softness, and delicacy. Their beauty, in-

deed, is of all others the most universally acknowledged; so much so, that from them every comparison and illustration of beauty is taken.

The earlier trees, besides the freshness of their colour, have a remarkable lightness and transparency, without nakedness; their new foliage serves as a decoration, not as a concealment, and through it the forms of their limbs are seen, as those of the human body under a thin drapery: while a thousand quivering lights, play around and amidst their branches in every direction, even into the innermost parts of the woods. The circumstances which most peculiarly distinguish trees at this season are characterised by Mr. Gray, in two lines of his beautiful lyric fragment:

And lightly o'er the living scene  
Scatters his tenderest, freshest green.

It

It seems to me, that from these two lines, in which the beauties of the early foliage have been selected with such admirable taste and accuracy, may also be collected the reasons why those beauties are in general less happily adapted to painting.

In order to produce a whole, painters deal very much in broad masses; these are rarely compatible with a *general* air of lightness; still less with what is scattered.

It might naturally be supposed that fresh and tender greens, which are so pleasing in nature to every eye, would be equally so on the canvas; and so they often are when balanced by other tints, but not when scattered lightly, and over the *general* scene. Freshness, in one sense, is simply coolness, and I believe that it is in some degree almost always accompa-

ness



nies it ; and though in nature real sunshine (possibly from its real warmth as well as its splendour) may give a glow and animation to a landscape entirely green, yet nothing is more difficult in painting, or more rarely attempted ; for who would confine himself to cold monotony, when all nature is full of examples of the greatest variety, with the most perfect harmony ?

As the green of spring, from its comparative coldness, is less favourable to landscape than the warm and mellow tints of autumn ; in like manner its flowers and blossoms, from their too distinct and splendid variety, are apt to produce a glare and a spottiness, destructive of that union and harmony, which is the very essence of a picture, either in nature, or imitation.

Whatever objects most strongly attract the eye, are of course most apt to create spots ; and consequently none more so  
 § than

than \* white objects ; and it is greatly on that account, that water so particularly requires the accompaniment of trees, as they take off from the glare of its whiteness. I therefore have often thought that the expression of a fine *sheet* of water, which is always meant and taken as a compliment, is a very just satire on those naked, glaring imitations (if they be so called) of lakes and rivers.

A tree or bush covered with white blossoms, suggests the same idea of a white sheet thrown over them ; and white sheets

\* I must beg leave to refer the reader to some remarks on this subject by Mr. Lock in Mr. Gilpin's Tour down the Wye, page 97, which I should have inserted here, were not that book in every person's hands.

It is impossible to read those remarks without regretting, that the observations of a mind so capable of enlightening the public, should be withheld from it ; a regret which those who have enjoyed the pleasure and advantage of his conversation, feel in a much higher degree.

scattered

scattered about a landscape, would not very readily unite with other objects.

The apple blossoms, whose colours when seen near, and when their different shades and gradations can be distinguished, are so beautiful, at a distance lose all their richness and variety : they appear only red, glaring, and spotty ; and the effect of a great number of pear, apple, and cherry trees in full blow, strongly proves that red and white ought never to predominate in the  
\* general landscape.

In the opening of spring also, the early trees in all their freshness of leaves, and

\* Having heard that at the time of the blow the whole county of Hereford looked like a garden, I many years ago came down at that season expecting to be in raptures. My disappointment was equal to my expectation, when I crossed the Malvern hills, and saw the country spread out before me ; it answered indeed to the description, and did look like a garden ; but from that time I have never wished to see a garden of several hundred acres,

gaiety

gaiety of blossoms, form too strong a contrast with the lifeless boughs of the oak or ash; and no painter, I believe, has ever deserved to have it said of him, that like Mezentius,

*Mortua quinetiam jungebat corpora vivis.*

It must not however be concluded, that the painter has no pleasure in any set of objects, unless they make a picture; the charms of spring are universally felt, and he enjoys them in common with all mankind, unless he has narrowed his mind by that art, which ought most to have enlarged it. But then his enjoyment is greatly heightened and varied, when the blossoms and flowers of spring are so mixed in, and grouped with the earlier deciduous trees, with ever-greens, with buildings, and other objects, that the glare and gaudiness is taken away, while the gaiety remains.

remains. All such combinations as form pictures (that is, in other words, where the forms and colours are most happily balanced and connected) are only new sources of pleasure added to those which are more general \* ; they are also pleasures which may be dwelt upon, and returned to, after the first enchanting, but vague delight of spring is diminished.

Such indeed are the charms of reviving nature, that he who does not feel them, and feel them with rapture, because in many cases they are less suited to pictures, must have a very pedantic love of painting. The profusion of fresh, gay, and beautiful colours, and of sweets, united with the ideas

\* This is precisely the case with regard to prospects: the painter adds those new sources of pleasure to the general and vague delight he feels in common with the superficial observer.—For a farther discussion of that subject, vide my letter to Mr. Repton, page 113.

of fruitfulness, have altogether an effect similar to that of the sublime; they absorb for the moment all other considerations: and on a genial day in spring, and in a place where all its charms are displayed, every man, whose mind is not insensible or depraved, must feel the full force of that exclamation of Adam, when he first wakened to the pleasure of existence:

“ With fragrance and with joy my heart o’erflow’d.”

I have now mentioned what seem to me the principal beauties and defects of the *earlier* part of spring, at which time, however, the change is most striking: for as the season advances, and the leaves are more and more expanded, they no longer retain their vernal hue, their gloss of youth; and the trees, in the height of summer, lose perhaps as much in the freshness, variety, and lightness of their foliage, as they gain

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in

in the general fullness of it, and the superior size of their leaves.

The Midsummer shoot relieves the uniform green that immediately precedes it; in many trees (and in none more than the oak) the effect is singularly beautiful; the old foliage forms a dark back ground, on which the new appears relieved and detached, in all its freshness and brilliancy; it is spring engrafted upon summer. This effect, however, is confined to the nearer objects; the great general change in all vegetation from the green of summer, is produced by the first frosts of autumn. Then begins that variety of rich glowing tints, which, at the early period of their change, so admirably accord with each other, and form so splendid a mass of colouring; so superior in depth and richness, to that of any other part of the year.

It has often struck me, that the whole

system of the Venetian colouring (particularly that of Giorgione and Titian, which has been the great object of imitation) was formed upon the tints of autumn; and that their pictures have thence that golden hue, which gives them (as Sir Joshua Reynolds observes) such a superiority over all others. Their trees, foregrounds, and every part of their landscapes, have, more strongly than those of any other painters, the deep and rich browns of that season. The same general hue prevails in the draperies of their figures, and even in their \* flesh, which

\* A strong proof of this is in the *Ganymede* of Titian, in the Colonna palace, to which, by the order of the old Cardinal, Carlo Maratt put a new sky of the same tone as those in his own pictures; and I may say, that none but such a cold insipid artist could have borne to execute, what such gross unfeeling ignorance had commanded. Such a sky would have been a severe trial to the flesh of any warm picture, but it makes that of the *Ganymede* appear almost black; which certainly would not have been the case, if it had been painted by Rubens, or Correggio.

has



has neither the silver purity of Guido, nor the freshness of Rubens, but a glow perhaps more enchanting than either. Sir Joshua has remarked, that the silver purity of Guido is more suited to beauty, than that glowing golden hue of Titian: it was natural for him to mention Guido, as being the painter who had most succeeded in beauty of form; but with less of that purity and evenness of tint, there is a freshness in that of Rubens which would admirably accord with beauty, though there are but few instances in his works of such a union.

It seems to me that if any one of the qualities which Mr. Burke has so justly ascribed to beauty, is more essential than the others, it is freshness; and it is that, which makes the most distinct line of separation, between the beautiful and the picturesque in colouring,

louring \*. I should on that account be inclined to call the Venetian style of colouring, and that of Mola, of Domenico Feti, and others who have imitated it, the picturesque style, as being formed upon the deep and glowing tints of autumn, and not upon the fresh and delicate colours of spring ; and although this Venetian colouring may not upon the whole be so congenial to the sublime, as the severer styles of the Roman and Florentine schools, yet it is infinitely more so, than the fresher and more sensual style of

\* Claude always mixed a much larger proportion of cool, fresh colours in his landscapes than the Venetians did in theirs. In some of his early pictures, those cool tints prevail too much, and give them a cold sickly appearance ; his best works, however, are entirely free from that, as well as the opposite defect, and his authority for the due proportion of cool and warm colours which beauty requires, is as high as any man's can be ; for no one studied beauty more diligently, more successfully, or for a greater number of years.

Rubens,

Rubens\*, or the silvery tone of Guido; and in that it accords with the general character of the picturesque, more readily mixing with the sublime, than the beautiful does. Sometimes also, the grandest effects have arisen from the broken tints of the Venetian painters; effects, that are displaid in their highest perfection in the back grounds, and skies of Titian†, and which could not be produced by the unbroken, and distinct colours of the Roman school.

\* Rubens seems to have had such great delight in *beauty* of colour, as often to have placed it, where a tint of a coarser kind would have been more in character. I remember observing, in that wonderful sketch of a battle on a bridge, in the Orleans collection, a robust soldier's knee, of so beautiful a carnation, blended with such pure white, as is only seen in the most delicate woman's complexion.

† That, for instance, in the St. Margaret, at Lord Harcourt's, at Nuneham. Those of Rubens and Vandyke are frequently very grand where the subject required it; and in that respect they made Titian and the Venetians their model.

Many of Rubens's works have quite the freshness of the early season of the year; and the whole of that well-known picture of the Duke of Rutland's, has the spring-like hue of those flowers, which with so gay and spring-like a profusion (but still with a painter's judgment) he has thrown about it. But when Titian introduces flowers, they also are made to accord with his general principle; they are not the children of spring; they seem to belong to a later season; for he spreads over them an autumnal hue and atmosphere, that would make even Rubens's flowers (much more those of a mere flower painter) look raw in comparison.

This leads me to observe, that it is not only the change of vegetation which gives to autumn that golden hue, but also the atmosphere itself, and the lights and shadows which then prevail. In September  
and

and October the sun describes a much lower circle above the horizon than in May and April; and consequently the lights and shadows, during a much larger portion of the day, are broader, and more resembling those, which in all seasons are produced at the close of it \*. The very characters of the sky and the atmosphere are of a piece with those of the two seasons; spring has its light and flitting clouds, with shadows equally flitting and uncertain; refreshing showers, with gay and genial bursts of sunshine, that seem suddenly to call forth, and to nourish the young buds and flowers. In autumn all is

\* In winter (when that circle is most contracted) even the mid-day lights and shadows, from their horizontal direction, are so striking, and the parts so finely illuminated, and yet so connected and filled up by them, that I have many times forgotten the nakedness of the trees, from admiration of the general masses. In summer, the exact reverse is as often the case; the rich cloathing of the parts makes a faint impression, from the vague and general glare of light without shadow.

matured,

matured ; and the rich hues of the ripened fruits, and of the changing foliage, are rendered still richer by the warm haze, which, on a fine day in that season, spreads the last varnish over every part of the picture.

## CHAPTER IX.

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I HAVE endeavoured, to the best of my abilities, and according to the observations I have made in a long habit of reflection on the subject, to trace the ideas we have of the picturesque, through the different works of art and nature ; and it appears to me, that in all objects of sight, in buildings, trees, water, ground, in the human species, and in other animals, the same general principles uniformly prevail; and that even light and shadow, and colours, have the strongest conformity to those principles. I have compared both its causes and effects, with those of the sublime and the beautiful; I have shewn  
its

its distinctness from them both, and in what that distinctness consists.

Of these three characters, beauty is that which most nearly interests us; and it is singular, that two of those who have most studied it, and best written upon it, should differ in their ideas so very widely, that the one should make beauty, and the other ugliness, proceed from the same cause. Mr. Burke has observed, \* “ that the idea of variation, without attending so accurately to the *manner* of the variation, has led Mr. Hogarth to consider angular figures as beautiful.”

Though I have never happened to meet with this position (so contrary to Hogarth’s general system) in the analysis of beauty, I have no doubt of Mr. Burke’s accuracy; and I can easily conceive, that a painter

\* Sublime and Beautiful, page 216.



like Hogarth, who had observed the rich and splendid effects produced by sudden variations, should call angles beautiful. Mr. Burke has, I think, clearly shewn that idea to be founded on false principles; but I also imagine that he himself, had he thought it worth his while to investigate so ungrateful a subject as ugliness, with the same accuracy as he has that of beauty, would hardly have reckoned those objects the *ugliest* which approach most nearly to \* angular; for in that case, the leaves of the vine and plane, would be among the ugliest of the vegetable kingdom.

It seems to me, that mere unmixed ugliness does not arise from sharp angles, or from any sudden variation; but rather from that *want* of form, that unshapen lumpish appearance, which, perhaps, no one word ex-

\* Sublime and Beautiful, page 217.

actly expresses; a quality (if what is negative may be so called) that never can be mistaken for beauty, never can adorn it, and which is equally unconnected with the sublime and the picturesque. In Latin, *forma* is sometimes used singly for beauty; and it seems to imply, that beauty, is form in its most exquisitely finished state, when the last touches of the master's hand have left nothing to add, nothing to diminish—such as we find in the most perfect Grecian sculpture. But were an artist to model, in any soft material, a head from the Venus or the Apollo, and then by way of experiment to make the nose longer or sharper—rising more suddenly towards the middle—or strongly aquiline; were he to give a striking projection to the eye brow—or to break the outline of the face into angles—though he would destroy beauty, yet he might create character; and something  
grand

grand, or picturesque, might be produced by such a trial. But let him take the contrary method, let him clog and fill up all those nicely marked variations, of whose happy union and connection beauty is the result—ugliness, and that only, must be the consequence. Were he afterwards to place warts and carbuncles on the nose, or any other unnatural wens and excrescencies on the face; were he to twist the mouth, or make the nose awry, or of an enormous size—he would then add deformity to ugliness.

Deformity is to ugliness, what picturesqueness is to beauty; though distinct from it, and in many cases arising from opposites causes, it is often mistaken for it, often accompanies it, and greatly heightens its effect. Ugliness alone, is merely disagreeable; when any striking deformity

is

is added, it becomes hideous ; when terror, sublime. All these are mixed in the

Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen  
ademptum.

Milton, in his description of death, has left out the deformity which is usual in the representation of that king of terrors \* ; possibly from judging that its distinctness would take off from the mysterious uncertainty, which has rendered his picture so awfully sublime :

The other shape,  
If shape it might be called, which shape had none  
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb ;  
Or substance might be call'd, which shadow seem'd,

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\* *That* deformity is only such with respect to the human body in its perfect state ; death being constantly painted as a skeleton, *that* must be considered as his natural form.

For

For each seem'd either; black it stood as night,  
 Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,  
 And shook a dreadful dart; what seem'd his head  
 The likeness of a kingly crown had on.

Some of those who think that all beauty depends on flowing lines, have criticised the Grecian nose as being too strait, and forming too sharp an angle with the rest of the face: Whether the Greek artists were right or not, it clearly shews that in their opinion strait and cutting lines, and what nearly approached to angles, were not merely compatible with beauty; but that the effect of the whole would thence be more attractive, than by a continual sweep and flow of outline in every part \*.

Those hills and mountains which nearly approach to angles, are often called beau-

\* The application of this to modern gardening is too obvious to be enforced. It is the highest of all authority against continual flow of outline, even where *beauty* of form is the only object.

tiful, seldom, I believe, ugly; and when distance has softened their roughness, brownness, and apparent bulk, they accord with the softest and most pleasing scenes, and form the distance of some of Claude's most polished landscapes. The ugliest forms of hills (if my ideas are just) are those which are lumpish, and, as it were, unformed; such, for instance, as, from one of the ugliest and most shapeless animals; are called pig-backed. When the summits of any of these are notched into paltry divisions, or have such insignificant risings upon them as appear like knobs or bumps; or when any improver has imitated those knobs and knotches, by means of patches, and clumps, they are then both ugly and deformed.

The same distinctions hold good in trees; the ugliest forms, are not those whose branches make sudden angles, (for  
 6 they

they are often highly picturesque,) but such shapeless ones as we see in trees which have been pressed by others, or in stripped or pollard ones that have just begun to recover; in these last (while the marks of the axe are still visible) that most horrid of all deformity, occasioned by mangled limbs, added to ugliness, makes them the most disgusting of all inanimate objects; they bring to our mind the shocking spectre of Deïphobus :

*Priamiden toto laniatum corpore vidi.*

The ugliest ground is that which has neither the beauty of smoothness, verdure, and gentle undulation, nor the picturesque-ness of bold and sudden breaks, and varied tints of soil : of such kind is ground that has been disturbed, and left in that unfinished state, as in a rough ploughed field run to sward. Such also are the slimy shores of

a flat tide river, or the stony ones of a mountain torrent when it descends into the plain. The steep shores of rivers, where the tide rises at times to a great height, and leaves promontories and caves of slime; and those on which torrents among the mountains leave huge shapeless heaps of stones, may certainly lay claim to some mixture of deformity; which is often mistaken for another character. Nothing, indeed, is more common than to hear persons who come from a tame cultivated country (and not those only) mistake barrenness, desolation, and deformity, for grandeur and picturesqueness\*.

### Deformity

\* It might be supposed, on the other hand, that the being continually among picturesque scenes, would of itself, and without any assistance from pictures, lead to a distinguishing taste for them. Unfortunately it often leads to a perfect indifference for that style, and to a liking for something directly opposite.

I once



Deformity in ground is indeed less obvious than in other objects : deformity seems to be something that did not originally belong to the object in which it exists ; something strikingly and unnaturally disagreeable, and not softened by those circumstances which often make it picturesque. The side of a smooth green hill torn by floods, may at first very properly be called deformed ; and on the same principle (though not with the same impression) as a gash on a living animal.

I once walked over a very romantic place in Wales with the proprietor, and strongly expressed how much I was struck with it, and, among the rest, with several natural cascades. He was quite uneasy at the pleasure I felt, and seemed afraid I should waste my admiration. " Don't stop at these things," said he, " I will shew you by and by one worth seeing." At last we came to a part where the brook was conducted down three long steps of hewn stone : " There," said he, with great triumph, " that was made by Edwards, who built Pont y pridd, and it is reckoned as neat a piece of mason-work as any in the country."

When the rawness of such a gash in the ground is softened, and in part concealed and ornamented by the effects of time, and the progress of vegetation—deformity, by this usual process, is converted into picturesqueness; and this is the case with quarries, gravel-pits, &c. which at first are deformities, and which, in their most picturesque state, are often considered as such by a levelling improver. Large heaps of mould or stones, when they appear strongly, and without any connection or concealment, above the surface of the ground, may also at first be considered as deformities, and may equally become picturesque by the same process.

This connection between picturesqueness and deformity cannot be too much studied by improvers, and, among other reasons, from motives of economy. There are in many places deep hollows and broken  
ground

ground not immediately in view, and which do not interfere with any sweep of lawn necessary to be kept open. To fill up, and level these, would often be difficult and expensive; to dress and adorn them, costs little trouble, or money. Even in the most smooth and polished scenes, they may often be so masked by plantations, and so united with them, as to blend with the general scenery at a distance, and to produce great novelty and variety when approached.

With regard to hills and mountains, their symmetry and proportions are not indeed marked out and ascertained, like those of the human figure; but the general principles of beauty and ugliness, of picturesqueness and deformity, are easily to be traced in them, though not in so striking and obvious a manner.

In buildings, and all artificial objects,

the same effects are produced by the same means. Whatever is neatly finished, and the form (whatever it may be) accurately expressed, will be less *ugly* than the same style of form executed in a slovenly and unfinished manner. A neat brick-wall, for instance, is less ugly, though perhaps more unpicturesque, than a slovenly mud-wall; a brick-cottage, than a mud one. A clump of brick no one will deny to be completely ugly, and it is melancholy to reflect how many houses in this kingdom are built upon that model; the chief difference, and that which makes them a degree less ugly, is the sharpness of their angles.

With respect to colours, it appears to me that as transparency is one essential quality of beauty, so the want of that transparency, or what may be termed mud-diness, is the most general and efficient cause of ugliness. A colour, for instance,  
 may

may be harsh, glaring, or tawdry, and yet please many eyes, and by some be called beautiful ; but a muddy colour no one ever was pleased with, or gave that title to. If this idea of ugliness in colour be just, it very much strengthens what I have before remarked with respect to form ; for in *that*, ugliness is said to arise from clogging those nicely marked variations which produce beauty ; and in this it will in a similar manner arise, from clogging, thickening, and altering the nice proportion and arrangement of those particles (whatever they be) which produce clearness and beauty of colour \*.

Ugliness, like beauty, has no prominent features ; it is in some degree regular and

\* I am here speaking of colours considered separately ; not of those numberless beauties and effects which are produced by their numberless connections and oppositions,

uniform,

uniform, and at a distance, and even on a slight inspection, is not immediately striking. Deformity, like picturesqueness, makes a quicker impression, and the moment it appears, strongly rouses the attention. On this principle, ugly music is what is composed according to rule and common proportion; but which has neither that selection of sweet and flowing melody, which answers to the beautiful; nor that marked character, that variety, those sudden and masterly changes, which correspond with the picturesque. If such music be executed in the same style in which it is composed, it will cause no strong emotion; but if played out of tune, it will become *deformed*, and every such deformity will make the musical hearer start. The enraged musician stops both his ears against the *deformity* of those sounds, which Hogarth has so powerfully conveyed to us through another

other sense, as almost to justify the bold expression of Æschylus, *δεδορκα φωνην*. Apply this to the other sense: Mere ugliness is looked upon without any violent emotion; but deformity, in any strong degree, would probably cause the same sort of action in the beholder, as in Hogarth's musician; by making him afraid to trust singly to those means of exclusion, which nature has placed over the sight.

The effects of the picturesque, when mixed with the sublime, or the beautiful, have been already considered. It will be found as frequently mixed with ugliness; and its effects when so mixed will appear to be perfectly consistent with all that has been mentioned of its effects and qualities. Ugliness, like beauty, in itself is not picturesque, for it has, simply considered, no strongly marked features: but when the last-mentioned character is added either to  
 beauty

beauty or to ugliness, they become more striking and varied ; and whatever may be the sensations they excite, they always, by means of that addition, more strongly attract the attention. We are amused and occupied by ugly objects if they are also picturesque, just as we are by a rough, and in other respects a disagreeable mind, provided it has a marked and peculiar character ; without it, mere outward ugliness, or mere inward rudeness, are simply disagreeable.

An ugly man or woman with an aquiline nose, high cheek bones, beetle brows, and strong lines in every part of the face, will, from these picturesque circumstances (which might all be taken away without destroying ugliness) be much more *strikingly* ugly, than a man with no more features than an oyster. I before observed, that ugliness, like beauty, is rendered more  
amusing



amusing and diversified, as well as more striking, by the addition of the picturesque: and therefore when those circumstances of disgust, which often attend reality, are softened and disguised, as in the drama, by imitation, picturesque ugliness (a distinction to which it has just as good a right as beauty) becomes a source of pleasure. He who has been used to admire such picturesque ugliness in painting, will from the same causes look with pleasure (for we have no other word to express the degree, or character of that sensation) at the original in nature; and one cannot think slightly of the power and advantage of that art, which makes its admirers often gaze with such delight on some ancient lady, as by the help of a little vanity might perhaps lead her to mistake the motive\*.

As

\* A celebrated anatomist is said to have declared, that hee had received in his life more pleasure from *dead* than

As the excess of those qualities which chiefly constitute beauty, produces insipidity; so likewise the excess of those which constitute picturesqueness, produces deformity. Though these mutual relations may perhaps be sufficiently obvious in inanimate objects, yet as every thing which relates to beauty strikes us more forcibly in our own species, the progress of that excess towards insipidity on one side, and towards deformity on the other, will be more clearly perceived, if we observe what its effects would be on the human countenance; and if we suppose the *general* form of the countenance to remain the same, and only what

than from *living* women. This might perhaps be brought as a parallel instance of perverted taste; but I never heard of any painter's having made the same declaration with respect to age and youth. Whatever may be the future refinements of painting and anatomy, I believe young and live women, will **never** have reason to be jealous of old, or dead rivals.

may

may be considered as the *accompaniments* to be changed.

Suppose then (what is no uncommon stile or degree of beauty) a woman with fine features, but the character of whose eyes, eyebrows, hair, and complexion, are more striking and showy than delicate: imagine then the same features, with the eyebrows less marked, and both those and the hair of the head of a softer texture;—the general glow of complexion changed to a more delicate gradation of white and red,—the skin more smooth and even,—and the eyes of a milder colour and expression: you would by this change take off from the striking, the showy effect; but such a face would have in a greater degree that finished delicacy, which even those who might prefer the other stile would allow to be more in unison with the idea of beauty, and the other would appear comparatively

coarse

coarse and unfinished. If we go on still farther, and suppose hardly any mark of eyebrow ;—the hair, from the lightness of its colour, and from the silky softness of its quality, giving scarce any idea of roughness ;—the complexion of a pure and almost transparent whiteness, with hardly a tinge of red ;—the eyes of the mildest blue, and the expression equally mild,—you would then approach very nearly to insipidity, but still without destroying beauty ; on the contrary, such a form, when irradiated by a mind of equal sweetness and purity, united with sensibility, has something angelic ; and seems farther removed from what is earthly and material. This shews how much softness, smoothness, and delicacy, even when carried to an extreme degree, are congenial to beauty : on the other hand it must be owned, that where the only agreement between such a form and the soul which inhabits

bits

bits it is want of character and animation, nothing can be more completely vapid than the whole composition.

If now we return to the same point at which we began, and conceive the eyebrows *more* strongly marked—the hair rougher in its effect and quality—the complexion more dusky and gipsy-like—the skin of a coarser grain, with some moles on it—a degree of cast in the eyes, but so slight, as only to give archness and peculiarity of countenance—this, without altering the proportion of the features, would take off from beauty, what it gave to character and picturesqueness. If we go one step farther, and encrease the eyebrows to a preposterous size—the cast into a squint—make the skin scarred, and deeply pitted with the small-pox—the complexion full of spots—and encrease the moles into excrescences—it will plainly appear how close

the connection is between beauty and insipidity, and between picturesqueness and deformity, and what “ thin partitions do their bounds divide.”

The whole of this applies most exactly to improvements. The general features of a place remain the same, the accompaniments only are changed ; but with them its character. If the improver (as it usually happens) attend solely to verdure, smoothness, undulation of ground, and flowing lines, the whole will be insipid. If, on the contrary (what is much more rare) the opposite taste should prevail ; should an improver, by way of being picturesque, make broken ground, pits, and quarries all about his place ; encourage nothing but furze, briars, and thistles ; heap quantities of rude stones on his banks ; or, to crown all, like Mr. Kent, plant dead trees ;—the deformity of such a place would, I believe,

be very generally allowed, though the insipidity of the other might not be so readily confessed.

I may here remark, that though picturesque and deformity are by their etymology so strictly confined to the sense of seeing, yet there is in the other senses a most exact resemblance to their effects; this is the case, not only in the sense of hearing (of which so many examples have been given) but in the more contracted ones of tasting and smelling; and the progress I have mentioned, is in them also, equally plain and obvious. It can hardly be doubted, that what answers to the beautiful in the sense of tasting, has smoothness and sweetness for its basis, with such a degree of stimulus as enlivens, but does not overbalance those qualities; such, for instance, as in the most delicious fruits and liquors. Take away the stimulus, they

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become

become insipid ; encrease it so as to overbalance those qualities, they then gain a peculiarity of flavour, are eagerly sought after by those who have acquired a relish for them, but are less adapted to the general palate. This corresponds exactly with the picturesque ; but if the stimulus be encreased beyond that point, none but depraved and vitiated palates will endure, what would be so justly termed deformity in objects of sight \*. The sense of smelling has in this, as in all other respects, the closest conformity to that of tasting.

\* The old maxim of the schools, *de gustibus non est disputandum*, is by many extended to all tastes, and claimed as a sort of privilege not to have any of their's called in question. It is certainly very reasonable, that a man should be allowed to indulge his eye, as well as his palate, in his own way ; but if he happened to have a taste for water-gruel without salt, he should not force it upon his guests as the perfection of cookery ; or burn their insides, if, like the king of Prussia, he loved nothing but what was spiced enough to turn a living man into a mummy.

These



These are the chief arguments that have occurred to me, for giving to the picturesque a distinct character. I have had the satisfaction of finding many persons, high in the public estimation, of my sentiment; and among them, some of the most eminent artists, both professors and dilettanti. On the other hand, I must allow, that there are persons, whose opinion carries great weight with it, who in reality, hold the two words, beautiful and picturesque, to be synonymous, though they do not say so in express terms: with those, however, I do not mean to argue at present, though well prepared for battle. Others there are, who allow, indeed, that the words have a different *meaning*, but that there is no distinct *character* of the picturesque; to those, before I close this part of my essay, I shall offer a few reflections.

Taking it then for granted, that the two

terms are not synonymous, the word picturesque, must have some appropriate meaning ; and therefore, when any person chooses to call a figure, or a scene, picturesque, rather than beautiful, he must have some reason for that choice. The most common, and a very natural reason, is, that such a figure or scene appears *peculiarly* suited to the painter ; but as no effect can be without a cause, there must be some distinct and appropriate cause of that peculiar suitableness.

Whoever has read with attention what I have written on the qualities of the picturesque, will, I think, very readily assign that cause : I trust that I have clearly shewn, that all rough, rugged, and abrupt forms — all sudden, irregular deviations, produce more *striking* oppositions and varieties, more *strongly marked* characters, and such therefore, as are more easily imitated with effect, than that which is smooth

smooth and flowing, and of which the deviations are gradual; although it is no less certain that smoothness, undulation, &c. are more *popular* qualities, and more suited to the *general* taste. It has been observed, for example, that painters generally succeed better in men, than in women—in old, than in young subjects;—from what reason? Clearly, because they have more of those qualities which I have assigned to the picturesque. But are not the freshness and smoothness of youth, more generally attractive, than the furrows, and the autumnal tint of old age? Certainly; and on that account it cannot be said, that they are *peculiarly* suited to the painter; for that expression implies some qualities (such, for instance, as ruggedness, abruptness, &c.) which, though not suited to the *general* taste, are suited to his art. But are they exclusively so? Are they even suited in a higher degree, than the opposite qualities

which are assigned to beauty? that question may be answered by another; by asking, what is the rank which Correggio, Guido, Albano, hold among painters? Raphael, the highest name among the moderns, was far from neglecting beauty, or the qualities assigned to it; and if we go back to the ancients, what are the pictures that were most admired while they existed, and whose fame is now as fresh as ever? The Venus of Apelles, the Helen of Zeuxis; pictures in which ruggedness, abruptness, and sudden deviation, could have no place,

From all this, to me it appears quite evident, that the qualities assigned to beauty are no less suited to painting (and that of the highest style) than those assigned to picturesqueness; and yet, that from the reasons I have given, those figures, or scenes, in which the last mentioned qualities prevail, may be said, without impropriety, to be *peculiarly* suited to painting; and there-  
 fo re

fore may justly claim a title taken from that art, without having an exclusive reference to it. If it be true with respect to landscape, that a scene may, and often does exist, in which the qualities of the picturesque, almost exclusively of those of grandeur and beauty, prevail—if it be true, (and the proof frequently occurs) that persons unacquainted with pictures, either take no interest in such scenes, or even think them ugly, while painters, and lovers of painting, study and admire them.—If, on the other hand, a scene may equally exist, in which the qualities assigned to the beautiful (as far as the nature of the case will allow) are alone admitted, and from which those of the picturesque are no less studiously excluded, and that such a scene will at once give delight to every spectator, to the painter no less than to all others, and will by all, without hesitation, be called beautiful\*.

\* Letter to Mr. Repton, page 137.

If this be true, yet still no distinction of character be allowed to exist—what is it, then, which does create a distinction between any two characters? That I shall now wish to examine; and as the right of the picturesque to a character of its own, is called in question, I shall do, what is very usual in similar cases, enquire into the right of other characters, whose distinction has hitherto been unquestioned: Not for the sake of disputing their right, but of establishing that of the picturesque; by shewing, on how much stronger and broader foundations it has been built. Envy, and revenge, are by all acknowledged to be distinct characters; nay both of them, as well as many of our better affections, have been so often personified by poets, and embodied by painters and sculptors, that we have as little doubt of their distinct figurative existence, as of the real existence of any of  
our

our acquaintance, and almost know them as readily. But from what does their distinction arise?—from their *general* effect on the mind? Certainly not; for their general effect, that which is common to them both, and to others of the same class, is ill-will towards the several objects on which they are exercised; just as the general effect of the sublime, of the beautiful, and of the picturesque, is delight or pleasure of some kind to the eye, to the imagination, or to both. It appears therefore from this instance, (and I am inclined to think it universally true) that distinction of character does not arise from general effects, but that we must seek for it's origin in particular causes; I am also persuaded, that it is from having pursued the opposite method of reasoning, that the distinction between the beautiful, and the picturesque, has been denied.

nied. The truth of these two positions will be much more evident, if it should be shewn, that the *causes* of envy, and revenge, no less plainly mark a *distinction*, than their *general effect*, if singly considered, would imply a *unity* of character. The cause of envy is the merit, reputation, or good fortune of others; that of revenge, an injury received. These seem to me their most obvious and striking causes, and certainly sufficient to distinguish them from each other: but let the most acute metaphysician, place in one point of view whatever may, in any way, mark the nice boundaries which separate them from each other, and then let his discriminations be compared, for clear, and strongly marked difference and opposition, with those I have stated to exist between the beautiful, and the picturesque; and if his discriminations are not  
more



more clear, and more strongly marked, but on the contrary much less so, why should they have a power, which is denied to mine?

It has been argued by some, that the sublime, as well as the picturesque, is included in the beautiful; that such distinctions as Mr. Burke and myself have made are too minute, and refined; and that the picturesque especially, is only a mode of beauty\*. What then are envy, and revenge? are they in a less degree modes of hatred? are they not so in a much closer degree? are they not much more nearly allied to that general title of ill-will towards our fellow-creatures, and to each other, than any of the three characters, whose distinction has been so ques-

\* The difference between the general, and the confined sense of beauty, is discussed in my letter to Mr. Repton, page 135.

tioned?

tioned? I must here also observe, (and it will greatly corroborate what I have before advanced) that hatred, from being general, and not referring, like the others, to any determinate cause, is a less familiar personification, less distinguished by peculiar attributes, less in short of a distinct character; and if represented in allegorical painting, might easily be mistaken for some other character.

It may here very naturally be asked, how it could happen that certain distinctions of characters, which, according to my statement, are plain and manifest, should so long have been very inaccurately made out, and should still by many be called in question; when a number of others, which, as I have asserted, are separated by very thin partitions, have for ages been universally acknowledged. This may easily be accounted

counted for, and the causes of accurate distinction, and of general agreement in the one case, will lead to those of inaccuracy and doubt in the other.

All that concerns our speculative ideas and amusements, all objects of taste, and the principles belonging to them, are thought of by a small part of mankind; the great mass never think of them at all. They are studied in one age, neglected in another, sometimes totally lost; but the variety of human passions and affections, all their most general and manifest effects, and their minutest discriminations, have never ceased to be the involuntary study of all nations and ages. They have, indeed, at various times been investigated by speculative minds, but every man has occasion to feel but too strongly, the truth of their separate causes and effects, either from his  
own

own experience, or that of persons near and dear to him; nor are we in any case unconcerned spectators where they operate.

Had it in the nature of things been possible, that the same eager, constant, and general interest, should have prevailed with respect to objects of taste—the discriminations might have been hardly less numerous, or less generally understood and acknowledged; and it is by no means impossible, should the distinctions in question, continue for a long time together the subject of eager discussion, and likewise of practical application, that new discriminations, and new terms for them, may take place. The picturesque might not only be distinguished from the sublime, and from the beautiful, but its mixture, when nearly balanced with either of them, or (what no  
less

less frequently occurs) with ugliness, might have an appropriate term. At present, when we talk of a picturesque figure, no one can guess, by that expression alone, to which of the other characters it may be allied; whether it be very handsome, or very ugly; in gauze and feathers, or in rags. Again, if we speak of a picturesque scene, or building, it is equally uncertain, whether it be a bit of a hollow lane, or heathy common; an old mill, or hovel: Or, on the other hand, a scene of rocks and mountains, or the ruin of some ancient castle or temple. We can, indeed, explain what we mean by a few more words; but whatever enables us to convey our ideas with greater precision and facility, must be a real improvement to language. The Italians do mark the union of beauty, with greatness of size or character, in a picture or any

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other

other object, by calling it, una *gran-bella* cosa ; I do not mean to say that the term is always very accurately applied, but it shews a strong tendency to such a distinction. But in English, were we to add any part of the word picturesque to handsome, or ugly, or grand, though such composed words would not be more uncouth than many which are received into the language, they would be sufficiently so, to place a very formidable barrier of ridicule between them and common use : To invent new terms (supposing the object of sufficient consequence) is perhaps still more open to ridicule. Mr. Burke decided in favour of the word *delight*, to express a peculiar sense of pleasure arising from a peculiar cause ; but the sense we are accustomed to is perpetually recurring during his essay, and out of it, the word of course returns

to

to its general meaning; had he risked an entirely new word, and had it got over the first inevitable onset of ridicule, and grown into use, the English language would have owed one more obligation to one of its greatest benefactors.





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## PART II.

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HAVING now examined the chief qualities that in such various ways render objects interesting; having shewn how much the beauty, spirit, and effect of landscape, real or imitated, depend upon a due mixture of rough and smooth, of warm and cool tints; and of what extreme consequence variety and intricacy are in those, as well as in our other pleasures; having shewn too, that the ge-

neral principles of improving are in reality the same as those of painting, I shall next enquire how far the principles of the last-mentioned art (clearly the best qualified to improve and refine our ideas of nature) have been attended to by improvers; and how far also those who first produced, and those who have continued the present system, were capable of applying them, even if they had wished to do so.

It appears from Mr. Walpole's very ingenious and entertaining Treatise on Modern Gardening, that Kent was the first who introduced that so much admired change from the old to the present system; the great leading feature of which change, and the leading character of each style, is very aptly expressed in half a line of Horace;

*Mutat quadrata rotundis.*

Formerly, every thing was in squares and parallelograms; now every thing is in segments of circles, and ellipses: the formality still remains; the character of that formality alone is changed. The old canal, for instance, has lost, indeed, its straightness and its angles; but it is become regularly serpentine, and the edges remain as naked, and as uniform as before: avenues, vistas, and straight ridings through woods, are exchanged, for clumps, belts, and circular roads and plantations of every kind: straight alleys in gardens, and the platform of the old terrace, for the curves of the gravel walk. The intention of the new improvers was certainly meritorious; for they meant to banish formality, and to restore nature; but it must be remembered, that strongly marked, distinct, and regular curves, un-

broken and undisguised, are hardly less unnatural or formal, though much less grand and simple, than strait lines ; and that, independently of monotonv, the continual and indiscriminate use of such curves, has an appearance of affectation and of studied grace, that always creates disgust.

The old style had indisputably defects and absurdities of the most obvious and striking kind. Kent, therefore, is entitled to the same praise as many other reformers, who have broken through narrow, inveterate, long established prejudices ; and who, thereby, have prepared the way for more liberal notions, although, by their own practice and example, they may have substituted other narrow prejudices and absurdities in the room of those which they had banished. It must be owned at the same time, that,  
like

like other reformers, he and his followers demolished, without distinction, the costly and magnificent decorations of past times, and all that had long been held in veneration; and among them (I speak solely of gardening) many things that still deserved to have been respected, and adopted. Such, however, is the zeal and enthusiasm with which, at the early period of their success, novelties of every kind are received, that the fascination becomes general; and those few, who may then see their defects, hardly dare to attack openly, what a multitude is in arms to defend. It is reserved for those, who are farther removed from that moment of sudden change, and strong prejudice, to examine the merits and defects of both styles, in every particular of what is called improvement: But how are they to be examined? by the general and unchanging principles,

principles, to which the effects of all visible objects are to be referred, but which (for the reasons I before have mentioned) are very commonly called the principles of painting \*. These *general* principles, not those peculiar to the *practice* of the art, are, in my idea, universally to be referred to in every kind of ornamental gardening; in the most confined, as well as the most enlarged sense of the word: my business at present is almost entirely with the latter—with what may be termed the landscapes, and the general scenery of the place, whether under the title of grounds, lawn, park, or any other denomination.

With respect to Kent, and his particular mode of improving, I can say but little from my own knowledge, having never seen any works of his that I could be sure had undergone no alteration from any of his successors;

\* Page 15.

cessors; but Mr. Walpole, by a few characteristic anecdotes, has made us perfectly acquainted with the turn of his mind, and the extent of his genius.

A *painter*, who, from being used to *plant* young beeches, introduced them, almost exclusively, into his *landscapes* \*, and who  
even

\* The circumstance of Kent's having *painted* nothing but young beeches, because he had been used to *plant* them, is taken from Mr. Walpole. His works are so much read, and his manner of treating all subjects is so lively and amusing, as well as ingenious, that I supposed this anecdote was familiar to every body; nor could I have thought it necessary to put the words *painter*, *plant*, and *landscapes* in Italics, in order to prevent any misapprehension of my meaning. But Mr. G. Mason has conceived, from what I have said, that I disapprove of *plantations* of young beeches, and asks with some triumph, whether I would have had Kent plant old ones, as a nursery for dead groves? and then goes on in praise of the beech \*.

\* Essay on Design in Gardening, page 109:

I flatter

even in his designs for Spencer (whose scenes were so often laid, “*infra l’ombre piante d’antica felva*”) still kept to his little beeches, must have had a more paltry mind than falls to the common lot ; it must also have been as perverse as it was paltry ; for as he *painted* trees without form, so he *planted* them without life, and seems to have imagined *that* alone would compensate for want of bulk, of age, and of grandeur of character.

I may here observe, that it is almost impossible to remove a large old tree, with all its branches, spurs, and appendages ; and

I flatter myself, that hitherto I have not mistated the meaning of any author, whom I have taken the liberty to criticise, and I shall certainly be very careful in future ; for I feel how infinitely ashamed I should be, were I ever to be convicted of having grossly perverted another person’s ideas, and then triumphed over my own mistatement.

I

without



without such qualities as greatness of size, joined to an air of grandeur, and of high antiquity, a dead tree should seldom be *left* in a conspicuous place ; to entitle it to such a station, it should be “ majestic even in ruin :” A dead tree which could be moved, would, from that very circumstance, be unfit for moving. These dead trees of Kent’s were probably placed where they would attract the eye ; for it is rare that any improver wishes to conceal his efforts. Some other parts of his practice I shall have occasion to consider hereafter.

If I have spoken thus strongly of a man, who has been celebrated in prose and in verse, as the founder of an art almost peculiar to this country, and from which it is supposed to derive no slight degree of glory, I have done it to prevent (as far as it lies in me) the bad effect which too great a veneration

for

for first reformers is sure to produce—that of interesting national vanity in the continuance and protection of their errors. The task I have taken upon myself, has been in all ages invidious and unpopular, but with regard to Kent, I thought it particularly incumbent upon me to shew, that he was not one of those great original geniuses, who, like Michael Angelo, seem born to give the world more enlarged and exalted ideas of art; but that on the contrary, in the art he did profess, and from which he might be supposed to have derived superior lights on that of gardening, his ideas were uncommonly mean, contracted, and perverse. Were I not to shew this plainly and strongly, and without any affected candour or reserve, it might be said to me with great reason—you assert that a knowledge of the principles of painting is the first qualification for an

an improver ; the founder of English gardening was a professed artist, and yet you object to him.

Kent, it is true, was by profession a painter, as well as an improver ; but we may learn from his example, how little a certain degree of mechanical practice will qualify its possessor to direct the taste of a nation, in either of those arts \*.

### The

\* It is but fair to mention, that a very apposite quotation has been cited in defence of Kent, from a poem of Dr. Warton's, called the Enthusiast, which quotation I shall give at length, as it stands in Mr. G. Mason's work.

Can Kent design like Nature? Mark where Thames  
Plenty and pleasure pours through Lincoln's meads:

Can the great artist, though with taste supreme  
Endued, one beauty to this Eden add?

Though he by rules unfetter'd, boldly scorns  
Formality and method—*round* and square  
Disdaining, plans irregularly great.

There cannot be a more decided and pointed opinion against all I have said of Kent ; it remains only to con- sider

The most enlightened judge, both of his own art, and of all that relates to it, is a painter of a liberal and comprehensive mind,

der what degree of weight is due to that opinion. I am very ready to acknowledge, that the sentiments of poets with respect to the general beauties of nature, ought always to have great weight; for poetical and picturesque ideas are very congenial: but where a poet means to celebrate the talents of a particular person, the case is very different; as he is apt, from a very natural enthusiasm, to bestow upon him his own ideas of excellence, and freedom from defects, without weighing too minutely whether he is entitled to such unreserved praise. And besides, poetry for the most part deals in strong general praise, or censure, and does not often stop to discriminate. I have great respect for Dr. Warton's character, both as a man, and as a poet, and I am sorry that the defence of my own judgment, should oblige me in any way to question the accuracy of his; but as I hold that, without a knowledge of the principles of painting, and an acquaintance with the works of the higher artists, it is difficult to acquire any just ideas of the effects and combinations in natural scenery, I am led to doubt of Dr. Warton's judgment in these points, from the lines that immediately follow those which have been quoted.

Creative

mind, who has added extensive observation and reflection, to practical execution ;  
and

Creative Titian, can thy vivid strokes,  
Or thine, O graceful Raphael, dare to vie—*with what?*  
With the rich tints that paint the breathing mead ?  
The thousand colour'd tulip, violet's bell  
Snow-clad and meek, the vermil-tinctured rose,  
And golden crocus.

Had it so happened, that Dr. Warton had applied to the study of pictures, and of the principles on which their excellence depends, those talents which in other studies have gained him such deserved reputation, he would have known, that to challenge Titian to vie with tulips and crocuses, is hardly less improper than to make the same challenge to Raphael—that in truth he might almost as well have pitted nature against nature, and challenged a forest in autumn, to vie with a flower-garden in spring—and that although Titian is renowned above all other painters, for the glow and richness of his tints, yet that Van Huysum came infinitely nearer to those of flowers, in point of exact imitation, and probability of deception, without aspiring to his high fame as a colourist. The same study might also have discovered to him, that Kent, and those who followed him, disdained

and the most capable of enlightening others, if in addition to those natural and acquired talents, he likewise possess the power of expressing his ideas clearly and forcibly in words. To such a rare combination, we owe Sir Joshua Reynolds's discourses, the most original and impressive work that ever was published on his, or possibly on any other art \*. On the other hand, nothing

Indeed the square and measured formality and method of the old style, but substituted a method and formality of their own, in which distinct and regular curves had no little share; and I am very sure that if Dr. Warton, when his mind was full of the compositions of eminent masters, had been shewn the prints of the *Fairy Queen*, he would not have ventured to ask—"Can Kent design like nature?"—the obvious ridicule would have struck him too forcibly.

\* I cannot so well describe the strong impression, and the various instruction that I received from Sir Joshua Reynolds's discourses, as in the words which Madame Roland has applied to a very different guide. "*Il sembla que c'étoit l'aliment qui me fut propre, & l'interprète*"

thing so contracts the mind as a little practical dexterity, unassisted and uncorrected by

terprete des sentimens que j'avois avant lui, mais que lui seul pouvoit m'expliquer." The same impression, and with additional delight, I received from his conversation. It was as pleasing as it was instructive. I never missed any opportunity of enjoying it, and I never think of it without regret.

Few men had more numerous friends, in more various ranks of life, or more warmly attached. Those among them, who now honour and cherish his memory, as they loved and admired him when living, must surely be hurt at the publication of certain letters ascribed to him, which, it will readily be allowed, are very unlike his printed works—the noble produce of the vigour and maturity of his age. These letters (whatever they may be) appear to be written with the hasty negligence of early and unsuspicious youth: if they be genuine, they may indeed suggest very severe reflections on the persons who gave them up, and on those who published them, but can little affect the high, and firmly established reputation of their supposed author; for, in my opinion, it would be just as fair to draw an inference from his former ignorance in painting, as from his former ignorance in writing; just as conclusive, to produce some of his

by general knowledge and observation, and by a study of the great masters. An artist, whose mind has been so contracted, refers every thing to his own narrow circle of

early bad pictures, to prove that he did not paint Mrs. Siddons, or Cardinal Beaufort, as to bring forth early letters, to shew that he did not compose his discourses.

The most valuable part of every man's education, is that which he receives from himself, from his own untutored reflections; especially when the active energy of his character, makes ample amends for the want of a more finished course of study. Such a man, and so formed was Sir Joshua Reynolds; his observations on a variety of subjects, as well as on his own art, were those of a strong original mind, and his language, both in speaking and writing, gave them their full value. In his conversation, there was a peculiar mildness, and a simplicity, highly interesting, but which promised little else; and I have often been struck with the contrast, between that simplicity of manner, and the vigour of his thoughts and expressions. Some of our common friends have made the same reflexion, and indeed many parts of his discourses, (and those not the least impressive) appeared like transcripts of what he had spoken.

ideas



ideas and execution\*, and wishes to confine within that circle all the rest of mankind.

Before I enter into any particulars, I will make a few observations on what I look upon as the great general defect of the present system; not as opposed to the old style (though I believe the latter to have been infinitely more free from it) but considered by itself singly, and without comparison. That defect, the greatest of all, and the most opposite to the principles of painting, is want of connection—a passion for making every thing distinct and separate. All the particular defects I shall have occa-

\* I remember a gentleman, who played very prettily on the flute, abusing all Handel's music, and to give me every advantage, like a generous adversary, he defied me to name one good chorus of his writing. It may well be supposed that I did not accept the challenge; c'étoit bien l'embarras des richesses; and indeed he was right in his own way of considering them, for there is not one that would do well for his instrument.

sion to notice, in some degree arise from this original fin, and tend towards it. The new creations, and the alterations of what was already in existence, have been all conducted on the same plan of distinctness; and in consequence of that ruling principle, those numberless ties, those bonds of union (as they may be called) by which the different parts of landscape are so happily connected with each other, are unthought of in what is newly planned, and where they do exist, are destroyed. Yet those are the ties, (minute and trifling as they may often appear) by which trees, in all their different arrangements, are reciprocally combined, and on which their balance, and even their contrast, depends; by which water, when accompanied by trees thus variously arranged, is often so imperceptibly united with land, that in many places the eye cannot discover the perfect spot and time of  
their

their union ; yet is no less delighted with that mystery, than with the thousand reflexions and intricacies which attend it. What is the effect, when those ties are not suffered to exist ? You trace every where the exact line of separation ; the water is bounded by a distinct and uniform edge of grass ; the grass by a similar edge of wood ; the trees, and often the house, are distinctly placed upon the grass ; all separated from whatever might group with them, or take off from their solitary insulated appearance : in every thing you trace the hand of a mechanic, not the mind of a liberal artist.

I will now proceed to the particulars, and will beg the reader to keep in his mind the ruling principle I have just described, and of which I shall display the different proofs and examples.

No professor of high reputation, seems for some time to have appeared after Kent, till,

at length, that the system might be carried to its *ne plus ultra* (no very distant point) arose the famous Mr. Brown; who has so fixed and determined the forms and lines of clumps, belts, and serpentine canals, and has been so steadily imitated by his followers, that had the improvers been incorporated, their common seal, with a clump, a belt, and a piece of made water, would have fully expressed the whole of their science, and have served for a model as well as a seal\*.

It is very unfortunate, that this great

\* What Ariosto says of a grove of cypresses, has always struck me in looking at made places,

—che parean d'una *stampa* tutte impressë.

They seem “cast in one mould, made in one frame;” so much so, that I have seen places on which large sums had been lavished, unite so little with the landscape around them, that they gave me the idea of having been made by contract in London, and then sent down in pieces, and put together on the spot.

legislator

legislator of our national taste, whose laws still remain in force, should not have received from nature, or have acquired by education, more enlarged ideas. Claude Lorraine was bred a pastry-cook, but in every thing that regards his art as a painter, he had an elevated and comprehensive mind; nor in any part of his works can we trace the meanness of his original occupation. Mr. Brown was bred a gardener, and having nothing of the mind, or the eye of a painter, he formed his style (or rather his plan) upon the model of a parterre; and transferred its minute beauties, its little clumps, knots, and patches of flowers, the oval belt that surrounds it, and all its twists and crincum crancums, to the great scale of nature\*.

We

\* This ingenious device of magnifying a parterre, calls to my mind a story I heard many years ago. A country

We have, indeed, made but a poor progress by changing the formal, but simple

country parson, in the county where I live, speaking of a gentleman of low stature, but of extremely pompous manners, who had just left the company, exclaimed, in the simplicity and admiration of his heart, "quite grandeur in miniature, I protest." This compliment reversed, would perfectly suit the shreds and patches that are so often stuck about by Mr. Brown and his followers, amidst the noble scenes they disfigure; where they are as contemptible, and as much out of character, as Claude's first edifices in pastry would appear, in the dignified landscapes he has painted.

I must observe, however, that when I blame Mr. Brown for having transferred the minutiae of a parterre to the great scale of nature, it is not because they are little in size, but in character. There is indeed no more common error, than that of mistaking greatness of size, for greatness of manner; it continually happens that the smallest class of rocks, mountains, cascades, lakes, &c. have infinitely more grandeur of style, and afford more dignified subjects to a painter, than others of three times their magnitude. Indeed, if a certain elevation of character is wanting, mere magnitude, in many cases, only creates disgust; nothing is more contemptible than a tame giant.—"Bulk without spirit vast."

and

and majestic avenue, for the thin circular verge called a belt ; and the unpretending ugliness of the strait, for the affected sameness of the serpentine canal : But the great distinguishing feature of modern improvement, is the *clump* ; whose name, if the first letter was taken away, would most accurately describe its form and effect. Were it made the object of study, how to contrive something which, under the name of ornament, should disfigure whole districts, nothing could be imagined that would answer that purpose like a clump. Natural groups, being formed by trees of different ages and sizes, and at different distances from each other, often too of a mixture of timber trees with thorns, hollies, and others of inferior growth, are full of variety in their outlines ; and from the same causes, no two groups are exactly alike. But  
 clumps,

clumps, from the trees being generally of the same age and growth, planted nearly at the same distance in a circular form, and from each tree being equally pressed by his neighbour, are as like each other as so many puddings turned out of one common mould. Natural groups, from the causes I have mentioned, are full of openings and hollows; of trees advancing before, or retiring behind each other; all productive of intricacy, and of variety of deep shadows, and brilliant lights. The others are lumps. In walking about a natural group, the form of it changes at each step; new combinations, new lights and shades, new inlets present themselves in succession. But clumps, like compact bodies of soldiers, resist attacks from all quarters: examine them in every point of view; walk round and round them; no opening,



opening, no vacancy, no stragglers\*! but in the true military character, *ils front face partout*.

The next leading feature to the clump in this circular system (and one which, in romantic situations, rivals it in the power of creating deformity) is the belt. Its sphere, however, is more contracted: Clumps, placed like beacons on the summits of hills, alarm the picturesque traveller many miles off, and warn him of his approach to the enemy; the belt lies more in ambush, and the wretch who

\* I remember hearing, that when Mr. Brown was high-sheriff, some facetious person observing his attendants straggling, called out to him, "Clump your javelin men." What was intended merely as a piece of ridicule, might have served as a very instructive lesson to the object of it, and have taught Mr. Brown, that such figures should be confined to bodies of men drilled for the purposes of formal parade, and not extended to the loose and airy shapes of vegetation.

falls into it, and is obliged to walk the whole round in company with the improver, will allow that a snake with its tail in its mouth is, comparatively, but a faint emblem of eternity. It has, indeed, all the sameness and formality of the avenue, to which it has succeeded, without any of its simple grandeur; for though in an avenue you see the same objects from beginning to end, and in the belt a new set every twenty yards, yet each successive part of this insipid circle is so like the preceding, that though really different, the difference is scarcely felt; and there is nothing that so dulls, and at the same time so irritates the mind, as perpetual change without variety.

The avenue has a most striking effect, from the very circumstance of its being strait; no other figure can give that image of a grand gothic aisle with its  
natural

natural \* columns and vaulted roof, whose general mass fills the eye, while the particular parts insensibly steal from it in a long gradation † of perspective. The broad solemn shade adds a twilight calm to the whole, and makes it, above all other places, most suited to meditation. To that also its straightness contributes; for when the mind is disposed to turn inwardly on itself, any serpentine line would distract the attention.

All the characteristic beauties of the avenue, its solemn stillness, the religious awe it inspires, are greatly heightened by moonlight. This I once very strongly experienced

\* Mr. Burke's *Sublime and Beautiful*, page 270.

† By *long* gradation I do not mean a great *length* of avenue; I perfectly agree with Mr. Burke, "that colonades and avenues of trees, of a moderate length, are without comparison far grander, than when they are suffered to run to immense distances."—*Sublime and Beautiful*, sect. x. p. 136.

in approaching a venerable, castle-like mansion, built in the beginning of the 15th century; a few gleams had pierced the deep gloom of the avenue; a large massive tower at the end of it, seen through a long perspective, and half lighted by the uncertain beams of the moon, had a grand mysterious effect. Suddenly a light appeared in this tower—then as suddenly its twinkling vanished—and only the quiet, silvery rays of the moon prevailed; again, more lights quickly shifted to different parts of the building, and the whole scene most forcibly brought to my fancy the times of fairies and chivalry. I was much hurt to learn from the master of the place, that I might take my leave of the avenue and its romantic effects, for that a death warrant was signed.

The destruction of so many of these venerable approaches, is a fatal consequence  
of

of the present excessive horror of strait lines. Sometimes, indeed, avenues do cut through the middle of very beautiful and varied ground, with which the stiffness of their form but ill accords, and where it were greatly to be wished they had never been planted, as other trees, in various positions and groups, would probably have sprung up, in, and near the place they occupy: But being there, it may often be doubtful whether they ought to be destroyed; for whenever such a line of trees is taken away, there must be a long vacant space that will separate the grounds, with their old original trees, on each side of it; and young trees planted in the vacancy, will not in half a century connect the whole together. As to saving a few trees of the line itself for that purpose, I own I never saw it done, that it did not produce a contrary effect, and that the spot was not

T

haunted

haunted by the ghost of the departed avenue. They are, however, not unfrequently where a boundary of wood approaching to a strait line would be proper \*, and in such places they furnish a walk of more perfect and continued shade than any other disposition of trees, without interfering with the rest of the place. When you turn from it either to the right or to the left, the whole country, with all its intricacies and varieties, is open before you ; but there is no escaping from the belt ; it hems you in on all sides, and if you please yourself with having discovered some wild sequestered part (if such there ever be when a belt-maker has been admitted) or some new

\* At a gentleman's place in Cheshire, there is an avenue of oaks situated much in the manner I have described ; Mr. Brown absolutely condemned it ; but it now stands, a noble monument of the triumph of the natural feelings of the owner, over the narrow and systematic ideas of a professed improver.

pathway,

pathway, and are in the pleasing uncertainty whereabouts you are, and whither it will lead you, the belt soon appears, and the charm of expectation is over. If you turn to either side, it keeps winding round you ; if you break through it, it catches you at your return ; and the idea of this distinct, unavoidable line of separation, damps all search after novelty. Far different from those magic circles of fairies and enchanters, that gave birth to such potent and splendid illusions, the palaces and gardens of Alcina and Armida, this, like the ring of Angelica, instantly dissipates every illusion, every enchantment.

If ever a belt be allowable, it is where the house is situated in a dead flat, and in a naked ugly country ; there at least it cannot injure any variety of ground, or of distant prospect ; it will also be the real

boundary to the eye, however unvaried, and any exclusion in such cases is a benefit; but where there is variety of ground, and a descent from the house, it more completely disfigures the place than any other improvement. What most delights us in the intricacy of varied ground, of swelling knolls, and of vallies between them, retiring from the sight in different directions amidst trees or thickets, is, that it leads the eye (according to Hogarth's expression) a kind of wanton chace; this is what he calls the *beauty* of intricacy, and is that which distinguishes what is produced by soft winding shapes, from the more sudden and quickly-varying kind, which arises from broken and rugged forms. All this wanton chace, as well as the effects of more wild and picturesque intricacy, are immediately checked by any circular plantation; which never appears to retire from  
the



the eye, and lose itself in the distance, nor ever admits of partial concealments. Whatever varieties of hills and dales there may be, such a plantation must stiffly cut across them, and the undulations, and what in seamen's language may be called the *trending* of the ground, cannot in that case be humoured; nor can its playful character be marked by that style of planting, which at once points out, and adds to its beautiful intricacy.

This may serve to shew how impossible it is to plan any forms of plantations that will suit all places \*, however convenient  
it

\* In the art of medicine, after general principles are acquired, the judgment lies in the application; and every case (as an eminent physician observed to me) must be considered as a special case.

This holds precisely in improving, and in both art the quacks are alike; they have no principles, but only a few nostrums which they apply indiscriminately to all situations and all constitutions. Clumps and belts,

it may be to the professor to establish such a doctrine.

I have perhaps expressed myself more strongly, and more at length than I otherwise should have done, on the subject of this paltry invention, from the extreme disgust I felt at seeing its effect in a place, the general features of which are among the noblest in the kingdom. In front, the sea embayed amidst islands, mountains, and promontories; a hanging descent of unequal ground from the house to the shore; on which descent, different masses of wood, groups, and single trees, more or less dispersed or connected together, with lawns

pills and drops, are distributed with equal skill; the one plants the right, and clears the left, as the other bleeds the east, and purges the west ward. The best improver or physician is he who leaves most to nature, who watches and takes advantage of those indications which she points out when left to exert her own powers, but which, when once destroyed or suppressed by an empiric of either kind, present themselves no more.

and glades between them, gently leading the eye among their intricacies to the shore, *might* have been planted, or left if growing there : this would have formed a rich and varied foreground to the magnificent distance ; and in the approach to the sea-side, which ever way you took, would have broken that distance, and have formed, in conjunction with it, a number of new and beautiful compositions. One of Mr. Brown's successors has thought differently, and this uncommon display of scenery is disgraced by a belt.

I do not remember this place in its unimproved state ; but I was told that there was a great quantity of wood between the house and the sea, and that the vessels appeared (as at that wonderful place, Mount Edgecumbe) as if sailing over the tops, and gliding among the stems of the trees ; if so, this professor

“ Has left sad marks of his destructive sway.”

The method of thinning trees, which (under the idea of improvement) has been adopted by layers out of ground, perfectly corresponds with their method of planting; for in both cases they totally neglect what (in the general sense of the word) may be called picturesque effects. Trees of remarkable size, indeed, usually escape; but it is not sufficient to attend to the giants of the forest; often the loss of a few trees, nay of a single tree of middling size, is of infinite consequence to the general effect of the place, by making an irreparable breach in the outline of a principal wood; often some of the most beautiful groups owe the playful variety of their form, and their happy connection with other groups, to some apparently insignificant, and (to common observers) even ugly trees\*.

\* Vide Sir Joshua Reynolds's Notes to Mafon's Du Fresnoy, page 89.

To attend to all these niceties of outline, connection, and grouping, would require much time as well as skill, and therefore a more easy and compendious method has been adopted: the different groups are to be cleared round, till they become as clump-like as their untrained natures will allow; and even many of those outside trees that belong to the groups themselves (and to which they owe, not only their beauty, but their security against wind and frost) are cut down without pity, if they will not range according to their model; till mangled, starved, and cut off from all connection, these unhappy newly drilled corps

“ Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves \*.”

Even

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\* Mr. Walpole mentions, that “ where the plumage of an ancient wood extended wide its undulating canopy, and stood venerable in darkness—Kent thinned the foremost ranks.”

It

Even the old avenue, whose branches had intertwined with each other for ages, must undergo this fashionable metamorphosis. The object of the improver is to break its regularity, but so far from his producing that effect by dividing it into clumps, he could scarcely invent a method by which its regularity would be made so apparent from every point. When entire, its straightness can only be seen when you look up or down it; viewed sideways, it has the appearance of a thick mass of wood; if other trees are planted before it, to them it gives consequence, and they give it lightness and variety: But when it is clumped, and you can see through it, and compare each of the separate clumps with the objects before and behind them, the straight line is apparent from

It is impossible to read Mr. Walpole's description, without feeling how much the character of such woods must be destroyed by such a *system* of improvement.

whatever

whatever point you view it. In its close array the avenue is like the Grecian phalanx; each tree, like each soldier, is firmly wedged in between its companions; its branches, like their spears, present a front impenetrable to all attacks; but the moment this compact order is broken, their sides become naked and exposed. Mr. Brown, like another Paulus Æmilius, has broken the firm embodied ranks of many a noble phalanx of trees\*, and in this, perhaps, more than in any other instance, he has shewn how far the perversion of taste may be carried; for at the very time when he deprived the avenue of its shade and

\* I do not know a more interesting account of a battle than Plutarch's description of that between Perseus and Paulus Æmilius, in which, after repeated efforts, the Roman legions at length completely broke and vanquished the famous Macedonian phalanx. It is in his life of P. Æmilius, which, if any of my readers should not be acquainted with, and should be tempted to read from this allusion, I think they will feel highly obliged to me.

its solemn grandeur, he encreased its formality\*.

\* I will take this opportunity of mentioning a very striking example, of an obvious, but most material distinction between painting and improving. When an avenue is broken into clumps, the painter may select a view between two of them, which will form a very pleasing composition; for as he takes in only a part of each clump, and as they are the boundaries of his landscape, their separation from all other objects, is not perceived. No one could suspect from such a picture, that there were other clumps, which strongly marked the old line from other parts of the place, and injured the character of the whole scenery. This is perfectly fair in the painter with reference to his own art; but were he employed to shew what would be the future effects of breaking an avenue into clumps, it would be in the same degree unfair: it would, in fact, be a deception, and tend to mislead his employer. Yet this is precisely what M. Repton has done, for the purpose of shewing how an avenue may be broken with good effect †. He has also taken a very painter-like liberty—that of varying the forms, and the disposition of those trees he supposes to be left, so as to give them the appearance of two natural groups; whereas he has made all those, which are to be taken away, of one uniform height and shape, and in strait lines. It is singular that the person who has most strongly written against the use of applying painting to landscape gardening, should have furnished the most flagrant instance of its abuse.

† Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening, page 23. plate 8.



## CHAPTER II.

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**I**T is in the arrangement and management of trees, that the great art of improvement consists : earth is too cumbrous and lumpish for man to contend much with, and its effects when worked upon, are flat and dead like its nature. But trees, detaching themselves at once from the surface, and rising boldly into the air, have a more lively and immediate effect on the eye \*. They alone, form a canopy over  
us,

\* I have generally observed, that persons not conversant in pictures and drawings, are in travelling much more pleased with distant, than with near objects, and that not from curiosity alone ; and yet the variety, and quick succession of pictures, depends infinitely more on the latter.

us, and a varied frame to all other objects; which they admit, exclude, and group with, almost at the will of the improver. In beauty, they not only far excel every thing of inanimate nature, but their beauty is complete and perfect in itself; while that of almost every other object requires their assistance. Without them, the most varied inequality of ground—rocks, and mountains\*—

ter. Distant objects do not rise so suddenly, or so immediately and powerfully strike upon the sight, as near ones. Trees on the foreground, as you proceed, alter their position every instant; distant woods remain the same for a long way. An extensive prospect, which, seen continually and uninterruptedly, had tired the eye, if it be afterwards viewed partially through trees, has the effect, and almost the reality, of novelty. Instead of one unchanging view of remote objects, each division of that view, becomes a subordinate, though a highly interesting part in a new composition, of which the trees and the foreground are the principal.

\* It is not meant that the mountains themselves must be wooded, but that there must be wood in the landscape; scenes of mere desolation, however grand, soon fatigue the mind.

even

even water itself, in \* all its characters of brooks, rivers, lakes, cataracts, are comparatively

\* I have not mentioned the sea, as in this country at least, trees will not succeed near it, unless when it is land-locked; and then (though their combination, as at Mount Edgcumbe, is no less beautiful than uncommon) the sea itself loses its grand imposing character, and puts on something of the appearance of a lake. *There* trees are necessary; for a *lake* bounded by naked rocks is a rude and dull landscape; but change the character of the one element only, let the *sea* break against those rocks, and trees will no longer be thought of. The sublimity of such a picture, absorbs all idea of lesser ornaments; for no one can view the foam, the gulphs, the impetuous motion of that world of waters, without a deep impression of its destructive and irresistible power. But sublimity is not its only character; for after that first awful sensation is weakened by use, the infinite variety, in the forms of the waves, in their light and shadow, in the dashing of their spray, and, above all, the perpetual change of motion, continue to amuse the eye in detail, as much as the grandeur of the whole possessed the mind. It is in this that it differs not only from motionless objects, but even from rivers and cataracts, however diversified in their parts. In them, the spectator sees no change

paratively cold, savage, and uninteresting. With them, even a dead flat may be full of variety and intricacy ; and it is perhaps from their possessing these two last qualities in so eminent a degree, that trees are almost indispenfibly necessary to picturesque and beautiful scenery.

The infinite *variety* of their forms, tints, and light and fhade, muft strike every body; the quality of *intricacy* they poffefs, if poffible, in a ftill higher degree, and in a more exclusive and peculiar manner. Take a fingle tree only, and confider it in this point of view. It is compofed of millions of boughs, fprays, and leaves intermixed with, and croffing each other in as many direCTIONS; while through the va-

change from what he faw at firft; the fame breaks in the current, the fame falls continue; and poffibly on that account they require the aid of trees: but the intricacies and varieties of waves breaking againft rocks, are as endlefs as their motion.

rious

rious openings the eye still discovers new and infinite combinations of them: yet, in this labyrinth of intricacy, there is no unpleasant confusion; the general effect is as simple, as the detail is complicated. Ground, rocks, and buildings, if the parts are much broken, become fantastic and trifling; besides, they have not that loose pliant texture so well adapted to partial concealment; a tree, therefore, is perhaps the only object where a grand whole (or at least what is most conspicuous in it) is chiefly composed of innumerable minute and distinct parts.

To shew how much those who ought to be the best judges, consider the qualities I have mentioned, no tree, however large and vigorous, however luxuriant the foliage, will be admired by the painter, if it present one uniform unbroken mass of leaves; while others, not only inferior in

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size,

size, and in thickness of foliage, but of forms which would induce many improvers to cut them down, will attract and fix their attention. The reasons of this preference are obvious; but as on these reasons, according to the ideas I have formed, the whole system of planting, pruning, and thinning, for the purpose of beauty (in its most general acceptation) depends, I must be allowed to dwell a little longer on them.

In a tree whose foliage is every where full and unbroken, there can be but little variety of *form*: then as the sun strikes only on the surface, neither can there be much variety of *light* and *shade*: and as the apparent colour of objects changes according to the different degrees of light or of shade in which they are placed, there can be as little \* variety of *tint*: and last-

\* Lux varium vivumque dabit, nullum umbra colorem.

Du Fresnoy.

ly,

ly, as there are none of those openings that excite and nourish curiosity, but the eye can be every where opposed by one uniform leafy screen, there be as little intricacy as variety. What is here said of a *single* tree is equally true of all *combinations* of them, and appears to me to account perfectly for the bad effect of clumps, and of all plantations and woods where the trees grow close together: Indeed, in all these cases the effect is in one respect much worse; we are disposed to admire the bulk of a single tree, the ipse nemus, though its form *should* be heavy; but there is a meanness, as well as a heaviness, in seeing a lumpy mass, produced by a multitude of little stems.

What the qualities are that painters *do* admire in single trees, groups, and woods, may easily be concluded from what they do not; the detail would be infinite, for

luckily where art does not interfere, the absolute exclusions are few. If their taste is to be preferred to that of gardeners, it is clear that there is something radically bad in the usual method of making and managing plantations; it otherwise would never happen, that the woods, and arrangements of trees, which they are least disposed to admire, should be those made for the express purpose of ornament. Under that idea, the spontaneous trees of the country are often excluded as too common, or admitted in small proportions; whilst others of peculiar form and colour, take place of oak and beech. But of whatever trees the *established* woods of the country are composed, the same, I think, should prevail in the *new* ones, or those two grand principles, harmony and unity of character, will be destroyed. It is very usual, however, when there happens to be a wa-

crant



vacant space between two woods, to fill it up with firs, larches, &c. ; if this be done with the idea of *connecting* those woods (and that *should* be the object) nothing can be more opposite than the effect: even plantations of the same species, require time to make them accord with the old growths; but such harsh and sudden contrasts of form and colour, make these insertions for ever appear like so many awkward pieces of patch-work \*; and surely  
if

\* It is not enough that trees should be naturalized to the climate, they must also be naturalized to the landscape, and mixed and incorporated with the natives. A patch of foreign trees planted by themselves in the outskirts of a wood, or in some open corner of it, mix with the natives, much like a group of young Englishmen at an Italian *conversazione*: But when some plant of foreign growth appears to spring up by accident, and shoots out its beautiful, but less familiar foliage among our natural trees, it has the same pleasing effect, as when a beautiful and amiable foreigner has

if a man were reduced to the necessity of having his coat pieced, he would wish to have the joinings concealed, and the colour matched, and not to be made a harlequin.

These dark shades, and spire-like forms, which when planted in patches, have such a motley appearance, may be so grouped with the prevailing trees of the country as to produce infinite richness and variety, and yet seem part of the original design ; but I imagine it to be an established rule, that plantations made for ornament, should, both in form and substance, be as distinct as possible from the woods of the country ; so that no one may doubt an instant what are the parts which have been improved. Instead, therefore, of giving to na-

acquired our language and manners so as to converse with the freedom of a native, yet retains enough of original accent and character, to give a peculiar grace and zest to all her words and actions.

ture \* that “rich, ample, and flowing robe which she *should* wear on her throned eminence,” instead of “hill united to hill with sweeping train of forest, with prodigality of shade,” she is curtailed of her fair proportions, pinched and squeezed into shape; and the prim squat clump is perked up exactly on the top of every eminence. Sometimes, however, the extent is so great, that common sized clumps would make no figure, unless they were excessively multiplied; in that case, it has been very ingeniously contrived to consolidate (and I am sure the word is not improperly used) a number of them in one great lump, and

\* Mr. Mason’s Poem on Modern Gardening, is so well known to all who have any taste for the subject, or for poetry in general, that it is hardly necessary to say, that the words between the inverted commas are chiefly taken from it. In the part from which I have taken these two passages, he has pointed out the noblest style of planting, in a style of poetry no less noble and elevated.

these condensed, unwieldly masses, are, without much choice, stuck about the grounds.

I have seen two places, on a very large scale, laid out in this manner by a professed improver of high reputation\*. The trees which principally shewed themselves were † larches, and from the multitude of

\* Some persons have imagined, that by a professor of high reputation I must have meant Mr. Repton; but these two places, which were laid out before he took to the profession, clearly prove that it did not then require his talents to gain a high reputation: I hope in future it will be less easily acquired.

† Wherever larches are mixed (though in small proportions) over the whole of a new plantation, the quickness of their growth, their pointed tops, and the peculiarity of their colour, make them so conspicuous, that the whole wood seems to consist of nothing else.

The summits of all round-headed trees (especially oak) vary in each tree; but there can be but one summit to all pointed trees.

*Linea recta velut sola est, & mille recurvæ.*

*Du Fresnoy.*

their

their sharp points, the whole country appeared *en herisson*, and had much the same degree of resemblance to natural scenery, that one of the old military plans, with scattered platoons of spearmen, has to a print after Claude or Pouffin. With all my admiration of trees, I had rather be without them, than have them so disposed; indeed, I have often seen hills, the outline of which,—the swellings,—and the deep hollows were so striking; and whose surface was so varied by the mixture of smooth, close-bitten turf, with the rich, though short cloathing of fern, heath, or furze, and by the different openings and sheep tracks among them, that I should have been sorry to have had the whole covered with the finest wood; nay, I could hardly have wished for trees the most happily disposed, and of course should have dreaded, in the same proportion, those  
which

which are usually placed there by art. An improver has rarely such dread; in general the first idea that strikes him, is that of distinguishing his property, nor is he easy till he has put his pitch-mark on all the summits\*. Indeed this gratifies

\* Vanity is a general enemy to all improvement, and there is no such enemy to the real improvement of the beauty of grounds, as the foolish vanity of making a parade of their extent, and of exhibiting various uninteresting marks of the owner's property, under the title of "Appropriation." Where there *are* any noble features, that are debased by meaner objects—where greater extent would shew a rich and varied boundary, and that boundary proportioned to that extent—whatever chokes up, or degrades such scenes, should of course be removed; but where there are no such features, no such boundaries—to appropriate, by destroying many a pleasant meadow, and by shewing you, when they are laid into one great common, green enough to surfeit a man in a calenture; to appropriate, by clumping their naked hedge-rows, and planting other clumps and patches of exotics which seem to stare about them, and wonder how they came there; to appropriate, by demolishing  
many

fies his desire of celebrity by exciting the curiosity and admiration of the vulgar ; and travellers of taste will naturally be provoked to enquire, though from another motive, to whom those unfortunate hills belong.

It is melancholy to compare the slow progress of beauty, with the upstart growth of deformity ; trees and woods planted in the noblest style, will not for years strongly attract the painter's notice, though luckily for their preservation, the planter is like a fond \* mother, who feels the greatest ten-

many a cheerful retired cottage, that interfered with nothing but the despotic love of exclusion (and make amends, perhaps, by building a village *regularly* picturesque) is to appropriate by disgusting all whose taste is not insensible or depraved, in the same sense that an alderman appropriates a plate of turtle, by sneezing over it.

\* Madame de Sevigné, whose maternal tenderness seems to have extended itself to her plantations, says, " Je fais jeter a bas de grands arbres, parce qu'ils font ombrage, ou qu'ils incommode mes jeunes enfants."

derness

derness for her children, at the time they are least interesting to others.

But to the deformer (a name too often synonymous to the improver) it is not necessary that his trees should have attained their full growth ; as soon as he has made his round fences, and planted them, his principal work is done ; the eye which used to follow with delight the bold sweep of outline, and all the playful undulation of ground, finds itself suddenly checked, and its progress stopt, even by these embryo clumps. They have the same effect on the great features of nature, as an excrescence on those of the human face ; in which, though the proportion of one feature to another greatly varies in different persons, yet these differences (like similar ones in inanimate nature) give variety of character, without disturbing the general accord of the parts : But let there be a wart,

or



or a pimple, on any prominent feature—no dignity or beauty of countenance can detach the attention from it; that little, round, distinct lump, while it disgusts the eye, has a fascinating power of fixing it on its own deformity. This is precisely the effect of clumps; the beauty or grandeur of the surrounding parts only serve to make them more horribly conspicuous; and the dark tint of the Scotch fir (of which they are generally composed) as it separates them by colour, as well as by form, from every other object, adds the last finish.

But even large plantations of firs, when they are not the natural trees of the country, and when (as it usually happens) they are left too thick, have, in my mind, a harsh look, and that on the same principle of their not harmonizing with the rest of the landscape. A planter very naturally wishes to produce some appearance of wood as

soon as possible ; he therefore sets his trees very close together, and so they generally remain, for his paternal fondness will seldom allow him to thin them sufficiently. They are consequently all drawn up together, nearly to the same height ; and as their heads touch each other, no variety, no distinction of form can exist, but the whole is one enormous, unbroken, unvaried mass of black. Its appearance is so uniformly dead and heavy, that instead of those cheering ideas which arise from the fresh and luxuriant \* foliage, and the lighter tints

\* Perhaps, in strict propriety, the term of *foliage* should never be applied to firs, as they have no leaves ; and, I believe, it is partly to that circumstance, that they owe their want of cheerfulness. Those among the lower evergreens that have leaves, such as holly, laurel, arbutus, are much more cheerful than the juniper, cypress, arbor vitæ, &c. The leaves (if one may so call them) of the yew, have much the same character as some of the firs.

of

of deciduous trees, it has something of that dreary image—that extinction of form and colour, which Milton felt from blindness; when he, who had viewed objects with a painter's eye, as he described them with a poet's fire, was

Presented with an universal blank  
Of nature's works.

It must be considered also, that the eye feels an impression from objects analogous to that of weight, as appears from the expression, a *heavy* colour, a *heavy* form; hence arises the necessity in all landscapes of preserving a proper balance of both, and this is a very principal part of the art of painting. If in a picture the one half were to be light and airy, both in the forms and in the tints, and the other half one black heavy lump, the most ignorant person would probably be displeased (though he  
might

might not know upon what principle) with the want of *balance*, and of harmony; for those harsh discordant effects, not only act more forcibly from being brought together within a small compass, but also because in painting they are not authorized by fashion, or rendered familiar by custom.

The inside of these plantations fully answers to the dreary appearance of the  
 \* outside: Of all dismal scenes it seems to  
 me

\* I have known persons who acknowledged that the *inside* of a close wood (either evergreen or deciduous) was poor and shabby, yet thought that at some distance its *outside* looked as well as that of a more open one. The defects of all objects are of course diminished as they are more removed from the eye, but as far as form can be distinguished (and that includes a large circuit) the difference is very perceptible between a wood where the trees have been cramped by each other, and one where their heads have had full room to extend themselves. If two such woods, even at the extremity  
 of

me the most likely for a man to hang himself in; he would, however, find some difficulty in the execution, for, amidst the endless multitude of stems, there is rarely a single side branch to which a rope could be fastened. The whole wood is a collection of tall naked poles, with a few ragged boughs near the top; above—one uniform rusty cope, seen through decayed and decaying sprays and branches; below—the soil parched and blasted with the baleful droppings; hardly a plant or a blade of grass, nothing that can give an idea of life, or vegetation. Even its gloom is without solemnity; it is only dull and dismal; and what light there is, like that of hell,

of an extensive view, are lighted up by a gleam of sunshine, the depth of shadow, and the fulness and richness of the one, would clearly distinguish it from the uniform heaviness of the other.

“ Serves only to discover scenes of woe,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades.”

In a grove where the trees have had room to spread (and in that case I by no means exclude the \* Scotch fir or any of the pines) the gloom has a character of solemn grandeur; that grandeur arises from the broad and varied canopy over head, from the small number and great size of the trunks by which that canopy is supported †, and from the large undisturbed spaces between them: but a close wood of firs, is, perhaps, the only one from which the opposite qualities of

\* Mr. Gilpin has admirably pointed out the picturesque character of the Scotch fir (where it has had room to spread) in his remarks on forest scenery; and he as justly condemns the usual method of planting and leaving them in close array.

† This circumstance seems to have struck Virgil in the case of a single tree:

*Media ipsa ingentem sustinet umbram.*

cheerfulness

cheerfulness and grandeur, of symmetry and variety, are equally excluded ; and in which, though the sight is perplexed and harassed by the confusion of petty objects, there is not the smallest degree of intricacy.

Firs, planted and left in the same close array, are very commonly made use of as screens and boundaries ; but as the lower part is of most consequence where concealment is the object, they are, for the reasons I mentioned before, the most improper trees for that purpose. I will, however, suppose them exactly in the condition the planter would wish ; that the outer boughs (on which alone they depend) were preserved from animals ; and that though planted along the brow of a hill, they had escaped from wind and snow, and the many accidents to which they are exposed in bleak situa-

tions; they would then exactly answer to that admirable description of Mr. Mason :

“ The Scottish fir  
In murky file rears his inglorious head  
And blots the fair horizon.”

Nothing can be more accurately, or more forcibly expressed, or raise a juster image in the mind. Every thick unbroken mass of black (especially when it can be compared with softer tints) is a *blot*; and has the same effect on the horizon in nature, as if a dab of ink were thrown upon that of a Claude. This, however, is viewing it in its most favourable state, when at least it answers the purpose of a screen, though a heavy one; but it happens full as often, that the outer boughs do not reach above half way down; and then, besides the long, black, even line which cuts the horizon at the top, there is at bottom a streak of glaring light that pierces every  
where



where through the meagre and naked poles (still more wretchedly meagre when opposed to such a back ground) and shews distinctly the poverty and thinness of the boundary. Many a common hedge that has been suffered to grow wild, with a few trees in it, is a much more varied and effectual screen; but there *are* hedges, where yews and hollies are mixed with trees and thorns,—so thick from the ground upwards,—so diversified in their outline,—in the tints, and in the light and shade,—that the eye, which dwells on them with pleasure, is perfectly deceived; and can neither see through them, nor discover (hardly even suspect) their want of depth.

This striking contrast between a mere hedge, and trees planted for the express purpose of concealment and beauty, affords a very useful hint, not only for screens and boundaries, but for every sort of orna-

mental plantation. It seems to point out, that concealment cannot well be produced without a mixture of the smaller growths, such as thorns and hollies, which, being naturally bushy, fill up the lower parts where the larger trees are apt to be bare ; that such a mixture must produce great variety of outline, as these smaller growths will not hinder the larger from extending their heads ; while, at the same time, by reason of their different heights, more or less approaching to those of the timber trees, they accompany and group with them, and prevent that set formal appearance, which trees generally have when there are large spaces between them, even though they should not be planted at regular distances.

It seems to me, that if this method were followed in all ornamental plantations, it would, in a great measure, obviate  
the

the bad effects of their being left too close, either from foolish fondness, or neglect. Suppose, for instance, that instead of the usual method of making an evergreen plantation of firs only, and those stuck close together, the firs were planted eight, twelve, or more yards asunder (of course varying the distances) and that the spaces between them were filled with the lower evergreens \*. All these would for some years

\* I believe there are only three sorts natural to this country, holly, box, and juniper; to which, on account of the slowness of its growth, and its doing so well under the drip of other trees, may be added the yew. There is, however, a great variety of exotics which are perfectly hardy, and many others that will succeed in sheltered spots; and the most scrupulous person will allow, that among firs (the greatest part of which are exotics) they are perfectly in character.—Whoever has been at Mount Edgcumbe, and remembers the mixture of the arbutus, &c. with the spreading pines, will want no farther recommendation of this method: I must own, that amidst all the grand features of that noble place, it made no slight impression on me.

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grow

grow up together, till at length the firs would shoot above them all, and find nothing afterwards to check their growth in any direction. Suppose such a wood, upon the largest scale, to be left to itself, and not a bough cut for twenty, thirty, any number of years; and that then it came into the hands of a person who wished to give variety to this rich, but uniform mass. He might in some parts choose to have an \* open grove of firs only; in that case he would only have to clear away all the lower evergreens, and the firs which remained, from their free unconstrained manner of

\* A grove of large spreading pines is very solemn, but that solemnity might occasionally be varied, and in some respects heightened, by a mixture of yews and cypresses, which at the same time would give an idea of extreme retirement, and of sepulchral melancholy. In other parts a very pleasing contrast in winter might be formed by hollies, arbutus, laurustinus, and others that bear berries and flowers at that season.

growing,

growing, would appear as if they had been planted with that design. In other parts he might make that beautiful forest-like mixture of open grove, with thickets and loosely scattered trees ; of lawns and glades of various shapes and dimensions, variously bounded. Sometimes he might find the ground scooped out into a deep hollow, forming a sort of amphitheatre ; and there, in order to shew its general shape, and yet preserve its sequestered character, he might only make a partial clearing ; when all that can give intricacy, variety, and retirement to a spot of this kind, would be ready to his hands.

It may indeed be objected, (and not without reason) that this evergreen under-wood will have grown so close, that, when thinned, the plants which are left will look bare ; and bare they will look, for such must necessarily be the effect of leaving  
any

any trees too close. There are, however, several reasons why it is of less consequence in this case : The first and most material is, that the great outline of the wood, formed by the highest trees, would not be affected ; another is, that these lower trees being of various growths, some will have outstripped their fellows in the same proportion as the firs outstripped them ; and, consequently, their heads will have had room to spread, and form a gradation from the highest firs, to the lowest underwood. Again, many of these evergreens of lower growth, succeed well under the drip of taller trees, and also (to use the figurative expression of nursery-men) love the knife : by the pruning of some, therefore, and cutting down of others, the bare parts of the taller ones would in a short time be covered ; and the whole of such a wood might be divided at pleasure into openings  
and

and groups, differing in form, in size, and in degrees of concealment; from skirtings of the loosest texture, to the closest and most impenetrable thickets.

This method is equally good in making plantations of deciduous trees, though not in the same degree necessary as in those of firs; and though I have only mentioned *ornamental* plantations, yet, I believe, if thorns were always mixed with oak, beech, &c. besides their use in preventing the forest trees from being planted too close to each other, they would by no means be unprofitable. If they were taken out before they were too large to be moved easily, their use for hedges, and their ready sale for that purpose, is well known; if left longer, they are particularly useful for planting in gaps, where smaller ones would be stifled; and if they remained, they would always make excellent hedge-wood, and answer

swer all the common purposes of under-wood. For ornament, a great variety of lower growths might be added; and, among the rest, of thorns of different species, the maple leaved, &c. &c.

It is not meant, that the largest growths should *never* be planted near each other; some of the most beautiful groups are often formed by such a close junction, but not when they have all been planted at the same time, and drawn up together. A judicious improver will know when, and how, to deviate from any method, however generally good.

There are few operations in improvement more pleasant, than that of opening gradually a scene, where the materials are only too abundant; but in which they are not absolutely spoiled, as they are in a thick wood of firs. In that, there is no room for selection; no exercise of the judgment in arranging the groups,



groups, masses, or single trees ; no power of renewing vegetation by pruning or cutting down ; no hope of producing the finest intricacy or variety. If one bare pole be removed, that behind differs from it so little, that one might exclaim with Macbeth,

“ Thy air

“ Is like the first—a third is like the former—

“ Horrible sight !”—

and so they would unvariedly go on,

“ tho’ their line

“ Stretch’d out to the crack of doom.”

In describing these two woods, I do not think I have at all exaggerated the ugliness, and the incorrigible sameness of the one, and the variety and beauty of which the other is capable. I mean, however, *that* variety which arises from the *manner* in which these evergreens may be disposed, not from the number of distinct species. I have

have indeed often observed in forests, (those great storehouses of picturesque dispositions of trees) that merely from oak, beech, thorns, and hollies, arose so many combinations, such different effects from those which are gained by ever so great a diversity of trees lumped together, that one could hardly wish for more variety ; it put me in mind of what is mentioned of the more ancient Greek painters ; that with only four colours, they did, what, in the more degenerate days of the art, could not be performed with all the aid of chemistry.

The true end of variety is to relieve the eye, not to perplex it ; it does not consist in the diversity of separate objects, but in the diversity of their effects when combined together ; in diversity of composition, and of character. Many think, however, they have obtained that grand object,

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when

when they have exhibited in one body all the hard names of the Linnæan system \*; but when as great a diversity of plants, as can well be got together, is exhibited in *every* shrubbery, or in *every* plantation, the result is a sameness of a different kind, but not less truly a sameness than would arise from there being no diversity at all; for there is no having variety of character, without a certain distinctness, without certain marked features on which the eye can dwell.

In forests and woody commons we

\* In a botanical light, such a collection is extremely curious and entertaining; but it is about as good a specimen of variety in landscape, as a line of Lilly's grammar would be of variety in poetry:

Et postis, vectis, vermis societur et axis.

A collection of hardy exotics may also be considered as a very valuable part of the improver's palet, and may suggest many new and harmonious combinations of colours; but then he must not call the palet a picture.

sometimes

sometimes come from a part where hollies had chiefly prevailed, to another where junipers or yews are the principal evergreens; and where, perhaps, there is the same sort of change in the deciduous trees and underwood. This strikes us with a new impression; but mix them equally together in all parts, and diversity becomes a source of monotony.

Two of the principal defects in the composition of landscapes, are the opposite extremes of objects being too crowded, or too scattered. The clump is a happy union of these two grand defects; it is scattered with respect to the general composition, and close and lumpish when considered by itself.

One great cause of the superior variety and richness of unimproved parks and forests, when compared with lawns and dressed ground, and of their being so much more  
admired

admired by painters, is,—that the trees and groups are seldom totally alone \* and unconnected; of this, and of all that is most attractive in natural scenery, the two great sources are accident and neglect †.

\* In the *Liber Veritatis*, consisting of above three hundred drawings by Claude, I believe there are not more than three single trees. This is one strong proof (and I imagine the works of other painters would fully confirm it) that those who most studied the effect of visible objects, attended infinitely more to connection, than to separate forms. The practice of improvers is directly the reverse.

† I remember hearing what I thought a very just criticism on a part of Mr. Crab's poem of the *Library*. He has there personified *Neglect*, and given her the *active* employment of spreading dust on books of ancient chivalry. But in producing picturesque effects, I begin to think her *vis inertię* is in many cases a very powerful agent.

Should this criticism induce any person who had not read the *Library*, to look at the part I have mentioned, he will soon forget his motive for looking at it, in his admiration of one of the most animated, and highly poetical descriptions I ever read,

Y

In

In *forests* and in *old parks*, the rough bushes nurse up young trees, and grow up with them; and thence arises that infinite variety of openings, of inlets, of glades, of forms of trees, &c. The effect of all these might be preserved, and rendered more *beautiful*, by a judicious style and degree of clearing and polishing, and might be successfully imitated in other parts.

*Lawns* are very commonly made by laying together a number of fields and meadows, the insides of which are generally cleared of bushes: when those hedges are taken away, it must be a great piece of luck if the trees that were in them, and those which were scattered about the open parts, should so combine together as to form a connected whole. The case is much more desperate, when a layer out of grounds has persuaded the owner,

To improve an old family seat,  
By *lawning* a hundred good acres of *wheat*;

for

For the insides of *arable* grounds have seldom any trees in them, and the hedges but few; and then clumps and belts are the usual resources.

Such an improvement, however, is greatly admired; and I have frequently heard it wondered at, that a green lawn, which is so charming in nature, should look so ill when painted. It must be owned, that it does look miserably flat and insipid in a picture; but that is not *entirely* the fault of the painter\*; for it is hardly possible  
to

\* It is, I believe, out of the power of the art to make a long extent of smooth, unbroken green interesting; but it must also be allowed, that it might be made less bad, than the representations of lawns that I have happened to see. Mr. Gilpin observes, that “were a lake spread out on the canvass in one simple hue, it would be a dull fatiguing object;” he might have added, a very unnatural one: it would then bear the same sort of resemblance to a lake, as some portraits of gentlemen’s seats do to a lawn, which, though in general a suffi-

to invent any thing more insipid than one uniform, green surface, dotted with clumps, and surrounded by a belt. If you will suppose a lawn, with trees of every growth dispersed in the happiest manner, and with as much intricacy and variety as mere grass and trees can give to a lawn, without destroying its character,—such a scene, painted by a Claude, would be a soft pleasing picture ; but it would want precisely what it wants in nature,—that happy union of warm and cool, of smooth and rough, of picturesque and beautiful, which makes the charm of his best compositions. Were two such pictures (both equally well painted) hung up by each other, the defects of the smooth green landscape would be felt immediately ; and were it possible to bring two

ciently dull and fatiguing object, yet has tints, and lights and shadows, but ill represented by one simple hue of green spread upon the canvas.

such



such scenes in nature into as immediate a comparison, he must be a sturdy improver who would hesitate between the two.

But though such scenes, as the great masters made choice of, are much more varied and animated than one of mere grass can be, yet I am very far from wishing the peculiar character of lawns to be destroyed. The study of the principles of painting would be very ill applied by an improver, who should endeavour to give to each scene, every variety that might please in a picture separately considered, instead of such varieties as are consistent with its own peculiar character and situation, and with the connections and dependencies it has on other objects. Smoothness, verdure, and undulation, are the most characteristic beauties of a lawn, but they are in their nature closely allied to monotony; improvers, instead of endeavouring to remedy that defect, which

is inherent in those essential qualities of beauty, have, on the contrary, added to it, and made it much more striking, by the disposition of their trees, and their method of forming the banks of artificial rivers: nor have they confined this system of levelling and turfing, to those scenes where smoothness and verdure ought to be the groundwork of improvement, but have made it the fundamental principle of their art. With respect to those things, in which a very different art is concerned, our sensations are also very different: a perfectly flat square meadow, surrounded by a neat hedge, and neither tree nor bush in it, is looked upon not only without disgust, but with pleasure; for it pretends only to neatness and utility: the same may be said of a piece of arable of excellent husbandry. But when a dozen pieces are laid together, and called a lawn, or a pleasure-ground, with manifest pretensions

pretensions to beauty, the eye grows fastidious, and has not the same indulgence for taste, as for agriculture. Men of property, who either from false taste, or from a sordid desire of gain, disfigure such scenes or buildings as painters admire, provoke our indignation: not so when agriculture, in its general progress (as is often unfortunately the case) interferes with picturesqueness, or beauty. The painter may indeed lament; but that science, which of all others most benefits mankind, has a right to more than his forgiveness, when wild thickets are converted into scenes of plenty and industry, and when gypsies and vagrants give way to the less picturesque figures of husbandmen, and their attendants.

I believe the idea, that smoothness and verdure will make amends for the want of variety and picturesqueness, arises from our not distinguishing those qualities that are

grateful to the mere organ of sight, from those various combinations, which, through the progressive cultivation of that sense, have produced inexhaustible sources of delight and admiration. Mr. Mason observes, that green is to the eye what harmony is to the ear; the comparison holds throughout, for a long continuance of either, without some relief, is equally tiresome to both senses. Soft and smooth sounds, are those which are most grateful to the mere sense; the least artful combination (even that of a third below sung by another voice) at first distracts the attention from the tune; when that is got over, a Venetian duet appears the perfection of melody and harmony. By degrees however the ear, like the eye, tires of a repetition of the same flowing strain; it requires some marks of invention, of original and striking character, as well as of sweetness, in the melodies of a composer;

it

it takes in more and more intricate combinations of harmony and opposition of parts, not only without confusion but with delight ; and with that delight (the only lasting one) which is produced both from the effect of the whole, and the detail of the parts \*. At the same time the having acquired a relish for such artful combinations, so far from excluding (except in narrow pedantic minds) a taste for simple melodies, or simple scenes, heightens the enjoy-

\* This I take to be the reason why those who are real connoisseurs in any art, can give the most unwearied attention to what the general lover is soon tired of. Both are struck (though not in the same manner or degree) with the *whole* of a scene ; but the painter is also eagerly employed in examining the *parts*, and all the artifice of nature in composing such a whole. The general lover stops at the first gaze, and I have heard it said by those, who in other pursuits shewed the most discriminating taste ; “ Why should we look at these things any more—we have seen them.”

Non piu parlar di lor', ma guarda & passa.

ment

ment of them. It is only by such acquirements, that we learn to distinguish what is simple, from what is bald and common-place ; what is varied and intricate, from what is only perplexed.

## CHAPTER III.



OF all the effects in landscape, the most brilliant and captivating are those produced by water, on the management of which, (as I have been told,) Mr. Brown particularly piqued himself. If those beauties in natural rivers and lakes which are imitable by art, and the selections of them in the works of great painters, are the best guides in forming artificial ones, Mr. Brown grossly mistook his talent; for among all his tame productions, his pieces of made water are perhaps the most so.

One of the most striking properties of water, and that which most distinguishes it

it from the grosser element of earth, is its being a mirror, and a mirror that gives a peculiar freshness and tenderness to the colours it reflects; it softens the stronger lights, though the lucid veil it throws over them seems hardly to diminish their brilliancy; it gives breadth to the shadows, and in many cases a greater depth, while its glassy surface preserves, and seems even to encrease their transparency. These beautiful and varied effects, however, are chiefly produced by the *near* objects; by trees, and bushes immediately on the banks; by those which hang over the water, and form dark coves beneath their branches; by various tints of the soil where the ground is broken; by roots, and old trunks of trees; by tuflucks of rushes, and by large stones that are partly whitened by the air, and partly covered with mosses, lichens, and weather-stains; while the soft tufts  
of



of grass, and the smooth verdure of meadows with which they are intermixed, appear a thousand times more soft, smooth, and verdant by such contrasts \*.

But to produce reflections there must be objects; for according to a maxim I have heard quoted from the old law of France (a maxim that hardly required the sanction of such venerable authority) *ou il n'y a rien le roi perd ses droits*; and this is generally a case in point with respect to Mr. Brown's artificial rivers †.

Even

\* If a man really wishes to form a just and unprejudiced comparison, between a beautiful natural river, and an artificial one, as they have hitherto been made—let him observe the circumstances I have just mentioned, at different times of the day, and in different degrees of light and shadow; and afterwards, while all their varied effects are fresh in his recollection, as attentively examine an artificial river; then let him judge how far mere greenness and smoothness, make amends for the total absence of every thing else.

† I consider Mr. Brown as the Hercules, to whom  
the

Even when, according to Mr. Walpole's \* description, " a few trees, scattered here

the labours of the lesser ones are to be attributed, and when I speak of his artificial water, I mean to include all that has been done by his followers after his model, for they have succeeded, and without any difficulty, in copying that model exactly. Natural rivers, indeed, can only be imitated by the eye either in painting or reality; but his may be surveyed, and an exact plan taken of them by admeasurement; and though a representation of them would not accord with a Claude or a Gaspar, it might with great propriety be hung up with a map of the demefne lands.

\* The passage I have quoted is in his treatise on Modern Gardening. The general tenor of that part, is in commendation of the present style of made water, but this passage contains more just, and pointed satire, than ever was conveyed in the same number of words: *a few trees, scattered here and there on its edges, sprinkle the tame bank.* It seems to me that in the midst of praises, his natural taste breaks out into criticism, perhaps unintended, and which, on that account, may well sting the improver who reads them; for the sting is always much sharper when

Medio de fonte leporum

Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat.

and there on its edges, sprinkle the tame bank that accompanies its mæanders," the reflections would not have any great variety, or brilliancy.

The mæanders of a river, which at every turn present scenes of a different character, make us strongly feel the use, and the charm of them ; but when the same sweeps return as regularly as the steps of a minuet, the eye is quite wearied with following them over and over again. What makes the sweeps much more formal, is their extreme nakedness: The sprinkling of a few, scattered trees on their edges, will not do ; there must be masses, and groups, and various degrees of openings, and concealment ; and by such means, some little variety may be given even to these tame banks, for tame they always will remain : and it may here be observed, that the same  
objects

objects which produce reflections, produce also variety of outline, of tints, of lights and shadows, as well as intricacy. So intimate is the connection between all these different beauties ; so often does the absence of one of them, imply the absence of the others.

In the turns of a beautiful river, the lines are so varied with projections, coves, and inlets ; with smooth, and broken ground—with open parts, and with others fringed and overhung with trees and bushes—with peeping rocks, large mossy stones, and all their soft and brilliant reflections—that the eye lingers upon them ; the two banks seem as it were to protract their meeting, and to form their junction insensibly, they so blend, and unite with each other. In Mr. Brown's naked canals, nothing detains the eye a moment ; and the two bare  
sharp

sharp extremities appear to cut into each other \*. If a near approach to mathematical exactness were a merit instead of a defect, the sweeps of Mr. Brown's water would be admirable; for many of them seem not to have been formed by degrees with spades, but scooped out at once by an immense iron crescent, which, after cutting out the indented part on one side, was applied to the opposite side, and then reversed

\* "When we look at a naked wall, from the evenness of the object the eye runs along its whole space, and arrives quickly at its termination." Mr. Burke's *Sublime and Beautiful*, p. 27.—This accounts for the total want of all that is picturesque, and of all interest whatsoever, in a continuation of naked, edgy lines; for where there is nothing to detain the eye, there is nothing to amuse it. I may add, that wherever ground is cut with a sharp instrument, it has that ideal effect on the eye; it is a metaphor which naturally prevails in many languages, where lines (from whatever cause) are hard and edgy. When A. Caracci speaks of the edginess of Raphael compared with Correggio, he uses the expression, *così duro, & tagliente*—*couleurs tranchantes*, &c.

to make the sweeps; so that in each sweep, the indented, and the projecting parts, if they could be shoved together, would fit like the pieces of a dissected map.

Where these pieces of water are made, if there happen to be any sudden breaks or inequalities in the ground; any thickets or bushes; any thing, in short, that might cover the rawness and formality of new work—instead of taking advantage of such accidents, all must be made level and bare; and, by a strange perversion of terms, stripping nature stark-naked, is called dressing her.

A piece of stagnant water, with that thin, uniform, grassy edge, which always remains after the operation of levelling, is much more like a temporary overflowing in a meadow or pasture, than what it professes to imitate—a lake or a river: for the principal distinction between the outline of such an overflowing,

overflowing, and that of a permanent piece of water, neither formed nor improved by art, is, that the flood-water is in general every where even with the grass—that there are no banks to it—nothing that appears firmly to contain it. In order, therefore, to impress on the whole of any artificial water a character of age, permanency, capacity, and above all, of naturalness as well as variety, some degree of height, and of abruptness in the banks, is required, and different degrees of both; some appearance of their having been in parts gradually worn, and undermined by the successive action of rain, and frost, and even by that of the water, when put in motion by winds: for the banks of a mill-pond, (which is proverbial for stillness,) are generally undermined in parts by a succession of such accidental circumstances. All this diversity of rough, broken ground, varying in height and form, and

accompanied with projecting trees and bushes, will readily be acknowledged to have more painter-like effects, than one bare, uniform, slope of grass ; that acknowledgment is quite sufficient, and the objections, which are easily foreseen, are easily answered ; for there are various ways in which rudeness may be corrected and disguised, as well as blended with what is smooth and polished, without destroying the marked character of nature on the one hand, or a dressed appearance on the other ; of this I have already given some few instances \*. But as artificial lakes and rivers are usually made, the water appears in every part so nearly on the same level with the land, and so totally without banks, that were it not for the regularity of the curves, a stranger might often suppose, that when dry weather came the flood would go off,

\* Vide my Letter to Mr. Repton, page 142.



and the meadow be restored to its natural state. Indeed, it not unfrequently happens, that the bottoms of meadows and pastures subject to floods, are in some places bounded by natural banks against which the water lies; where it takes a very natural and varied form, and might easily from many, and those not distant points, be mistaken for part of a river: I of course do not mean to allude to such overflowings: the comparison would do a great deal too much honour to those pieces of water whose banks Mr. Brown had formed; for it is impossible to see any part of such artificial rivers, without knowing them to be artificial.

Among the various ways in which the present style of artificial water has been defended, certain passages from the poets have been quoted\*, to shew that it is a great beauty

\* Essay on Design in Gardening, page 203.

in a river to have the water close to the edge  
of the grass :

May thy *brimmed* waves for this  
Their full tribute never miss.

Vivo de pumice fontes  
Roscida mobilibus *lambebant* *gramina* rivis \*.

To which might be added the well known  
passage :

Without o'erflowing full.

I have such respect for the feeling which  
most poets have shewn for natural beauties,  
and think they have so often, and so happily  
expressed what is, and ought to be, the ge-  
neral feeling of mankind, that wherever  
they were clearly and uniformly against me,  
I should certainly (as far as that general  
sensation was concerned) allow myself to  
be in the wrong. In this case, however, I  
can safely agree with the poets, and yet  
condemn Mr. Brown. With respect to

\* Claudian de raptu Proserpinæ.

the

the first instance, I might say, that, without thinking of beauty, it is a very natural compliment to a river-god or goddess, to wish their streams always full; but I am ready to admit, that by *brimmed* waves the poet meant as full as the river could be without overflowing, and that it were to be wished, for the sake of beauty, that rivers could always be kept in that state. All this is clearly in favour of an equal height of the *water*; but can it be inferred from this, or, I will venture to say, from any passage whatever, that Milton, or any other poet, were of opinion that the *banks* \* ought every where to

\* It is difficult to define, with any precision, what may properly be called the *bank* of a river: in its most extended acceptation, it may mean whatever is seen from the water; I wish it to be taken here in its most confined sense, as that which immediately rises above the water till another level begins, or some distinct termination. This, in certain instances, will be very clear; as where a

to be of an equal height above the water, and the ground equally sloped down to it. If it be allowed (as I presume it must) that no such idea is to be found amongst the poets, I am sure it can as little be justified by natural scenery: for let us imagine the river to be brimful, like a canal, for a certain distance from any given point, and then (as it perpetually happens) the bank to rise suddenly to a considerable height: the *water* must remain on the same level,

flat meadow (but not sloped down to the water by art) joins the river. It will be equally clear, where the general bank is steep, if a road be carried near the bottom; for such an artificial level will form a distinct near bank, and which would be distinctly marked in a picture. The highest part to which the flood generally reaches, is also a very usual boundary, and in most places there is something which separates the immediate bank, from the general scenery that encloses the river. This near bank being in the foreground, is of the greatest consequence: wherever that is regularly sloped and smoothed, whatever beauty or grandeur there may be *above*, the character of the *river* is gone.

but

but the *brim* would be changed, and instead of being brimful, according to an idea taken from Mr. Brown, not from Milton, the river though full, would in that place be deep within its banks. But still, it has been argued, when the water rises to the upper edge of the banks, the signs of being worn in them cannot appear: certainly not in Mr. Brown's canals, where monotony is so carefully guarded, that the full stream of a real river would, for a long time, hardly produce any variety: but do rivers, in their natural state, never swell with rain or snow, and, before they discharge themselves over the *lowest* parts, tear and undermine their *higher* banks? two distinctions which do not exist in what are called imitations of rivers. Do not the marks of such floods on the higher banks, remain after the river has retired into its proper channel, that is, nearly to the height of the *lower* banks?

But

But even on a supposition of it's never overflowing, and never sinking, the same thing would happen in some degree; for it does happen in stagnant water, and must wherever there are any steep banks exposed to rain and frost, and unsecured by art.

The image in Claudian is extremely poetical, and no less pleasing in reality; the passage relates, however, to a small rivulet, not to a river; but supposing it did relate to a river, are we thence to infer that, according to the poet's meaning, nothing but grass ought any where to be in contact with the water, and that the turf must *every where* be regularly sloped down to it? that there must be no *other* image? When trees from a steep and broken bank, form an arch over the water, and dip their foliage in the stream—when the clear mirror beneath reflects their branching roots, the coves under them, the jutting rocks they have fastened

fastened upon, and seem to hold in their embrace—the bright and mellow tints of large moss-crowned stones, that have their foundation below the water, and rising out of it support and form a part of the bank—would the poet sigh for grass only, and wish to destroy, level, and cover with turf, these and a thousand other beautiful and picturesque circumstances? Would he object to the river, because it was not every where brimful to the top of *all* its banks, and did not *every where* kiss the grass? And are we to conclude, that when poets mention one beauty, they mean to exclude all the rest?

It may possibly be said, that there are *natural* rivers whose banks, like those of Mr. Brown's, keep for a long time together the same level above the water; there certainly are such rivers, but I never heard of their being admired, or frequented for their beauty. It is possible also, that there may

found some lake or meer, with a uniform grassy edge all round it: I can only say, that such an instance of complete natural monotony, though it may be admired for its rarity, cannot be a proper object of imitation. But if an improver happens to be placed in a level country, should he not even there consult the *genius loci*? without doubt, and therefore he will not attempt hanging rocks and precipices; but he may surely be allowed to steal from the better genius of some other scene, a few circumstances of beauty and variety that will not be incompatible with his own. By such methods, many pleasing effects may be given to an artificial river, even in a dead flat; but where there is any natural variety in the ground, with a tendency to wood, and other vegetation, nothing but art systematically absurd, and diligently employed in counteracting the efforts of nature,



ture, can create and preserve perfect monotony in the banks of water.

And yet, however fond of art, and even of the appearance of it, some improvers seem to be, I fancy, if a stranger were to mistake one of their pieces of made water for the Thames, such an error would not only be forgiven, but considered as the highest compliment; notwithstanding Mr. Brown's modest \* apostrophe to that river.

But though an imitation of the most striking varieties of nature, so skilfully arranged as to pass for nature herself, would be acknowledged as the highest attainment of art; yet no one seems to have thought of copying those circumstances, which might occasion so flattering a deception.

\* "Thames! Thames! Thou wilt never forgive me."—A well known exclamation of Mr. Brown, when he was looking with rapture and exultation at one of his own canals.

If

If it were proposed to any of these professors to make an artificial river without regular curves\*, slopes, and levelled banks, but with those characteristic beauties, and negligencies, which give a certain air of naturalness, as well as variety to *real* rivers, and which distinguish them from what is universally done by art, they would, in Briggs's language, "stare like stuck pigs—" "do no such thing." Their talent lies another way; and if you have a *real* river, and will let them improve it, you will be surprised to find how soon they will make

\* The lines in natural rivers, in bye roads, in the skirtings of glades of forests, have sometimes the appearance of regular curves, and seem to justify the use of them in artificial scenery; but something always saves them from such a crude degree of it. If, on a subject so very unmathematical, I might venture to use any allusion to that science, or any term drawn from it, such lines might be called picturesque asymptotes; however they may approach to regular curves, they never fall into them.

it

it like an *artificial* one; so much so, that the most critical eye could scarcely discover that it had not been planned by Mr. Brown, and formed by the spade and the wheelbarrow.

All these defects in the banks of made water, may, I am persuaded, be got over by judicious management\*; but there is another

\* Mr. Repton (who is deservedly at the head of his profession) might effectually correct the errors of his predecessors, if to his taste and facility in drawing (an advantage they did not possess) to his quickness of observation, and to his experience in the practical part, he were to add an attentive study of what the higher artists have done, both in their pictures and drawings: Their selections and arrangements would point out many beautiful compositions and effects in nature, which, without such a study, may escape the most experienced observer.

The fatal rock on which all professed improvers are likely to split, is that of system; they become mannerists, both from getting fond of what they have done before, and from the ease of repeating what they have so often practised; but to be reckoned a mannerist, is at least as great

another consideration on this subject that deserves to be weighed by every improver. To make an artificial river, you must necessarily begin by destroying one of the greatest charms of a natural one; and motion is such a charm, so suited to all tastes, that before a running brook, is forced into stagnant water, the advantages of such an alteration ought to be very apparent: if it be determined, nothing that may compensate for such a loss should be neglected; and as the water itself can have but one uniform surface, every variety of which banks are capable, should be studied both from nature and painting, and those selected, which will best accord with the general

great a reproach to the improver as to the painter. Mr. Brown seems to have been perfectly satisfied, when he had made a natural river look like an artificial one; I hope Mr. Repton will have a nobler ambition—that of having his artificial rivers and lakes mistaken for natural ones.

scenery.

scenery. Objects of reflection, seem peculiarly suited to still water, for, besides their distinct beauty, they soften the cold, white glare, of what is usually called a fine sheet\* of water. This expression, as I before observed (and I believe it is the case with other common forms of compliment) contains a very just criticism, on what it seems to commend, and the origin of such mixtures of praise, and censure may, I think, be easily accounted for. The person who first makes use of such a form, and brings it into vogue, only expresses a sudden idea that strikes him, without examining it ac-

\* Collins, in his Ode to Evening, has used this kind of expression very justly: Where some sheety lake,

“ Cheers the lone heath.”

Water upon a heath, from the want of reflections, will have a *sheety* appearance; but at that time of the day, to which Collins has addressed his ode, its softened whiteness (and particularly when twilight has rendered other objects dusky) will cheer the lone heath.

A a

curately.

curately. Any person, for instance, who was shewn, for the first time, a piece of made water, would probably be struck with the white glare of the water itself, and with the uniform greenness, and exact level of its banks, or rather its border; the idea of linen spread upon grass might thence very naturally occur to him, which, in civil language, he would express by a fine sheet of water; and this is always meant, and taken as a flattering expression, though nothing can more pointedly describe the defects of such a scene \*: had there been any

\* I happened to be at a gentleman's house, the architect of which (to use Colin Campbell's expression) "had not preserved the majesty of the front from the ill effect of crowded apertures." A neighbour of his, meaning to pay him a compliment on the number and closeness of his windows, exclaimed, "What a charming house you have! upon my word it is quite like a lantern." I must own I think the two compliments equally flattering; but a charming lantern has not yet had the success of a fine sheet.

variety

variety in the banks, with deep shades, brilliant lights, and reflections, the idea of a sheet would hardly have suggested itself, or if it had, he who made such a comparison would have made a very bad one ;

“ And liken'd things that are not like at all.”

But in the other case, nothing can be more like than a sheet of water, and a real sheet; and wherever there is a large blanching ground, the most exact imitations of Mr. Brown's lakes and rivers might be made in linen ; and they would be just as proper objects of jealousy to the Thames, as any of his performances.

I am aware that Mr. Brown's admirers, with one voice will quote the great water at Blenheim, as a complete answer to all I have said against him on this subject. No one can admire more highly than I do that most princely of all places ; but it

would be doing great injustice to nature and Vanbrugh, not to distinguish their merits in forming it, from those of Mr. Brown.

If there be an improvement more obvious than all others, it is that of damming up a stream, which flows gently through a valley \*; and it required no effort of genius to place the head in the narrowest, and most concealed part; this is all that Mr. Brown has done. He has, indeed, the negative merit (and to which he is not always entitled) of having left the opposite bank of wood in its natural state †; and had he  
 profited

\* I will not go quite so far as a friend of mine, well known for his love of maintaining singular opinions. When we were talking, upon the spot, of the great water, and of Mr. Brown's merit in conceiving it, he declared he was quite certain, that there was not a housemaid in Blenheim to whom it would not immediately have occurred.

† I am convinced, however, that a Mr. Brown, though



profited by so excellent a model—had he formed and planted the other more distant banks, so as to have continued something of the same style and character round the lake, (though with those diversities which would naturally have occurred to a man of the least invention) he would, in my opinion,

though he may not often venture on so flagrant a piece of mischief as clumping and shaving such a bank of wood as that at Blenheim, yet seldom, if ever, feels and distinguishes the peculiar beauties of its *unimproved* state. A professed improver is in all respects like a professed picture-cleaner; the one is always occupied with grounds, and the other with pictures; but the eyes and taste of both are so vitiated by their practice, that they see nothing in either, but subjects for smoothing and polishing; and they work on, till they have skinned and flead every thing they meddle with. Those characteristic, and spirited roughnesses, together with that patina, the varnish of time, which time only can give (and which in pictures may sometimes hide crudities which escape even the last glazing of the painter) immediately disappear; and pictures and places are scoured as bright as Scriblerus's shield, and with as little remorse on the part of the scourers.

have had some claim to a title created since his time ; a title of no small pretension, that of *landscape gardener*. But if the banks above, and near the bridge were formed, or even approved of by him, his taste had more of the engineer than the painter ; for they have so strong a resemblance to the glacis of a fortification, that it might well be supposed, that shape had been given them in compliment to the first duke of Marlborough's campaigns in Flanders.

The bank near the house, which is opposite to the wooded one, and which forms part of the pleasure-ground, is extremely well done ; for that required a high degree of polish, and there the gardener was at home. Without meaning to detract from his real merit in that part (but at the same time to reduce it to what appears to me its just value) I must observe, that two things have contributed to give it a rich  
 5 effect

effect at a distance, as well as a varied and dressed look within itself; in both respects very different from his other plantations. In the first place, there were several old trees there, before he began his works; and their high, and spreading tops, would unavoidably prevent that dead flatness of outline, *cet air ecrasè*, which his own close\*,  
lumpy

\* It may perhaps be thought unjust to make Mr. Brown answerable for the neglect of gardeners; it may be said, that an improver's business is to *form*, not to *thin* plantations. But a physician would deserve very ill of his patient, who, after prescribing for the moment, should abandon him to the care of his nurse; and who in his future visits should concern himself no farther, but let the disorder take its course, till the patient was irrecoverably emaciated, and exhausted. Mr. Brown, during a long practice, frequently repeated his visits; but as far as I have observed, the trees in his plantations bear no mark of his attention: indeed, his clumps strongly prove his love of compactness. There is another circumstance in his plantations, which deserves to be remarked: A favourite mixture of his was that of beech, and Scotch firs, and in nearly equal proportion: but if unity and simplicity

lumpy plantations of trees always exhibit. In the next place, the situation of this spot called for a large proportion of shrubs, with exotick trees of various heights; these shrubs and plants of lower growth, though chiefly put in clumps, the edgy borders of

of character in a wood is to be given up, it should be for the sake of a variety that will harmonize; which *two* trees, so equal in size and in numbers, and so strongly contrasted in form and colour, can never do.

This puts me in mind of an anecdote I heard of a person, very much used to look at objects with a painter's eye:—He had three cows; when his wife, with a very proper œconomy, observed, that two were quite sufficient for their family, and desired him to part with one of them. “Lord, my dear,” said he, “*two* cows you know will never group.”

A third tree (like a third cow) might have connected and blended the discordant forms and colours of the beech and Scotch fir; but every thing I have seen of Mr. Brown's works, have convinced me that he had, in a figurative sense, no *eye*; and if he had had none in the literal sense, it would have only been a private misfortune,

And partial evil, universal good,

which

which have a degree of formality \*, yet being subordinate, and not interfering with the higher growths, or with the original trees, have, from the opposite bank, the appearance of a rich underwood; and the beauty, and comparative variety of that

\* All such *edges* are no less adverse to the beautiful, than to the picturesque: they are hard, cutting, and formal; they destroy all play of outline—all beauty of intricacy. Digging, with the edges it occasions, is a blemish, which is endured at first (and with great reason) for the sake of luxuriant vegetation; and in some cases, as for instance, where the plants are very small, or where flowers are cultivated, must always be continued; but when the end is answered, why continue the blemish? No one, I believe, would think it right to dig a circle or an oval, and keep its edges pared, round a group of kal-meas, azaleas, rhododendrons, &c. that grew luxuriantly in their own natural soil and climate, in order to make the whole look more beautiful. Why then continue to dig round them, or any other foreign plants in this country, after they have begun to grow as freely as our own? Why not suffer them to appear, without the marks of culture,

As glowing in their *native* bed?

garden

garden scene, from all points, are strongly in favour of the method of planting I described in a former part. It is clear to me, however, that Mr. Brown did not make use of this method from principle; for in that case, he would sometimes at least have tried it in less polished scenes, by substituting thorns, hollies, &c. in the place of shrubs. Of the rich, airy, and even dressed effect of such mixtures, he must have seen numberless examples in forests, in parks, on the banks of rivers; and from them he might have drawn the most useful instruction, were it to be expected that those who profess to improve nature, should ever deign to become her scholars.

But to judge properly of Mr. Brown's taste and invention in the accompaniments of water, we must observe those which he has formed *entirely* himself; and *that* we may

may do without quitting Blenheim \*: Below the cascade all is his own, and a more complete piece of monotony could hardly be furnished even from his own works. When he was no longer among shrubs and gravel walks, the gardener was quite at a loss; for his mind had never been prepared by a study of the great masters

\* As Blenheim is the only place I have criticised by name, an apology is due to the noble possessor of it (to whom, on many accounts, I should be particularly sorry to give offence) for the freedom I have taken. I trust, however, that the liberality of mind, which naturally accompanies that love and knowledge of the fine arts for which he is so distinguished, will make him feel that in criticising modern gardening, it would have been unfair to Mr. Brown, not to have mentioned his most famous work; and that my silence on that head, would have been attributed to other motives than those of delicacy and respect. I must also add in my defence, that I can hardly look upon Blenheim in the light of common private property; it has the glorious and singular distinction, of being a national reward, for great national services; and the public has a more than common interest, in all that concerns so noble a monument.

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of landscape, for a more enlarged one of nature. Finding, therefore, no invention, no resources within himself—he copied what he had most seen, and most admired—his own little works; and in the same spirit in which he had magnified a parterre, he planned a gigantic gravel walk. When it was dug out, he filled it with another element, called it a river, and thought the noblest in this kingdom must be jealous of such a rival\*.

\* Mr. Brown and his followers are great oeconomists of their invention: with them walks, roads, brooks, and rivers are, as it were, convertible works. Dry one of their rivers, it is a large walk or road—flood a walk or a road, it is a little brook or river—and the accompaniments (like the drone of a bagpipe) always remain the same.

A brook, indeed, is not always damned up; it sometimes (though rarely) is allowed its liberty; but, like animals that are suffered by the owner to run loose, it is marked as private property by being mutilated. No operation in improvement has such an appearance of barbarity, as that of destroying the modest, retired character



rafter of a brook : I remember some burlesque lines on the treatment of Regulus by the Carthaginians, which perfectly describe the effect of that operation :

His eyelids they pared,  
Good God ! how he stared !

Just so do these improvers torture a brook, by widening it, cutting away its beautiful fringe, and exposing it to day's garish eye.

If, instead of being always turned into regular pieces of water, brooks were sometimes stopped *partially*, and to different degrees of height (particularly where there appeared to be natural beds, and where natural banks with trees or with thickets, would then hang over them) there would be a mixture, and a succession of still and of running-water ; of quick motion, and of clear reflection.

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I HAVE now gone through the principal points of modern gardening ; but the observations I have made relate almost entirely to the *grounds*, and not to what may properly be called the *garden* \*. The embellishments near the house, and those decorations which would best accord with architecture, and with buildings of every kind, deserve to be treated separately, and more at large ; as likewise the different characters and effects of buildings, as con-

\* A gentleman, whose taste and feeling, both for art and nature, rank as high as any man's, was lamenting to me the *extent* of Mr. Brown's operations :—" Former improvers," said he, " at least kept near the house ; but this fellow crawls like a snail all over the grounds, and leaves his cursed slime behind him wherever he goes."

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ned with landscape, whether real, or imitated. It was my intention to have said something on these two subjects in this edition, but I found that they would carry me much farther than I at first conceived, and that they would almost furnish a volume by themselves. I have therefore laid them aside for the present, in hopes of offering my ideas to the public at some future period, more fully prepared and digested.

As the art of gardening, in its extended sense, vies with that of painting, and has been thought likely to form a new school of painters; I think I am justified in having compared its operations and effects, with those of the art it pretends to rival, nay, to instruct. These two rivals (whom I am so desirous of reconciling) have hitherto been guided by very opposite principles, and the character of their productions have been as opposite; but the cold flat  
monotony

monotony of the new favourite; has been preferred by many ("aye, and those great ones too") to the spirited variety of her elder sister; she has, indeed, been so puffed up by this high favour, that she has hardly deigned to acknowledge the relationship, and has even treated her with contempt: Those also, who from their situation and influence were best qualified to have brought about an union between them, have, on the contrary, contributed to keep up her vanity, and to widen the breach: for I have heard an eminent professor treat the idea of judging, in any degree, of places as of pictures, or of comparing them at all together, as quite absurd. In real life, the noblest part a man can act—the part which most conciliates the esteem and good-will of all mankind—is that of promoting union and harmony wherever occasion offers: In the present case, though a breach between these figura-

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tive persons, is not of serious consequence to society, yet I shall feel no small pleasure and pride, should my endeavours be successful. I have shewn, to the best of my power, how much it is their mutual interest to act cordially together, and have offered every motive for such an union; and I hope that prejudices, however strongly rooted—however enforced by those who may be interested in the separation, will at last give way. I may, perhaps, be thought somewhat caustick for a peace-maker, and, I must own,

“My zeal flows warm and eager from my bosom.”

But if war be to be made for the sake of peace (however the wisdom of the expedient may be doubted) all will agree, that it ought to be prosecuted with vigour if once begun.

I never was in company with Mr.

B b

Brown,

Brown, nor even knew him by sight, and therefore can have no personal dislike to him; but I have heard numberless instances of his arrogance and despotism, and such high pretensions seem to me little justified by his works. Arrogance and imperious manners, which, even joined to the truest merit, and the most splendid talents, create disgust and opposition, when they are the offspring of a little narrow mind, elated with temporary favour, provoke ridicule, and deserve to meet with it.

Mr. Mason's poem on Modern Gardening, is as real an attack on Mr. Brown's system, as what I have written. He has as strongly guarded the reader against the insipid formality of clumps, &c. and has equally recommended the study of painting, as the best guide to improvers; but the praise he has bestowed on Mr.

Brown

Brown himself (however generally conveyed) has spoiled the effect of so powerful an antidote. Most people, from a very natural indolence, are more inclined to copy an established and approved practice, than to correct its defects, or to form a new one from theory; Mr. Mason's eulogium has therefore sanctioned Mr. Brown's practice more effectually, than his precepts have guarded against it. That eulogium, however, (if I may be allowed to make a suggestion which I think is authorized by the tenor of the poem) has been given from the most amiable motive—the fear of hurting those with whom he lived on the most friendly terms, and who had very much employed and admired Mr. Brown. Silence would, in such a work, have been a tacit condemnation; still worse to have “damned with *faint* praise:” my idea may possibly be taken

upon wrong grounds, but I have often admired Mr. Maſon's addreſs in ſo delicate a ſituation. Had Mr. Brown tranſfused into his works any thing of the taſte and ſpirit, which prevail in Mr. Maſon's precepts and deſcriptions, he would have deſerved (and might poſſibly have enjoyed) the high honour of having thoſe works celebrated by him and Mr. Walpole; and not have had them referred, as they have been by both, to future poets and hiſtorians.

It may, perhaps, be thought preſumptuous in an individual, who has never diſtinguiſhed himſelf by any work that might give authority to his opinion, ſo boldly to condemn, what has been admired and practiſed by men of the moſt liberal taſte and education: but the force of faſhion and example are well known, and it requires no little energy of mind, and confidence in one's



one's own principles, to think and act for one's self, in opposition to general opinion and practice. Some French writer (I do not recollect who) ventures to express a doubt, whether a tree waving in the wind, with all its branches free and untouched, may not possibly be an object more worthy of admiration, than one cut into form in the gardens of Versailles.—This bold sceptic in theory, had most probably his trees shorn like those of his sovereign.

It is equally probable, that many an English gentleman may have felt deep regret, when Mr. Brown had improved some charming trout stream, into a piece of water ; and that many a time afterwards, when disgusted with its glare and formality, he has been heavily plodding along its naked banks, he may have thought how beautifully fringed those of his little brook once had been ; how it sometimes ran ra-

pidly over the stones and shallows; and sometimes in a narrower channel, stole silently beneath the over-hanging boughs. Many rich natural groups of trees he might remember—now thinned and rounded into clumps; many sequestered and shady spots which he had loved when a boy—now all open and exposed, without shade or variety; and all these sacrifices made, not to his own taste, but to the fashion of the day, and against his natural feelings.

It seems to me, that there is something of patriotism in the praises which Mr. Walpole and Mr. Mason have bestowed on English gardening; and that zeal for the honour of their country, has made them (in the general view of the subject) overlook defects, which they have themselves condemned. My love for my country, is, I trust, not less ardent than theirs, but it has taken a different turn; and I feel anxious

ous to free it from the disgrace of propagating a system, which, should it become universal, would disfigure the face of all Europe. I wish a more liberal and extended idea of improvement to prevail; that instead of the narrow, mechanical practice of a few English gardeners—the noble and varied works of the eminent painters of every age, and of every country, and those of their supreme mistress, Nature, should be the great models of imitation.

If a taste for drawing and painting, and a knowledge of their principles, made a part of every gentleman's education; if, instead of hiring a professed improver to torture their grounds after an established model, each improved his own place, according to general conceptions drawn from nature and pictures, or from hints that favourite masters in painting, or favourite

parts of nature suggested to him — there might in time be a great variety in the styles of improvement, and all of them with peculiar excellencies. No two painters ever saw nature with the same eyes; they tended to one point, by a thousand different routes, and that makes the charm of an acquaintance with their various modes of conception and execution: but any of Mr. Brown's followers might say, with great truth, we have but one idea among us.

I have always understood, that Mr. Hamilton, who created Painshill, not only had studied pictures, but had studied them for the express purpose of improving real landscape. The place he created (a task of quite another difficulty from correcting, or from adding to natural scenery) fully proves the use of such a study. Among many circumstances of more striking effect,

I was

I was highly pleased with a walk, which leads through a bottom skirted with wood; and I was pleased with it, not from what *bad*, but from what had *not*, been done; it had no edges, no borders, no distinct lines of separation; nothing was done, except keeping the ground properly neat, and the communication free from any obstruction. The eye and the footsteps were equally unconfined; and if it is a high commendation to a writer or a painter, that he knows when to leave off, it is not less so to an improver.

In a place begun (I believe) by Kent, and finished by Brown, a wood, with many old trees covered with ivy, mixed with thickets of hollies, yews, and thorns; a wood, which Rousseau might have dedicated *a la reverie* — is so intersected by walks and green alleys, all edged and bordered, that there is no escaping from them; they

they act like flappers in Laputa, and instantly wake you from any dream of retirement. The borders of these walks (and it is a very common case) are so thickly planted, and the rest of the wood so impracticable, that it seems as if the improver said, "You shall never wander from my walks—never exercise your own taste and judgment—never form your own compositions; neither your eyes nor your feet shall be allowed to stray from the boundaries I have traced"—a species of thralldom unfit for a free country.

There is, indeed, something despotic in the general system of improvement; all must be laid open—all that obstructs, levelled to the ground—houses, orchards, gardens, all swept away. *Painting*, on the contrary, tends to humanize the mind: where a despot thinks every person an intruder who enters his domain, and wishes  
to

to destroy cottages and pathways, and to reign alone; the lover of painting, considers the dwellings, the inhabitants, and the marks of their intercourse, as ornaments to the landscape \*.

For the honour of humanity, there *are* minds, which require no other motive than what passes within. And here I cannot resist paying a tribute to the memory of a beloved uncle, and recording a benevolence towards all the inhabitants around him, that struck me from my earliest re-

\* Sir Joshua Reynolds told me, that when he and Wilson the landscape painter were looking at the view from Richmond terrace, Wilson was pointing out some particular part; and in order to direct his eye to it, "There," said he "near those houses—there! where the *figures* are."—Though a painter, said Sir Joshua, I was puzzled. I thought he meant statues, and was looking upon the *tops* of the houses; for I did not at first conceive that the men and women we plainly saw walking about, were by him only thought of as figures in the landscape.

membrance;

membrance ; and it is an impression I wish always to cherish. It seemed as if he had made his extensive walks, as much for them as for himself ; they used them as freely, and their enjoyment was his. The village bore as strong marks of his and of his brother's attentions (for in that respect they appeared to have but one mind) to the comforts and pleasures of its inhabitants. Such attentive kindnesses, are amply repaid by affectionate regard and reverence ; and were they general throughout the kingdom, they would do much more towards guarding us against democratical opinions,

“ Than twenty thousand soldiers arm'd in proof.”

The cheerfulness of the scene I have mentioned, and all the interesting circumstances attending it (so different from those of solitary grandeur) have convinced me,  
that



that he who destroys dwellings, gardens, and inclosures, for the sake of mere extent, and parade of property, only extends the bounds of monotony, and of dreary, selfish pride; but contracts those of variety, amusement, and humanity.

I own it does surprise me, that in an age and in a country where the arts are so highly cultivated, one single plan (and that but moderate) should have been so generally adopted; and that even the love of peculiarity, should not sometimes have checked this method of levelling all distinctions, of making all places alike \*; all equally tame and insipid.

Few persons have been so lucky as never to have seen, or heard the true *profer*;

\* A person well known for his taste and abilities, being at a gentleman's house where Mr. Brown was expected, drew a plan by anticipation; which proved so exact, that I believe the ridicule it threw on the serious plan, helped to prevent its execution.

smiling,

smiling, and distinctly uttering his flowing common-place nothings, with the same placid countenance, the same even-toned voice : he is the very emblem of serpentine walks, belts, and rivers, and all Mr. Brown's works ; like him they are smooth, flowing, even, and distinct\* ; and like him they wear one's soul out.

There

\* The language (if it may be so called) by which objects of sight make themselves intelligible, is exactly like that of speech. To a man who is used to look at nature, pictures, or drawings, with a painter's eye, the slightest hint, on the slightest inspection, conveys a perfect and intelligible meaning ; just as the slightest sound, with the most negligent articulation, conveys meaning to an ear that is well acquainted with the language of the speaker : But to a person little versed in that language, such a sound is quite unintelligible ; he must have every word pronounced distinctly and articulately.

Then again, as these slight hints, and slurred articulations, have often a grace and spirit in language which is lost when words are distinctly pronounced ; so many of these slight and expressive touches, both in art and in nature, give most pleasure to those who are thoroughly versed in the language. This may, perhaps, in some degree

There is a very different being, of a much rarer kind, and who hardly appears to be of the same species; full of unexpected turns,—of flashes of light: objects the most familiar, are placed by him in such singular, yet natural points of view,—he strikes out such unthought of agreements and contrasts,—such combinations, so little obvious, yet never forced or affected, that the attention cannot flag; but from the delight of what is passed, we eagerly listen for what is to come. This is the true picturesque, and the propriety of that term will be more felt, if we attend to what corresponds to the *beautiful* in conversation. How different is the effect of

gree account for the plainly marked distinctions in improvement; for as in order to convey any idea to a man unused to a language in *one* sense, you must mark every word; so to a man unused to it in *another* sense you must mark every *object*; must cut sharp lines, must whiten, redden, blacken, &c. &c.

that soft insinuating style, of those gentle transitions, which, without dazzling or surprising, keep up an increasing interest, and insensibly wind round the heart.

It requires a mind of some sensibility, and habit of observation, to distinguish what is really beautiful and interesting, from what is merely smooth, flowing, and insipid, and to give a decided preference to the former. It is not more common to have a true relish for picturesque scenery; and even the quick turns and intricacies of conversation are not relished by all. I have sometimes seen a *proser* quite forlorn in the company of a man of brilliant imagination; he seemed "dazzled with "excess of light," his dull faculties totally unable to keep pace with the other's rapid ideas. I have afterwards observed the same man, get close to a brother *proser*; and the two snails have travelled

on so comfortably on their own slime, that they seemed to feel no more impression, either of pleasure or envy, from what they had heard, than a real snail may be supposed to do, at the active bounds and leaps of a stag, or of a high-mettled courser.

This is exactly the case with that practical proser, the true improver: carry him to a scene merely picturesque, he is bewildered with its variety and intricacy, the charms of which he neither relishes, nor comprehends; and longs to be crawling among his clumps, and debating about the tenth part of an inch, in the turn of a gravel walk. The mass of improvers seem to forget that we are distinguished from other animals, by being (as Milton describes it)

“ Nobler far, of look *erect* ;”

they go about

“ With leaden eye that loves the ground,”

C c

and

and are so continually occupied with turns and sweeps, and manœuvring stakes, that they never gain an idea of the first elements of composition.

Such a mechanical system of operations little deserves the name of an art. There are indeed certain words in all languages that have a good and a bad sense; such as *simplicity* and *simple*, *art* and *artful*, which as often express our contempt as our admiration. It seems to me, that whenever art, with regard to plan or disposition, is used in a good sense, it means to convey an idea of some degree of invention;—of contrivance that is not obvious,—of something that raises expectation,—which differs, and with success, from what we recollect having seen before. With regard to improving, that alone I should call art in a good sense, which was employed in collecting from the infinite varieties of ac-

*cident* (which is commonly called *nature*, in opposition to what is called *art*) such circumstances as may happily be introduced, according to the *real* capabilities of the place to be improved. This is what painters have done in their art, and thence it is, that many of these lucky accidents, being strongly pointed out by them, are called picturesque.

He therefore, in my mind, will shew most art in improving, who *leaves* (a very material point) or who creates the greatest variety of *pictures*,—of such different compositions as painters will least wish to alter. Not he who begins his work by general clearing and smoothing, that is, by destroying all those accidents, of which such advantages might have been made; but which afterwards, the most enlightened and experienced art, can never hope to restore.

When I hear how much has been done by art, in a place of large extent,—in no one part of which, where that art has been busy, a painter would take out his sketch book; when I see the sickening display of that art, such as it is, and the total want of effect; I am tempted to reverse the sense of that famous line of Tasso, and to say of such performances:

L'arte che *nulla* fa, tutta si scuopre \*.

\* No line is more generally known, than

L'arte che tutto fa, nulla si scuopre;

and no precept more universally received; yet still it must not be too strictly followed in all cases.

Near the house, artificial scenery ought to have place in proportion to the style and character of the building; and one great defect of modern gardens (in the confined sense of the word) is an affectation of simplicity, and what is called nature; *that* easily degenerates into a plainness (to say no more) which does not accord with the richness and splendour of architectural ornaments. In other parts the precept should have its full effect, and  
the



the improver should conceal himself, like a judicious author ; who sets his reader's imagination at work, while he seems not to be guiding, but to be exploring new regions with him.

In the same manner, the improver should facilitate the means of getting at the most striking parts, but seldom force the spectator to one single route,—to one single point ; in many cases he should even conceal, if possible, that he has made any walk at all. There is in our nature a repugnance to despotism, even in trifles ; and we are never so heartily pleased as when we fancy ourselves unguided and unconstrained, and that we have made the discovery ourselves. Homer rarely appears in his own person. Fielding often does, and sometimes ostentatiously : amidst all his beauties (and no writer has more) ; it is a striking defect.



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## A P P E N D I X.

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**G**REAT part of my essay was written before I saw that of Mr. Gilpin on picturesque beauty. I had gained so much information on that subject from his other works, that I read it with great eagerness, on account of the interest I took in the subject itself, as well as from my opinion of the author. At first I thought my work had been anticipated; I was pleased however to find some of my ideas confirmed, and was in hopes of seeing many new lights struck out. But as I advanced, that distinction between the two characters, that line of separation which I thought would have been accurately marked out, became less and less visible; till at length the beautiful and the picturesque were more than ever mixed and incorporated together, the whole subject

involved in doubt and obscurity, and a sort of anathema denounced against any one who should try to clear it up. Had I not advanced too far to think of retreating, I might possibly have been deterred by so absolute a veto, from such authority; but I hope I shall not be thought presumptuous for having still continued my researches, though so diligent and acute an observer had given up the enquiry himself, and pronounced it hopeless.

Mr. Gilpin's authority is deservedly so high, that where I have the misfortune to differ from him, his opinion will of course be preferred to mine, unless I can clearly shew that it is ill-founded: I must therefore endeavour to shew in what respects it is ill-founded as often as these points occur, and with the best of my abilities; for any thing short of victory, is in this case a defeat.

I will first mention, in general, the difficulties into which so ingenious a writer has been led, from losing sight of that  
genuine

genuine and universal distinction between the beautiful and the picturesque, which he himself had begun by establishing, and which separates their characters equally in nature and in art ; and from confining himself to that unsatisfactory notion of a mere general reference to art only.

He has given it as his opinion, that “ roughness forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful and the picturesque, and seems to be that particular quality which makes objects chiefly please in painting.” He therefore has thought it necessary, in some instances, to exclude smooth objects from painting, and to shew, in others, that what is smooth in reality is rough in appearance ; so that when we fancy ourselves admiring the smoothness, which we think we perceive (as in a calm lake) we are in fact admiring the roughness which we have not observed. I will now proceed to give the particular instances of those points in which we differ.

Mr.

Mr. Gilpin observes, that “ a piece of Palladian architecture (which, I presume, is only another term for regular Grecian architecture) may be elegant in the last degree; the proportion of its parts, the propriety of its ornaments, the symmetry of the whole, may be highly pleasing; but, if we introduce it in a picture, it immediately *becomes* a formal object, and ceases to please.” He adds, “ should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must, from a smooth building, turn it into a rough ruin.”

Mr. Gilpin’s first point was, to shew that a building, to be picturesque, must neither be smooth nor regular; and so far we agree. But then, to shew how much picturesque beauty (to use his expression) is preferred by painters to all other beauty, nay, how unfit beauty alone is for a picture, he makes the two assertions I have quoted, viz. that a piece of regular and finished architecture becomes a formal object, and ceases to please when introduced  
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in a picture ; and that no painter, who had his choice, would hesitate a moment between that and a ruin.

Were this really the case, we must give up Claude as a landscape painter ; for he not only has introduced a number of perfect, regular, and smooth pieces of architecture into his pictures, but they frequently occupy the most conspicuous parts of them. I should even doubt whether he may not have painted more entire buildings, as *principal* objects, than he has ruins, though many more of the latter as *subordinate* ones.

Claude delighted in representing scenes of festive pomp and magnificence, as well as of pastoral life and retirement ; but if we suppose his temples abandoned, his palaces deserted and in ruins, the whole character of those splendid compositions, which have so much contributed to raise him above the level of a mere landscape painter, would be destroyed. Mr. Gilpin cannot but remember that beautiful sea-port of his which did belong to Mr. Lock, and  
which

which (could pictures choose their own possessors) would never have left him. He must have observed, that the architecture on the left hand was regular, perfect, and as smooth as such finished buildings appear in nature.

But with regard to entire buildings, in contradistinction to ruins, the back grounds and landscapes of all the great masters, (particularly of N. and G. Pouffin,) are full of them, and the ruins few in proportion; so much so, that in the numerous set of Gaspars, published by Vivares, there are scarce any ruins to be found among numberless entire buildings.

No painter more diligently studied picturesque disposition and effect than Paul Veronese; yet architecture of the most regular and finished kind forms a very essential part of his magnificent compositions. Many of these splendid edifices have the most truly beautiful appearance in pictures, especially when they are accompanied (as in Claude's) by trees of elegant forms, and  
by



by a scenery, each part of which accords with their character. I believe indeed, that we might reverse Mr. Gilpin's position, and with more truth assert, that a piece of Palladian architecture, however elegant, however well proportioned its parts, however well disposed and selected its ornaments, how perfect soever the symmetry of the whole, yet, in the mere elevation, or placed (as it frequently is in reality) at the top of a lawn, naked and unaccompanied, is a formal object, and excites only a cold admiration of the architect's ability ; but, when introduced in a picture, *becomes* a highly interesting object, and universally pleases. I of course mean introduced as the best masters have introduced and accompanied such buildings, for there can be no doubt of the tendency of all regular architecture to formality.

The skill with which that formality has been avoided by the great painters, without destroying smoothness or symmetry, is,

is, perhaps, one of the strongest arguments for studying their works for the purposes of improvement.

I have equally the misfortune of differing from Mr. Gilpin on the subject of water ; he says, “ \* If the lake be spread out on the canvas [and in this case it cannot be different in nature] the *marmoreum æquor*, pure, limpid, smooth as the polished mirror, we acknowledge it to be picturesque.” No one, I believe, will be singular enough to deny that a lake in such a state is beautiful ; then either the two terms are perfectly synonymous, or the two characters are mixed : in the latter case I must beg leave to quote a passage from Mr. Locke †, on a different subject indeed, but of general application. “ These passions (fear, anger, shame, envy, &c.) are scarce any of them simple and alone, and wholly unmixed with

\* Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 22.

† On the Human Understanding, octavo edit. page 208.

others,

others, though usually, in discourse and contemplation, that carries the name which operates strongest, and appears most in the present state of the mind." Now if smoothness (as Mr. Gilpin acknowledges) is at least a considerable source of beauty; and if roughness (as he does not scruple to assert) is that which forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful and the picturesque, it surely is rather a contradiction to his own principles to call a lake in its smoothest state picturesque, on account of such interruptions to the absolute smoothness (or rather uniformity) of its surface, as not only accord with beauty, but are often in themselves sources of beauty; such as shades of various kinds, undulations, and reflections.

Upon the same grounds that he asserts the smooth lake to be picturesque, he also gives that character to the high-fed horse with his smooth and shining coat. If, however \* "a play of muscles appearing through the fine-

\* Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 22.

ness of the skin, gently swelling and sinking into each other—his being all over lubricus aspici, with reflections of light continually shifting upon him, and playing into each other,” make an animal picturesque, what then will make him beautiful? The interruption of his smoothness, by a variety of shades and colours (not sudden and strong, but “ playing into each other, so that the eye glides up and down among their endless transitions”) certainly will not supply the room of roughness in such a degree as to over-balance the qualities of beauty, and abolish (as in the present instance) the very name.”

It is true, that according to Mr. Gilpin’s two definitions \*, both the lake and the horse, in their smoothest possible state, are picturesque; but they are no less opposite to that character, according to his more strict and pointed method of defining it, by making roughness the most essential point of difference between that and the beautiful. After so plain and natural a distinc-

\* Vide page 48.

tion between the two characters, it surely would have been more simple and satisfactory to have named things according to their obvious and prevailing qualities; and to have allowed that painters sometimes preferred beautiful, sometimes picturesque, sometimes grand and sublime objects, and sometimes objects where the two or the three characters were equally, or in different degrees, mixed with each other.

Many of the examples I have given of picturesque animals, are taken from Mr. Gilpin's very ingenious work on forest scenery. He there observes, that among all the tribes of animals scarce any one is more ornamental in landscape than the ass. He adds "in what this picturesque beauty consists; whether in his peculiar character, "in his strong lines, in his colouring, in "the roughness of his coat, or in the mixture of them, would perhaps be difficult "to ascertain." When I read this passage I had not seen the essay on picturesque beauty, and it gave me great satisfaction to

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find

find my ideas of the causes of the picturesque confirmed by so attentive an observer as Mr. Gilpin, though he spoke doubtfully; and I could not help flattering myself, that as his authority had confirmed me in my ideas, so by tracing them through a greater variety of objects than his subject led him to consider, I might shew the justness and accuracy of his suppositions. Peculiarity of character, on which Mr. Gilpin very properly lays a stress, naturally arises from strong lines and sudden variations: What is perfectly smooth and flowing has proportionably less of peculiar character, and loses in picturesqueness, what it may gain in beauty.

This leads me to consider a part of Mr. Gilpin's Essay on Picturesque Beauty, that I own surprised me in the author of the last quoted passage, as well as of several others in the essay just mentioned; all of which mark the true character and cause of the picturesque in a masterly manner, and shew how much and how well he had observed. If  
the

the criticism I am going to make be just, Mr. Gilpin has, I think, laid himself open to it by his exclusive fondness for the picturesque, and by having carried to excess his position, that roughness is that particular quality which makes objects chiefly please in painting. From his partiality to this doctrine, he ridicules the idea of having *beauty* represented in a picture, and addressing himself to the person he supposes to make so un-painter-like a request, he says\*,

“ The art of painting allows you all you  
 “ wish ; you desire to have a beautiful ob-  
 “ ject painted ; your horse, for instance, is  
 “ led out of the stable in all his pampered  
 “ beauty. The art of painting is ready to  
 “ accommodate you ; you have the beauti-  
 “ ful form you admired in nature exactly  
 “ transferred to canvass. Be then satisfied ;  
 “ the art of painting has given you what  
 “ you wanted. It is no injury to the  
 “ beauty of your Arabian, if the painter

\* Essay on Picturesque Beauty.

“ think he could have given the graces of  
 “ his art more forcibly to your cart-horse.”

If a person ignorant of the art of painting were to be told, that a painter who wished to give forcibly the *graces* of his art, would prefer a cart-horse to an Arabian, he would be apt to think there was something very preposterous both in the art and the artist. This will always be the case, when instead of endeavouring to shew the agreement between art and nature, even when they appear most at variance, a mysterious barrier is placed between them to surprize and keep at a distance the uninitiated. To me the fact seems to be what we might naturally suppose; that Rubens, Vandyk, or Wovermans, when they wished to shew the graces of their art, painted beautiful horses; such as the general sense of mankind would call beautiful: gay pampered steeds with fine coats, and high in flesh. When they added (as they often did) a greater share of picturesqueness to these beautiful animals, it was not by degrading  
 them



them to cart-horses and beasts of burthen; it was by means of such sudden and spirited action, with such a correspondent and strongly marked exertion of muscles, such wild disorder in the mane, as might heighten the freedom and animation of their character, without injuring the elegance or grandeur of their form. If by giving *forcibly* the graces of his art, is to be understood the giving them with powerful impression, I cannot help thinking that Rubens, when he was transferring from nature to the canvass one of these noble animals, in all the fulness and luxuriance of beauty, little imagined that he was throwing away his powers; and that any of the rough high-boned cart-horses he had placed in scenes with which they accorded, were more striking specimens of the graces of his art. In Wouvermans also, the number of beautiful pampered steeds greatly exceeds that of his rough and picturesque ones.

It would indeed be a wretched degrada-

tion of the art, should the horses of Raphael, Giulio Romano, Polidore, N. Poussin, the forms and characters of which, such great artists had studied with almost the same attention as those of the human figure ; in which too (as in the human figure) they had corrected the defects of common nature from their own exalted ideas of beauty, and from those of their great models the ancient sculptors ; and in which they certainly meant to display\* (and not feebly) the graces of their art,—should such ennobled animals, not only be rivalled, but surpassed even in those graces, by a jade of Berchem, or Paul Potter.

The next and last point of difference between us, is with respect to the plumage of birds: Mr. Gilpin thinks the result of plumage (and he makes no exception) is picturesque ; and the whole seems to me another striking instance of his exclusive fondness for that character, and of his unwillingness, on that account, to allow any beauty, or merit to smoothness. Indeed, as

he supposes the picturesque solely to refer to painting, and that pictures can scarcely admit of any objects which are not of that character, and as he also allows (or rather asserts) that roughness is its distinguishing quality—it became necessary either to allow that an object might be picturesque without being rough, which would contradict his assertion, or to shew that there were other qualities which would render it so in spite of its smoothness; or, to use his own expression, would supply the room of roughness.

Speaking of the plumage of birds\*, “nothing,” he says, “can be softer, nothing smoother to the touch; yet it certainly is picturesque.” He then observes, “it is not the smoothness of the surface which produces the effect; it is not this we admire; it is the breaking of the colours; it is the bright green or purple, changing perhaps into a rich azure or vel-

\* Essay on Picturesque Beauty, page 23.

vet black; from thence taking a semitint, and so on through all the varieties of colours: or if the colour be not changeable, it is the harmony we admire in these elegant little touches of nature's pencil."

It is singular that the colours of birds, and particularly the changeable ones, from which Mr. Burke has taken some of his happiest illustrations of the beautiful, should, by Mr. Gilpin, not only be cited as sources of the picturesque, but as so abounding in that quality as to bestow on smoothness the effect of roughness. He has laid it down as a maxim, that a smooth building must be turned into a rough one, before it can be picturesque; yet, in this instance, a smooth bird may be made so by means of colours, many of which, with their gradations and changes, are universally acknowledged and admired as beautiful.

I cannot help repeating the same question on this subject as on the preceding one; if beautiful and changeable colours, with their gradations, added to softness and  
smoothness

smoothness of plumage, and to the harmony of the elegant little touches of nature's pencil, make birds picturesque, what then are the qualities which make them beautiful ?

But Mr. Gilpin himself has furnished me with the strongest proof how natural it is for all men, when they design to produce a picturesque image, to avoid all idea of smoothness. He has quoted Pindar's celebrated description of the eagle, as equally poetical and picturesque, and such I believe it always has been thought. The *ruffled* plumage of the eagle (which Mr. Gilpin has put in Italics, as the circumstance which most strongly marks that character) is both in Mr. West's translation, and Mr. Gray's imitation ; but as far as I can judge, there is not the least trace of it in the original. I have not the most distant pretensions to any critical knowledge of the Greek language ; yet still I think, that by the help of those interpreters who have studied it critically, an un-  
learned

learned man, if he feels the spirit of a passage, may arrive at a pretty accurate idea of the force of the expressions. From them it appears to me, that far from describing the eagle with *ruffled* plumes, or with any circumstance truly picturesque, Pindar has, on the contrary, avoided every idea that might disturb the repose, and majestic beauty of his image. After he has described the eagle's flagging wing, he adds ὑγρον πωτον αιωρει, which is so opposite to ruffled, that it seems to signify that perfect smoothness and sleekness given by moisture; that oily suppleness so different from any thing crisp or rumped; as ὑγρον ελαιον expresses the smooth, suppling, undrying quality of oil. The learned Christianus Damm in his Lexicon, interprets κνωσσαν ὑγρον νωτον αιωρει, dormiens incurvatum (vel potius *læve*) tergum attollit; and the action is that of a gentle heaving from respiration, during a quiet repose. In another place Damm interprets ὑγροτης, mollities; all equally opposite to ruffled. Indeed we might almost suppose

suppose that Pindar, having intended to present an image both sublime and beautiful, had avoided every thing that might disturb its still and solemn grandeur; for he has thrown as it were into shade, the most marked and picturesque feature of that noble bird: *κελαινωπιν δ' ἐπὶ οἱ νεφελαν ἀγκυλω κρατι, βλεφαρων ἄδυ κλαιστρον, κατεχευας*; a feature which Homer, in a simile full of action and picturesque imagery, has placed in its fullest light :

*Οἱ δ' ὥστ' αἰγυπιοὶ γαμφωνυχες, ἀγκυλοχεῖλαι,  
Πετρεῖ ἐφ' ὑψηλῇ μεγάλα κλαζόντε μαχόνται.*

Having been bold enough to criticise both the translation and imitation of Pindar, I shall venture one step farther, and try to account for the passage having been so rendered. I think Mr. West and Mr. Gray might probably have been impressed with the same idea as Mr. Gilpin, that the imagery in this passage was highly picturesque, but might have felt that smooth feathers would not accord with that character;

ter; and therefore perhaps (as Sir Joshua Reynolds observes on Algarotti's ill-founded eulogium of a picture of Titian) they chose to find in Pindar, what they thought they ought to have found. With all the respect I have for their abilities (and Mr. Gray's cannot be rated too high) I must think that by one word they have changed the character of that famous passage; and it may be doubted whether they have improved it.

Were their image represented in painting it might be more striking, more catching to the eye than Pindar's; and that is the true character of the picturesque. But his would have more of that repose, that solemn breadth, that freedom from all bustle, which I believe accords more truly with the genuine unmixed characters both of beauty and sublimity \*, and with the ideas of the great original.

\* Vide Sir Joshua Reynolds's Notes in Mason's *Du Fresnoy*, p. 86.

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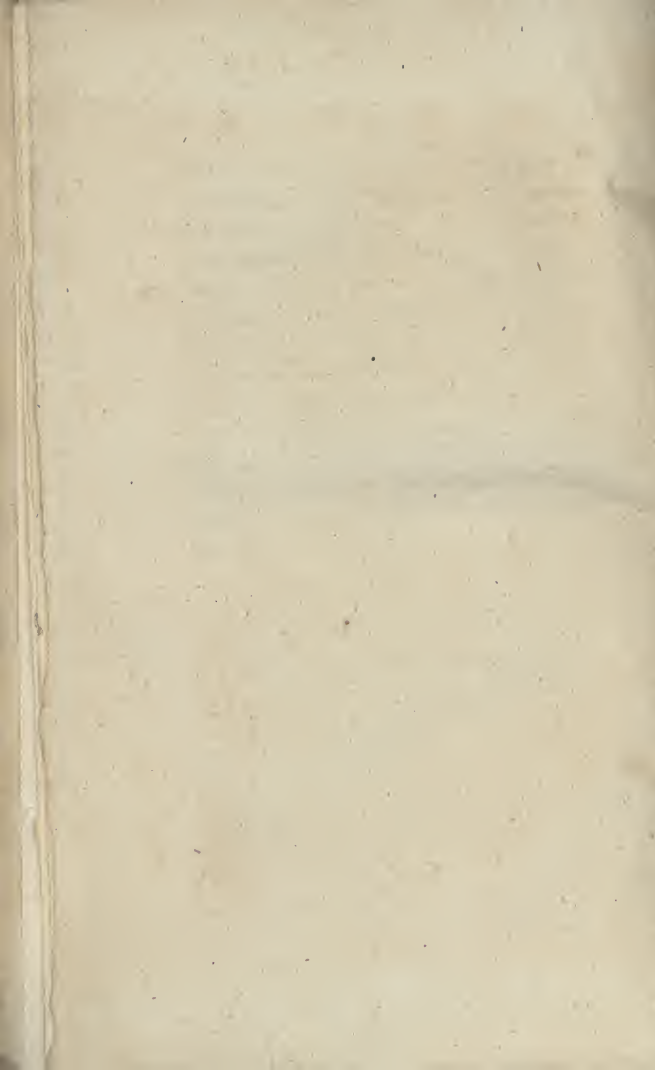


I have pressed strongly on all the points of difference between Mr. Gilpin and me, because I think them very essential to the chief object I have had in view,—that of recommending the study of pictures, and of the principles of painting, as the best guide to that of nature, and to the improvement of real landscape. Could it be supposed that for the purpose of his own art, a painter would in general prefer a worn-out cart-horse to a beautiful Arabian;—or that such pieces of architecture as were universally admired for their beauty and elegance would, if introduced in a picture, become formal, and cease to please,—no man would be disposed to consult an art which contradicted all his natural feelings. But were he to be informed that painters have always admired and copied beauty of every kind, in animals, as well as in the human species (and strange it would be were it otherwise); that they neither reject smoothness, nor symmetry, but only the ill-judged and tiresome display of them; that with regard to regular and perfect

perfect architecture, it made a principal ornament in pictures of the highest class; but that while its smoothness, symmetry, and regularity were preserved, its formality was avoided; in short, that the study of painting, far from abridging his pleasures, would open a variety of new sources of amusement, and, without cutting off the old ones, only direct them into better channels—he might be disposed to consult an art which promised many fresh and untasted delights, without forcing him to abandon all those which he had enjoyed before.

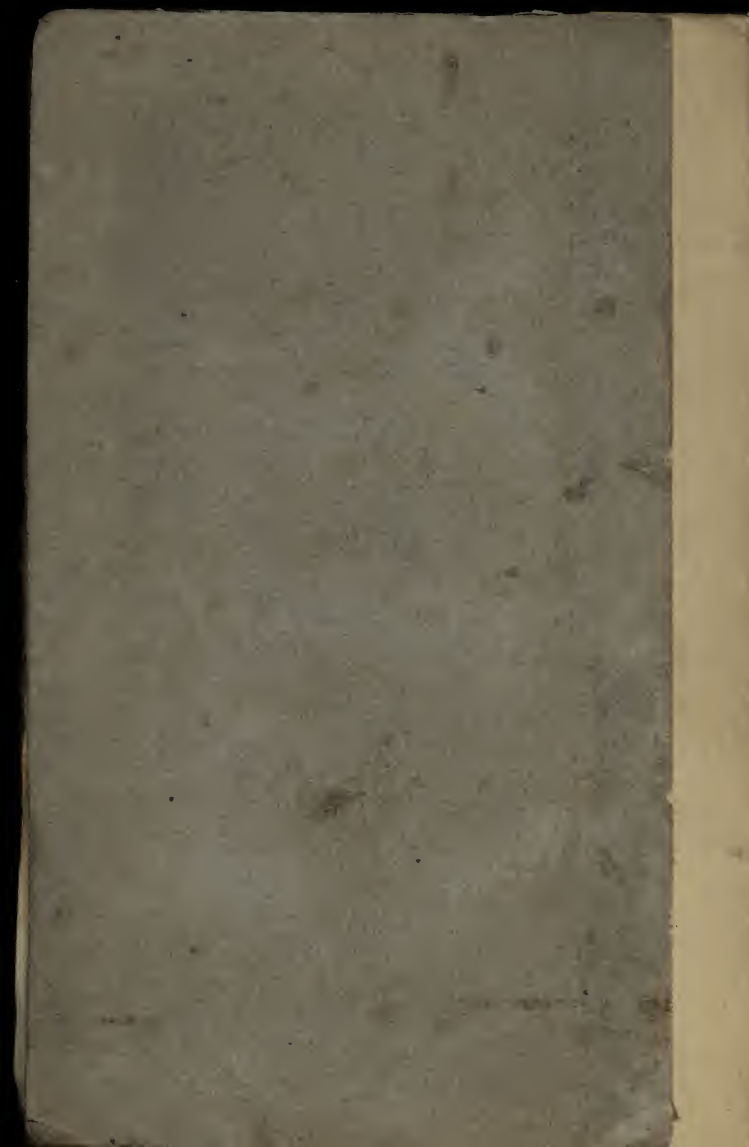
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