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AN ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE

HAFOD, &c.

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AN ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE  
HAFOD,

AND THE NEIGHBOURING SCENES ABOUT THE  
BRIDGE OVER THE FUNACK, COMMONLY CALLED  
THE DEVIL'S BRIDGE, IN THE COUNTY OF  
CARDIGAN.

AN ANCIENT SEAT BELONGING TO THOMAS  
JOHNES, ESQ. MEMBER FOR THE COUNTY OF  
RADNOR.

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BY GEORGE CUMBERLAND.

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Unvex'd with quarrels, undisturb'd with noise,  
The country king his peaceful realm enjoys;  
Cool grotts, and living lakes, the flow'ry pride  
Of meads, and streams that thro' the valley glide,  
And shady groves, that easy sleep invite,  
And, after toilsome days, a soft repose at night.

*Dryden's Virgil.*

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LONDON:

Printed by W. Wilson, St. Peter's Hill, Doctors' Commons.

And sold by T. Egerton, Whitehall.

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M D C C X C V I.

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TO

CHARLES LONG, Esq. M. P.

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*WHEN, traversing the Cambrian mountains, in the eager pursuit of picturesque beauty, we once united in opinion, that, among all the wonders of Welch scenery, none had any title to be compared to HAFOD, and the surrounding country; neither of us then, I believe, expected to see a little palace arise among those recesses, or that the merit of those sublime irregularities of nature would so soon find a tasteful owner to appreciate their magnificence.*

*Much less did we then anticipate a meeting in SWITZERLAND, where, after a tour through the most romantic parts of that country, we should again agree, that HAFOD and the FALL of PEN-MACKNA still flourished unrivalled; and that our native land possessed charms, which, in despite of climate, at certain seasons, stood prominent among the objects most worthy of delineation.*

*At my last return from the Continent, the same sentiment induced me to print a few copies of the little Poem on British Landscapes; in which, by the following note, I, in a manner, pledged myself to revisit a spot, that had made, on my mind, so distinct an impression.*

*In that note, I said, (CLIFDEN gives a fine specimen of the magnificent hills of nature at PIERCFIELD; but with all its beauties, to those who have visited the latter, it seems only a fragment torn from the sides of that majestic work; and yet, between CLIFDEN and PIERCFIELD, there*

*there is nothing approaching it in grandeur. The country, about the DEVIL'S BRIDGE and HAVOD, surpasses either ; containing scenery so supremely beautiful, that the author, having passed a few days there making drawings, meditated the design of composing a description to accompany them ; but too much enchanted to give it with coolness, he relinquished the contemplation ; and all he can now say is, that having, since that time, visited all the fine scenes of SWITZERLAND, SAVOY, the TYROL, and ITALY, truth compels him to give many parts of WALES the preference, except the advantages derived from clearer skies ; and a circumstance that should give this testimony additional weight is, that satiated with landscape, since his acquaintance with the highest efforts of human art, the sculpture of the ancients, his before heated imagination is cooled sufficiently to see the face of nature with discriminate delight).*

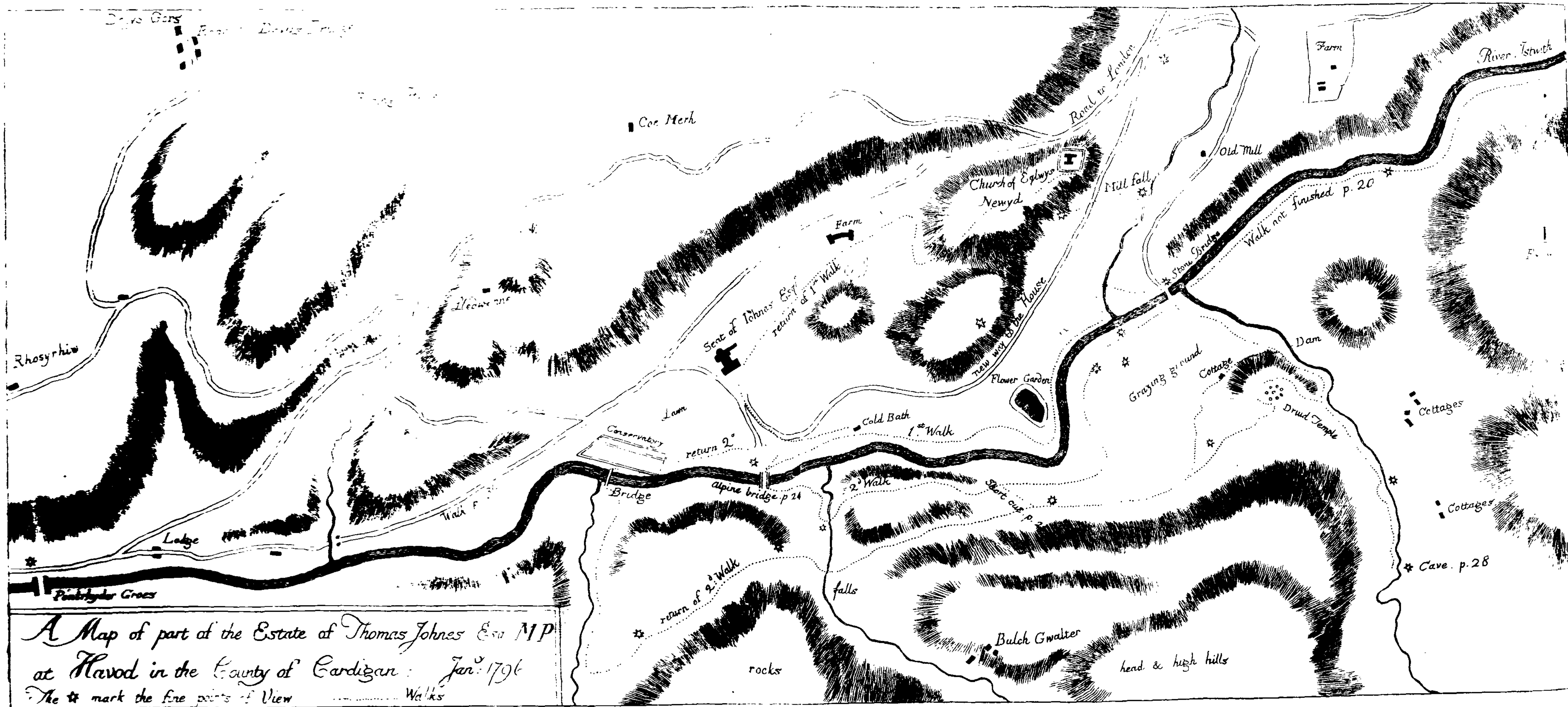
*In the autumn of 1794, I had ocular demonstration of the propriety of this note, and the justice of those remarks ; for, after a most attentive examination*

*nation of these remarkable regions, I returned through our fine English scenes, as through a barren plain, uninterested; and with my faculties impressed with so warm an attachment to that romantic country, as still to retain its attraction, though constantly resident on one of the most pleasing and salubrious situations near the metropolis. Nor let it be considered as a trivial proof of the influence of fine nature over us, that, without consulting our friend, I cannot resist the temptation I feel to unveil his Elysium, and to call on your well-known taste to support the genuine approbation.*

BISHOPSGATE,  
WINDSOR GREAT PARK,  
JANUARY 1, 1796.

G. C.





A Map of part of the Estate of Thomas Johns Esq MP  
 at Harod in the County of Cardigan: Jan: 1796  
 The \* mark the fine points of View  
 Walks

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## HAFOD.

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“ Come, blessed Pan, whom rural haunts delight;  
“ Come, leaping, agile, wand’ring, starry light;  
“ Thee shepherds, streams of water, goats’ rejoice  
“ Thou lov’st the chace, and echo’s secret voice,  
“ Come, Bacchanalian, blessed pow’r, draw near.”

*Taylor’s 10th Hymn of Orpheus.*

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**H**A FOD, usually pronounced Havod, is a place in itself so pre-eminently beautiful, that it highly merits a particular description. It stands surrounded with so many noble scenes, diversified with elegance as well as with grandeur; the country on the approach to it is so very wild and uncommon, and the place itself is now so embellished by art, that it will be difficult, I believe, to point out a spot that can be put in competition with it, considered either as the object of the Painter’s Eye, the Poet’s Mind, or as

A a de-



a desirable residence for those who, admirers of the beautiful wildness of nature, love also to inhale the pure air of aspiring mountains, and enjoy that *santo pacé* (as the Italians expressively term it) which arises from solitudes made social by a family-circle.

**HAFOD**, to all these charms, unites inducements which, though not uncommon in England, have there, at such a distance from the capital, a peculiar grace. It has a capacious stone-mansion, executed in the pleasing, because appropriate style of Gothic architecture; situated on the side of a chosen, sheltered dingle, embowered with trees, which rise from a lawn of the gentlest declivity, that shelves in graceful hollows to the stream below.

From the portico it commands a woody, narrow, winding vale; the undulating forms of whose ascending, shaggy sides, are richly clothed with various foliage, broken with silvery waterfalls, and crowned with climbing sheep-walks, reaching to the clouds.

Neither are the luxuries of life absent; for, on the margin of the Ystwyth, where it flows broadest through this delicious vale, we see hot  
houses

houses, and a conservatory; beneath the rocks a bath; amid the recesses of the woods a flower-garden; and within the building, whose decorations, though rich, are pure and simple, we find a mass of rare and valuable literature, whose pages here seem doubly precious, where meditation finds scope to range unmolested.

In a word, so many are the delights afforded by the scenery of this place and its vicinity, to a mind imbued with any taste, that the impression on mine was increased after an interval of ten years from the first visit, employed chiefly in travelling among the Alps, the Apennines, the Sabine Hills, the Tyrollese; along the shores of the Adriatic, over the Glaciers of Switzerland, and up the Rhine; where, though in search of beauty, I never, I feel, saw any thing so fine, never so many pictures concentrated in one spot; so that, warmed by the renewal of my acquaintance with them, I am irresistibly urged to attempt a description of the hitherto almost virgin-haunts of these obscure mountains.

Wales, and its borders, both north and south, abound, at intervals, with fine things; Piersfield has grounds of great magnificence, and wonderfully picturesque beauty.

Downton-Castle \* has a delicious woody vale, most tastefully managed; Llangollen is brilliant; the banks of the *Conway* † savagely grand; Barmouth romantically rural; the great Pistill Rhyader is horribly wild; Rhyader Wenol, gay, and gloriously irregular; each of which merits a studied description.

But, at HAVOD and its neighbourhood, I

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\* Downton Castle, near Ludlow, is the seat of Richard Paine Knight, Esq. member for that place; and author of "A Poem on Landscape." He has laid out the valley (where Milton is said to have planned his Comus) in a stile that does infinite credit to his refined taste; which has led him likewise to make one of the purest and largest collections of good antique bronze-sculpture in Europe, after the museum at Portici, and which is really a valuable acquisition to this country.

† " ——— Conway crown'd with wood,  
 " And rocks encompass'd round, augments the flood.  
 " Forth from the giant-hills she takes her way,  
 " Resistless winds, and moves with sov'reign sway;  
 " With slow, majestic sweep, creates her bed,  
 " Wide, and more wide, the pregnant waters spread;  
 " While herds, from purple hills, look down below,  
 " And rocks inverted on her surface glow."

find

find the effects of all in one circle ; united with this peculiarity, that the deep dingles, and mighty woody slopes, which, from a different source, conduct the Rhydols' never-failing waters from Plenlimmon, and the Fynach, are of a unique character, as mountainous forests, accompanying gigantic size with graceful forms ; and, taking altogether, I see the " Sweetest  
 " interchange of hill and valley, rivers, woods,  
 " and plains, and falls with forest crown'd,  
 " rocks, dens, and caves ;" infomuch, that it requires little enthusiasm there to feel forcibly with Milton, that

" All things that be, send up from earth's great altar,  
 " Silent praise."——

To the judicious traveller, who is desirous, in his tour, to ascend in a regular scale of fine places, let it be ever recommended, if, in his passage to this place, he come from the metropolis, to begin with the village of Tintern, near Chepstow, which, though little noticed, even by those \* who magnify the pretty landscapes near

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\* If Mr. Gilpin, who has made a chaos of art, as far as the subject he treats of is connected with it,  
 had



the Wye, is yet abundantly picturesque and rural; and where an artist, possessed of the rare talent of knowing how to chuse, might soon fill his portfolio.

He should next devote three or four days, at least, to Piersfield, and then ascend the Wye from Monmouth, up as far as Hereford; next follow it by Builth, and the Hay, to Rhayader-Gwy-bridge, taking the Falls of the *Ithon* on the way; thence passing by the picturesque lake and torrent of Gwynllyn, which is about two miles from Rhayader-Gwy-bridge, it is easy, by turning a little over to the right, to regain the high road to *Hafod* and Aberystwyth. On entering these mountains, like the prelude to some

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had possessed this talent, he would not have had occasion to lament the want of fore-grounds, and to advise practitioners to invent them *ad libitum*:—even a bright stubble field is often the best fore-ground for the picture; for it frequently occasions us, by its simplicity and plainness, to observe the grandeur of the scene beyond; and, in the hands of a genuine artist, may be so managed, as to give a value to the whole: for effect is not dependent on strong masses of shade, but on sharpness or bluntness of outline.

scene

scene of enchantment, we are presented with a contrast that is really awful; our winding road hanging on the precipitous sides of steep, smooth, and mighty hills, cloathed to their very tops with verdure, bespotted all over with numerous flocks, and herds of black cattle, vaguely grazing the tender grafs, or picking a scanty sustenance near the pendant brow of some polished hillock; and this at a giddy height that makes one dread, lest the unsure ground should slide beneath their feet, and send them down, a living ruin, to the deeps below; for, from the haughty sides of these hanging lawns, down to the water-worn smooth, dark rock, that forms the torrent's bed, not a shrub, or fuzzy protuberance, appears to break their fall.

As to the river, that rolls at the feet of these grassy mountains, the channel is so sudden, and so deep, that, even from the towering road on the side of this valley, one can only by conjecture imagine, that far down its waters

“ Creep in lingering lab'rinth dark and slow.”

Such are the reflections naturally arising in the mind of an English traveller, when occasionally  
the

the singularity of the scene forces him, for a moment, to turn his eyes from the fearful road he is descending, to survey the majestic picture which lies around.

Yet oftentimes he finds himself on a level plain, with a turbary, or bog, extending to the foot of the hills; whose dark and yawning fissures strongly recal Milton's wonderful picture of one, in these lines:

“ ——— Quench'd in a boggy fyrty, neither sea  
 “ Nor good dry land, nigh founder'd, on he fares,  
 “ Treading the crude consistence.”

Thus these moory dales, these gloomy crags these rocks with frowning brows, enhance the value of even the rugged road that leads through them; and, continuing these scenes for some miles, with little variety, except now and then the storm-beaten abode of some laborious shepherd, we come at last to a modern bridge, and find our way lies under steep precipices, on the right of the valley, near some old mines of lead-ore; whose dingy scrofa, impending above the high road, choaks the river into which it falls, and which now runs broad and shallow through the vale, manifesting to the admiring spectator the amplitude of the excavations into the bowels of  
 • the

the rock, whilst the powder-blasted, gloomy crags, that scowl above the aperture, convey no bad idea of the sulphurous soil of Milton's nether world.

Within the mines there are said to be abundance of chambers, but the workmen sleep in cottages abroad; and these, united with the engine-wheel, banish considerably the natural gloom of the place, which, being divested of trees, and scanty indeed of cultivation, reminds a lover of *Cervantes* not unfrequently of the fable mountains, where the love-stricken, veteran knight listened to

“Stunning sounds, borne thro' the hollow dark.”

*Milton.*

Just beyond the mines, their present tenant has built an inn; where, although the delicate can find no comfortable accommodation, suited even to common ideas of enjoyment, yet a zealous admirer of the fine scenes, that now begin to unfold themselves, must, alas! take up his lodging; for, in all these parts, no other resting-place occurs, except a little public cottage,\*

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\* This is now, I am informed, very considerably enlarged, and made a comfortable inn, where travellers may be well accommodated.

built



built by the hospitable proprietor of HAFOD, and the Devil's Bridge, on the very brow of a steep, woody hill, above the *Fynach-Fall*, fronting scenes of stupendous magnificence.

As to Spitty-Cenfen, where, over the door of a cavern, we see inscribed,

“ Go north, go south, go east, go west,  
“ When past this, you've past the best.”

The horrors of that abode of misery are a compleat contrast to the grandeur of the scenes around it.

The crisped heads of Hafod's woods now burst all at once on the astonished eye.

To the right, the road to Aberystwith, ascends the verdant hills ; below them, the little church of Eglwys Newydd presents its modest front, half buried in oaks, seated on a little knoll ; in front, the woody valley, with the Ystwyth, in its bottom, opens before us, crowned on the left with sloping, lofty hills ; while, in the midst, a smooth mound, half concealed with oaks, rises among the shades, and seems designed by nature as a centre ; whence, nor too high, nor too low, the whole expanse around, of intermingled beauties, may continually feed the eye : where,  
if

if a druid's temple never stood, a druid's temple is unquestionably called for; and, I cannot help expressing a hope, that a rude imitation will one day there be placed\*.

Descending by a left-hand entrance-road, among a grove of oaks, you wind under the knoll, that sustains the little church; and, soon turning to the right, come suddenly and unexpectedly on the Gothic mansion, facing the portico front; which, with its light wings, white, gay appearance, and spacious steps, seems to invite its visitors with cheerful hospitality.

There are four fine walks from the house, chiefly through ways artificially made by the proprietor; all dry, kept clean, and composed of materials found on the spot; which is chiefly a coarse stone, of a grayish cast, friable in many places, and like slate, but oftener consisting of immense masses, that cost the miner, in making some part of these walks, excessive labour; for there are places, where it was necessary to perforate the rock many yards, in order to pass a promontory, that, jutting across the way, denied further access; and to go round

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\* Such I find since is the intention of Mr. Johnes.  
which

which, you must have taken a great tour, and made a fatiguing descent. As it is, the walks are so conducted, that few are steep; the transitions easy, the returns commodious, and the branches distinct. Neither are they too many, for much is left for future projectors; and if a man be stout enough to range the underwoods, and fastidious enough to reject all trodden paths, he may, almost every where, stroll from the studied line, till he be glad to regain the friendly conduct of the well-known way.

Yet one must be nice not to be content at first to visit the best points of view by the general routine; for all that is here done, has been to remove obstructions, reduce the materials, and conceal the art; and we are no where presented with attempts to force these untamed-streams, or indeed to invent any thing, where nature, the great mistress, has left all art behind; and where I find my favourite maxim has obtained to the extent of my wishes.

“ Here nature feeds, the verdure points the views,  
 “ While art, her handmaid, soberly pursues,  
 “ Supports her sacred train, divides the groves,  
 “ And, at due distance, with discretion moves.”

*Poem on British Landscape.*

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“ ——— Unto the woode that was me fast by,  
“ I went forthe myself alone boldily,  
“ And helde the way down by a broke fide,  
“ Tyll I came to a launde of white and greene,  
“ So fair an one had I never in bene ;  
“ The grounde was greene y’ powdir’d with daisye,  
“ The flouris and the grevis alike hie,  
“ All grene and white, was nothing ellis fene.

CHAUCER.

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**T**HE first ramble I should chuse for a stranger would be, to take him down, through the lawn before the house, at once to the river Yitwith ; where, instead of passing over the long Alpine bridge, one turns short to the left into a path that skirts the water, and beneath which it runs rapidly over its pebbly bed, overhung with straggling boughs.

Thence you soon descend to the level of the mead, through which it flows ; where, after  
passing



passing the cold bath, that is fed by a constant spring of the purest water,

“ Where from the rock, with liquid lapse distills  
“ A limpid fount.”——

*Pope's Odyssey, book xvii. line 232.*

“ The watre is evir fresh and newe,  
“ That welmith up, with waves bright,  
“ The mountenaunce of two finger height,  
“ About it is the grasse springing.”

*Chaucer's Romant. of the Rose, line 1560.*

you enter a sweet, sheltered, level walk, running nearly on a line with the river, but separated from it by narrow and irregular stripes of meadow, and shaded above by climbing woods, and rocks fringed with old roots, and ivy.

This meadow, which seems to be quite hemmed in by the woody hills, conveys an idea of a warm, screened, and solitary retirement; at the end of it, however, you are agreeably surprised with a sudden turn of the stream into a confined valley; to the left of which lies, capped in high trees, a most sequestered swell of about two acres, formed into a flower and shrub-garden; surrounded by a rude stone-fence, of an irregular form, nearly concealed by ivy; the  
plats

plats of which are curved out of a fine shaven turf, and the whole circumscribed by a smooth gravel walk.

The situation of this gay little spot, among rocks and torrents, and backed by the noblest woods, affords us, at our entrance, an agreeable surprize ; for, although close to the paths, unless shown by the guide, it would not be discovered ; suddenly, however, you find yourself

“ Among thick woven arborets, and flowers  
“ Embroider'd on each bank \*.”

*Milton.*

Issuing from this quiet scene, you arrive at the borders of a rapid torrent, that falls speedily

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\* “ ———— Violaria et  
“ Myrtus, et omnis copia narium,  
“ Spargent olivetis odorem,  
“ Fertilibus domino priori.”

*Hor. ode xv. lib. 2.*

“ The violet and the myrtle greets  
“ The senses with a waste of sweets !  
“ While vainly would Apollo's ray  
“ Through our thick laurels pour the day.”

*Francis.*  
into

into the Ystwyth, and the mouth of which forms the pretty cascade. The way now becomes rocky, and, ascending among groves, one's attention is presently arrested by a picturesque break of the water, just by a rude stone-bridge, leaving which uncrossed, and continuing up this mill-stream, a number of pleasing falls murmur all the way.

We now cross over a simple foot-bridge, that embraces two rocks, and a few irregular paces introduce you to another pass; where the wave foams loudly under the foundation of a rustic building, connected to the path by a wall; on ascending a few steps to this building, all is lost by the screen it affords; but, on issuing from it, pleasure and surprize affect the mind delightfully, at the picture that starts as it were to view—For now,

At a few hundred feet from you, the valley seems to terminate in a most romantic stile, ending with a scissure in the rocky front; through which is poured the whole stream of the torrent, tumbling from a pretty considerable height, in a form the most agreeable, screened by a huge mass of bare rock, over which, in great floods, it makes its course entire; but, in general, as  
when

when I saw it, the waters wind behind the rock ; and, rushing into a boiling pool, come rattling forward, white with foam, and drop the whole brook near the building, whence this cascade \* is most advantageously beheld.

If, after viewing it, you chuse to ascend the sides of this old fall, you will meet with many interesting details ; and, although the way be a little rugged, and the stones slippery, I found it amply recompence my curiosity.

Here, although we seem to come to the end of our walk, it takes another turn, short to the left ; ascending, for this high country, through very fine oak groves ; for it is not at this place, as in rich plains, that oaks are found of great magnitude : here they derive their beauty chiefly from their forms and situations, growing generally from old stocks ; it having been the custom of this country, for many years back, to mow their woods, as it were, at stated periods : much mercy has however been extended

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\* I had, one very dark night, the pleasure to see it lighted up by the Bengal-fire ; and the effect was original and pleasing.



to the Dryades at Hafod ; and one feels a pleasing hope, that these forests are now destined to a long repose.

Ascending through these groves, among the underwoods of which the sheep culls at random her ivy, and flowery herbage ; you lose sight, almost entirely, of the torrent ; except where, at a few intervals, little spots of its white froth glitter through the trees : But you never lose the sound of the wave, which ascends with you, till you arrive at a broader and more level walk, that conveys you, still mounting slowly, into one of the principal approach-ways, conducted through close woods on the sides of a hill : on issuing through which, at a common gate, it continues up, secured on the steep side by a fence, and presently leads to an open, elevated situation ; whence almost the whole valley is discerned, backed by fine forms of mountains, some bare, some wooded.

At this point, I mean a few paces from the common gate, that fine smooth hill, mentioned before as inviting a Druid's temple, appears in a particularly interesting form ; seeming, by its regular features, there to be placed as a happy contrast to the surrounding theatre of wildness.

After

After ascending gently a little further, a returning path brings us to the church of Eglwys-Newydd, niched in a wood, overgrown with brambles,

There nightingales in unprun'd copses build,  
In shaggy furzes lies the hare conceal'd.

*Savage's Wanderer, canto v.*

among which the cattle have worn a thousand irregular paths, with its decent church-yard and ancient yews about it; while above, the climbing sheep-walks crown the pastoral landscape.

For change the small church into a Temple of Pan, and you have the very place where the Comates of Theocritus says

———— Τηνεὶ δρύες ὧδε κίπειρος,  
Ὡδε καλὸν βομβεῦντι ποτὶ σμάνεσσι μέλιτται.

Here rest we; low Cyprus decks the ground,  
Oaks lend their shade, and wild bees buz around.

*Fawkes.*

Entering the brushwood, a rural path-way now carries you speedily to a very delightful little promontory, rather clear of wood; whence, with a gentle precipice below, you command the crescent-formed farm-yard, crouching under

the hill, below the river, the bridge, and all around the variegated vale.

This walk will take a full hour: there is another, in the same direction, which branches from it, fit only for those who can climb, as it is not yet entirely traced; but which, on that very account, may have inducement for the curious.—To find this, you must cross the rude stone-bridge, before-mentioned as being situated just beyond the flower-garden; whence a path soon leads to another stone-bridge of one arch, buttressed by two solid rocks; beneath which, at a pretty considerable depth, the Ystwyth (here confined and girt in) pours its whole stream into a basin, quite overshadowed with boughs of oaks.

Looking up the river, on the other side of this rude bridge, the water rolling heavily down over vast stones, which often separate the stream, has a very wild appearance: and a pretty considerable mill-stream, rushing over the high rocky bank, just above the arch of the bridge, forms a brawling cataract, not very large, but extremely impetuous.

On the left, lofty wooded rocks ascend high over the river: on the right-hand, broken ground, covered with herbage, and loose stones, mark the irregular boundaries; and, on this side, you must ascend the confined stream, which may easily be effected, though the opposite bank is too steep to admit a path.

After skirting the torrent's rocky bed, at intervals, for about half a mile upwards, a pretty little sloping, cultivated spot, on the opposite side, presents itself before the eye; suspended as it were over the stream, and capt with a cottage; below which the water works a wind: after viewing this spot, we should descend to the point where the whole Ystwyth is seen, pouring through one of the noblest masses of rock that can be imagined, worn, by the winters' floods, into a pleasingly irregular form; fringed and shaded with young oak and birch; and terminated above with a stripe of sloping meadow, which melts into the gentle declivities of a mountainous sheep-walk.

Upwards, the river again spreads and widens; and through a rude grove is soon perceived a stone-water-mill; whence, a long bridge, of two trees thrown across the shallow, rapid stream,

invites the passage : instead of which, continue on the right-hand side, till you meet a little brook, such as one could almost jump over ; on following which to the right, under a steep, woody cliff, that clothes a small dingle, one comes to a sweetly formed cascade, which rolls down from a considerable height, over a fine broken table of flaty rock ; and, spreading itself like a fan, glides gently into the little brook below.



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“ Part thou hast view’d—if further we explore,  
“ Let *industry* deserve applause the more;  
“ He clear’d, manur’d, enlarg’d the furtive ground,  
“ And firms the conquest with his fenceful mound;  
“ What wonder then *art* by his potent aid,  
“ A mansion in a barren mountain made.”

*Savage’s Wanderer, canto i.*

**T**HERE are walks of great extent, on the opposite side the river from the house, which take up about three hours to trace, returning again to the mansion, and these are what are considered as the principal part of the artificial improved paths.

Whether they might have been better laid out, I shall not attempt here to enquire; for indeed I was too much delighted with the accommodation they afforded me, to think much of criticising their lines, if I had been possessed of the requisite abilities; I shall therefore content myself with describing them, and the principal points of view they afford, whilst their

delightful remembrance is fresh in my mind ;  
and from notes made on the spot.

Leaving the house, you must descend once more by the direct path, through the lawn, and cross the rude wooden bridge, that is supported by a stone-buttreffs in the centre ; on passing over which, the view, both up and down the valley, is very elegant, crowned with hanging woods, in almost every direction. When across the stream, you should take the left-hand path, and follow the curve of the river, till interrupted by a brook that falls from Bwlch-Gwalter, a hill above. The path then winds up the brook, which

“ Rolls in music down the rocky hill,”

most agreeably ; till arriving at a tree, thrown over for a bridge, you have a very pretty picturesque fall to the right, accompanied with graceful scenery of rocks, fern, long moss, and light trees,

“ Where rills amusive send from rocks around,  
“ A solitary, pleasing, murmuring sound.”

*Savage's Valentine's Day.*

Thence the walk ascends a little, then grows  
level

level, and, at the first turning to the right, we should carefully avoid ascending, as that is only a branch to get a shorter return from the upper walk to the house : continue, therefore, along the river, as it winds through the vale, till arrived at some ash trees, finely grouped, just where the stream bends : and here, at a small gate, leave the forest to enter a straight path, (which ought to be covered close), whence the first fine view presents itself up the valley ; and, as the horizon is quite low, the Ystwyth broad and shallow, and the forests every way ascending from its margin, it demands some attention.

The end of the straight path delivers us to a large piece of grazing-ground, of very unequal forms ; one side of which hangs directly over the river, the other climbs the hills, and melts into the woods. Skirting this delicious meadow a little way, and contemplating the woods which rise directly from the opposite bank of the Ystwyth, one sees, gushing from them, with a divided cascade, the waters of the mill brook, shaded with noble branches, and loose stems of wild oaks : after which the whole river contracts almost suddenly, and retires into a rocky channel, fringed with trees, which con-  
duct

duct to the stone-bridge, of one arch, mentioned in my last walk.—Here we are led to the right, by the path that encircles the mead, in a gentle ascent, and soon begin to gain extensive views in perspective of the valley; but near the end of the path the waving heads of climbing forests open grandly, giving a hint of what one has soon to expect at a more elevated situation; for although the masses fold in gracefully on each other, yet no part of the river is in sight, owing to the front screen which first delivered us to this incomparable mead.

That feast, however, is only for the present delayed; for the walk now suddenly turns up to an artificial dam, constructed for the purpose of drowning the meadows (a mode of improvement always attainable in this part of the country). This dam forms a basin and regular cascade, which, though little observed here, would in many parts of England be observed as a considerable curiosity; the waters coming down a deep ravin, whose rocks are, by the rolling torrents, washed smooth and round.

Ascending this brook the path is at first scooped into the rocky sides of the ravin, abounding with the most romantic scenery; and presently the

the brook or torrent is almost lost, but soon appears again above, alternately making little falls at every angle.

You now pass a mine hole ; but before leaving this, and indeed in many other places, one should look back down the rocky dingle, to observe how beautifully the distant smooth hills contrast with its rugged bottom, and shrubby sides.

Ascending still in a tortuous path, eaten as it were into the bank, and frequently sustained from beneath, the eye is soon again fixed, and the foot arrested, by a precipitous fall of the whole brook about fourteen feet, pouring itself steadily into a basin, from between two smooth rocks, with a regular loud murmur that remains long upon the ear.

Ascending a few paces, you come to a little but precious cascade, scattering its waters in a triangular form, down a flat slaty rock, on the opposite side of the ravin we are tracing. This resplendent rill might easily, from its situation and scenery, be conducted into almost any figure, and seems perfectly adapted to take the  
form



form of a pisse-vache or spout, as it issues under a rocky head near forty feet high, and almost perpendicular.

The ravin now narrows fast, and the path wreathes with it, when a small close cave is perceived on the right; on entering which, a roaring sound of water assaults the ear, which increases on advancing through the dark passage; when, turning suddenly to the left, light breaks in, and you see, through a large aperture, a luminous sheet of water, falling just before you, with noisy velocity, into a deep hole beneath. After rains this aperture cannot easily be approached, as the spray beats in like a mist, and sometimes even the torrent; but the contrast of the gloomy passage you are in, with the light of the opening, and the rapid motion of the waters, hanging down before it like a shower of icicles, produces an effect on the mind that is very imposing, and reminded me of the following lines in Chaucer's dream:

They came to the darke valey  
 That stante betwixtin rockis twey  
 ————— werin a few wellis  
 Came renning fro the cliffes adowne,

That

That made a dedly flepinge fowne,  
 And renning down right by a cave  
 That was under a rocke ygrave  
 Amid the vally wonder deep.

Returning from this damp den of Tropho-  
 nius to the light, a fresh surprise is prepared for  
 us, producing a more pleasing sensation ; for,  
 descending a few loose steps of slate, a bridge of  
 two trees conducts us across the torrent over a  
 deep channel of intire rock ; and we then in-  
 stantly perceive the cause of all the sounds we  
 have heard ; for from above comes tumbling  
 the whole brook, precipitating itself from be-  
 hind a smooth rock, in the most picturesque  
 form, under some decayed oaks, white, foam-  
 ing, and impetuous ; rolling at length into a  
 deep boiler under the bridge, and worming  
 its way, in irregular windings, down the  
 meandering vale.

No art has been used here, yet I question if  
 any art could improve it ; for the whole is, in-  
 deed, fit for the canvass of the painter.

It is possible, I believe, to return on the op-  
 posite side ; but, as no walk is yet marked out,  
 I should rather recommend returning across the  
 rude bridge, to those whose heads are not apt

to be giddy ; and, enjoying the scene downwards, continue the walk, till arriving near a bold piece of smooth rock, formed like a seat, the path takes to the left : and after continuing round the brow of that remarkably-smooth, tumultuously formed hill (of which I before took notice, from the church of Eglwys-newydd, and which seems to be marked out for a Druid's temple), the astonished eye is all at once presented with a command of the valley, that beggars all description—a mighty and magnificent theatre of varied forests, on both sides ascending majestically from the river Ystwyth, which rushes through the valley in the most pleasingly irregular lines ; bordered here and there with rich stripes of pasturage ; often bending its blue course till lost behind the projecting points of land covered with woods, and again breaking out in the distances ; the whole crowned with smooth, verdant caps, towards whose summits vegetation diminishes ; occasionally broken by gray mossy rocks that protrude from the soil ; the whole interspersed with rude shepherds' cottages, and sprinkled deliciously over with flocks and herds : in a word, you see at one view, from a proud eminence, the whole range of this exquisite valley, extending to Lord Lisburne's woods ; on the right, capt  
by

by Grogwinian's fall; while, to the left, the bare mossy mountains of Sputty-Ystwyth, terminate the scene, and mingle with the vapours of the horizon.

The impression this view made upon my mind *is indelible*; yet I saw it without any advantageous concomitants. What then must be the effects of sun-shine—vapours—autumnal foliage—a fine aurora—or a clear moon light! what, in the language of Ossian, “When the  
“blast has entered the womb of the mountain-  
“cloud and scattered its curling gloom around,” for here, on this globose promontory, a bard might indeed fit, and draw all his fine images from nature!

Winding round the crown of this precious knoll, set up as it were by art to examine the whole surrounding country, you see in every direction the abundance of the prospect.

The chief entrance-road from Rhyadargwy, Eglwys-newydd, with its sweet position under the groves, hence look charmingly. Below also, the fine scenery that surrounds the flower-garden, with its little temple, is seen snug beneath  
the

the trees, and retiring, as it were, under the wings of the wood. When satisfied with these fine things, descending gradually, and leaving the open walk again, we plunge into the forest higher up, which had before, at our outset, been traced below.

Here, on passing in, parallel to the river, with shades above and shades below you, and sometimes enclosed in deep foliage, the openings to the opposite hills, richly clothed with trees, have fine effects: particularly where a little path turns down (but which you are not to follow), where the flower garden, far beneath, always pretty among such wild scenery, with the promontory-like hill that peers over it, and the approach-way, that so judiciously skirts it below, makes a sweet picture.

The ascent is now rather rapid. The walk soon hangs over a precipice, compelled to enter the sides of the hill, till a rude set of stone steps ascends to the front of a mass of mossy overgrown rock (that would be a good study for an artist as a mere foreground) conducting us to the entrance of a cavern-way, cut through the solid mountain, which here thrusts out a  
 promontory,



promontory, whose sides are perpendicular, and whose base is far below ;

— sequester'd to the nymphs, is seen,  
A mossy altar, deep embower'd in green.

*Odyssey, book xvii. l. 240.*

After passing this excavated passage, one soon hears the sound of the fall we first met with after crossing the river, and sees the brook glistening almost under our feet ; when, turning up to the left, along a rocky shelf, it meets you, spreading into an abundance of flashing rills, and passing round a little insulated spot, lapped by the waters, in their falling current, among mossy stones and tangled underwood. Here a bridge of two slabs, rudely placed, meets the path ; and soon after you are pleasingly surprised with a fine view of the mansion, dropt like a pearl on the opposite sloping hill, in a recess, so closely surrounded by wood and rock, that although you have been long travelling far above it, it never meets the eye till this moment, and now only partially ; for, continuing on a little further from the bridge, we soon emerge from these woods, on ascending a hill, and command nearly as fine a prospect up the river as before we had downwards from *the swelling*

C

*mount ;*

*mount*; with the additional ornament of the house in the foreground: and, what is rather singular, within ten yards of the same spot, turning back, there is a very original unwooded prospect of the upper sheep-hills.

A descent, rather precipitous, now leads to the conservatory, and fruit-walls, on the opposite side of the river, which is passed by a very long flying bridge. After viewing which, and the exotics, a short easy ascent brings you back again to the point from which you set out.

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Dark the gigantic rocks projecting hung,  
Crown'd with gray oaks, in rude disorder flung;  
Thund'ring and hoarse a smoking torrent fell,  
Spreading a dingy wave, and foamy swell;  
Whose rushing streams in whirling eddies sweep,  
Loud-sounding, rapid, turbulent, and deep.

AFTER what has been already said of the walks about HAFOD, in which I shall undoubtedly be suspected of high-colouring, arising from the effects of early impression, it may be imagined that the tale is told; or, at any rate, that what follows will be but amplification: so far am I however from subscribing to such an opinion, that on re-perusing my former descriptions, I find them feeble, frigid, and far inferior to the subject; and, for what is to come, I have to regret, that not only my poor talents, but language itself, will sink under it; for how are words to imprint things, when, where nature has done much, even the art of painting, in able hands, is seldom found adequate to the

C 2 office?

office? My plan, therefore, is, to describe as faithfully as I wish to draw; convinced that it is better to possess even a middling outline of an object that gives us pleasure, than to have a false, though fine, picture; especially where the beauties of landscape are concerned, which remain undecayed, to confront at all times the delineation.

There is a walk from HAFOD, which, if we knew of Milton's having ever trod, it would enable us to account for the natural origin of the finest of his images\*. Of that walk I am going to attempt a description:

On leaving the house, and passing into the woods opposite the plain front, by a road conducted along the side of a hill, we soon arrive at one of the approach-gates; where the way goes close by the river Ystwyth, which is bordered on the left by very craggy, bold, and high

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\* But he, deep musing, o'er the mountains stray'd,  
Thro' mazy thickets of the woodland shade,  
And cavern'd ways, the shaggy coast along,  
With cliffs, and nodding forests, overhung.

*Odyssey, b. iv. l. i.*

sheep-

sheep-walks ; on the right, by Mr. Johnes' elegant woods. Here a bridge\* faces you, composed of hewn native stones, thrown over the river in one arch, unnecessarily high, for no flood could possibly reach it, yet infinitely more ornamental on that very account: it is backed by steep hills to the left, and, on the right, adorned by a range of mountains, clothed up to the very summit with verdant forests.

Leaving the bridge to the left,† a very little meadow, encroaching on the woods, presents itself, overhanging the river: at the end of which is the mouth of a deep hole, where the eddying waters of a small brook seem to have paused, to acquire strength to force their exit into the river; forming strange small bays among the rocks that compose its bottom, and leaving little clods that sustain a single shrub, or a bare stone, whose sides are for ever washed by the rolling waters. A rustic bridge, consisting of a single tree, with a rail composed of a branch, conveys you safe across the shaded little torrent; on tracing up which, among trees, you soon arrive at a most alluring cascade, where the waters of this pretty brook roll in a twisted form through a hole, high above;

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\* Pont-rhyder-Groes. † Here we leave the map.



over which an old stone-arch makes the crown, which was formerly used as a bridge to a mill, but is now so decayed as to appear like an accident of the rock: while that, through which the water presses, on one side is highly ornamented with ivy, fern, and creeper; and, on the other, is as richly adorned with straggling young oaks, whose long branches wave with every wind across the fall; and, by their bright colour, finely contrast the deep shade of the humid stone: a circularly formed boiler below receives the whole, white with foam, into its dark bosom; and it glides away under smooth slaty banks, fringed with raspberries and fern.

A grassy swell, intermingled with mossy stones, slopes conveniently before the face of the solid cascade, and, amidst such vast surrounding forests, makes it altogether a most interesting and cheerful scene.

But all these pictures vanish soon from the memory on rejoining the river, struggling, and foaming through its rocky, impenetrable bed; where it rushes in under a bold, entire mountain of bare solid stone; whose massy front projects forward, so as almost to embrace the opposite steep side of a hanging ridge of grassy hills,

hills, that present a narrow, irresistible barrier on both sides; which confining the roaring waters, during thaws and floods, seems to account for that formidably profound channel, worn, by the stream, all the way beyond it, in forcing downwards through the deep-gullied valley, grooving into the earth's entrails, as it works toward the sea.

For this inbound channel is one entire, bare, broken rock, corroded by the action of the stream, or ground away by the friction of its own loose fragments, incessantly whirling in the water-worn caves.

Many ancient and accidental ruins break it finely; as well as the wild mossy arms of oaks, that spring from the fissures of the sides, in places where no woodman has yet been daring enough to carry his axe; convinced, that should he succeed, it would not be worth while, at the risque of life, to cope for the fallen timber with the fullen stream.

Indeed the smoothness of the bottom-rocks, with their often perpendicular sides; the cold depth of the dark basons beneath; and the violence of the flood; would render it absolutely

dangerous for any mortal to venture there, even in the summer season.

Thus continuing to explore the right-hand side of this acherontic stream, by following the sheep-paths through the wood, you find the means of frequently approaching the promontories of its banks, by steep descents, that dip towards the margin of this terrific channel: where, when safely arrived, no language can image out the sublimity of the scenes; which, without quite arriving at a sentiment\* of aversion, produces, in the empaffioned soul, all those thrilling sensations of terror, which ever arise from majestic, yet gloomy exhibitions.

But, what a pleasure! after you have attained the point of some impending rock, covered with long streaming grass, where a little ledge presents itself, with a level footing; whence with security you can look both up and down the caverns of this channel, to see its flood

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\* If any one demands what I mean here, by the sentiment of aversion, let them look down the well at Carisbrooke Castle, as the lighted paper descends, till it expires suddenly in the cold profound.

come winding heavily towards you, through the gloomy, damp hollows, falling from bafon to bafon, or fpacious, or profound.

At other points we behold a rugged cave, worn, during the lapfe of ages, under the oppofite projecting rocks; whose beetling brows, crowned with trees, almoft overhang and darkly fhade the deep pools whence they fprang; to the edges of which are clinched the fantaftic roots of aged oaks; from whose fides depend flender bands of ivy, waving with every breeze, or dipping in the wells beneath; wildly fhooting acrofs the whole, long, crooked branches of oaks vibrate fufpended; and, with their fcanty, but elegant leaves, chequer the fhades of the moift caves below;

“ And holy horrors folemnize the fhade.”

*Odyffey, b. xvii. l. 245.*

Judging from the vehement effects of thefe powerful waters, on the oppofite rocks, one is naturally led to fufpect that mines are worked under the bafe we ftand on: a circumftance which, united to the profpect of the treacherous fringe that furrounds our narrow platform, through which the eye not unfrequently penetrates,

trates, where all should seem solid, adds not a little to the sublime and awful imaginations, that force themselves to our fancy, on examining the scene around.

And when I observed the caution with which a dog approached these mouldering margins, and listened to the plunge of a piece of stone hurled into one of the pools, I felt a revulsion that, notwithstanding the sublimity of the picture, made me speedily remove from the spot.

Wandering down these woody dells, you at length come to a winding path, that leads to a rustic bridge of three trees and a rail, projected across the dark chasm from rock to rock, where “the river through the shaggy hill rolls underneath engulf’d;” on passing which, a low, flat, perpendicular rock faces you, worked by the pick, to make a safe landing.

Here, turning about, a thousand romantic objects present themselves: the rural bridge—the rocky channel it bends across—the murky shade around—the fretful waters of the foaming flood—the wood-crowned rocks ascending high behind you—and the fine climbing forest in front, terminated above by Grogwinian’s silvery fall,



fall, shooting through the trees, and leaping from shade to shade—these, altogether combining with the recent traces of the pictures you have just left, fetter a pensive mind to the spot, and force from the poet, or painter, at least a sigh at parting.

Nor let me be said to have overcharged the canvass:—for “ Here is the rock, and the tree,  
“ and the roaring stream : here the gray stream  
“ winds in the valley, and the trees shake their  
“ green heads in the wind : here the aged  
“ oak bends over the waters, and sighs with all  
“ its moss : the thistle is there in the rock,  
“ and shakes its beard to the gale : here are  
“ rocks broken with thunder, the streams of  
“ whose chinks have failed.”

- 
- “ Hail, sister springs,  
“ Parents of silver-forded rills!  
“ Ever bubbling things!  
“ Thawing crystal! snowy hills!

*Craſhaw, p. 1.*

**A**FTER ascending the hill, and passing the little village of Sputy Ystwyth, across some moors, there is a walk of about three miles from the place I have just been describing, which, though not very agreeable in itself, brings the curious traveller to a rather original cascade, remarkable for its height, and surrounding scenery: the place, called Cwm-Caradoc, is said to have derived its name from a man who rode into it on horseback, and was killed, as he well might be, by the fall.

It is produced by a brook, which, passing the high way, drops suddenly, a few yards from it, into a very deep dingle, most beautifully ornamented

namented with trees and wild shrubs: which brook flows away below, under the sides of a hill, richly embellished with oaks of long standing, and such as are seldom found in this high country.

At about eight miles distance from HAFOD, in a solitary, but picturesque valley, there is also, for bold walkers, a cataract of great magnificence, and a fine painter's fall at a mill just beyond it.

The cataract is composed of the river Rhyddol, falling in one vast body into a tremendous boiler, scooped out by the force of the waters in great floods; the whole bottom of which is white with foam; and which, when the waters rise, during thaws, becomes alarming even to the neighbours of this spot, who are chiefly miners and charcoal burners, or those who wash the black jack: a mineral used in making brass, and in the collection of which many poor people are constantly employed.

The surrounding scenery also of this spot is very grand, being composed of lofty mountains, whose sides are one continued forest.

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But that which renders the residence of **HAFOD** the most remarkable is, that with all its natural beauties, it is close in the vicinity of mountainous forests, of a character totally different from its own; of a character, I may add, totally unlike any thing I ever before beheld, and which many people think superior to any place in **Wales**.

The region to which I allude is about those vallies, folding within vallies, of sides precipitous, and clothed with endless woods, seated at the very foot of **Plinlimmon**, into which the waters of the **Fynach** and the **Rhyddol** are poured, as it were, from their urns (for both are in sight at once); the former, coming down from beneath the **Devil's bridge**, has no equal for height and beauty that I know of; for although a streamlet to the famous fall of **Narni**, in **Italy**, yet it rivals it in height, and surpasses it in elegance.

To go to it from **HAFOD**, you need not leave the estate, in a part of which it lies, but, the walk is near five miles; however, you will always find refreshment at the little public-house I formerly spoke of, and which has been for that purpose erected lately by  
Mr.

Mr. Johnes, in front of the Rhyddol, and close to the Fynach-fall. Nor will one excursion suffice common observers; nor indeed many, to the lovers of the grand sports of nature: and, although the intended paths are not as yet sketched out, I shall recommend to those who can bear the fatigue of climbing among dingles; who, in search of beauties, are capable of descending from the “Hilly crofts, that brow the  
 “bottomed glades down to the dark sequestered  
 “rocks below,” to enter upon the Fynach-stream, about four miles from HAROD, and skirt it, as well as they can, down to the Devil’s Bridge. To do this, I will fairly confess, that (in the present state of things) they must creep often through thickets “dank or dry;” sometimes encounter, “the undergrowth of  
 “shrubs and tangling bushes;” “tempt the  
 “steep glade,” treacherous with slaty ruins; pass over “rocks with frowning brows; be  
 “lost in leafy labyrinths, and thickest shelter  
 “of black shades embowered;” but then in reward for all this, I can fairly promise them, (for I experienced those pleasures fully), they shall as often find themselves in

“Umbrageous grotts and caves of cool recess,  
 “over which the ivy creeps;” behold “the  
 “murmuring



“ murmuring water falls down the slope dell dispersed,” or “ in a glassy pool unite their streams ;” see “ crisped brooks, with mazy  
 “ error under pendant shade, offering their  
 “ glassy, cool, translucent waves ; midst grotts  
 “ and caverns, shagged with horrid shade ;” and as a specimen of these scenes, I would have subjoined two out of twenty spots, in a space less than a mile, on this romantic stream ; computing from the slate quarry, and water-mill under Mr. Hughes’s farm, to the Devil’s bridge ; beneath the dreadful double-arch of which the future walks are intended to be conducted, so as to bring the spectator suddenly, as by enchantment, into the front of that incredibly stupendous chasm of intervolving vallies, clothed to their misty top with wood of—“ Thickest  
 “ covert, interwoven shade, a verdant wall ;” beneath, the receptacle of many waters, the principal of which is the Rhydol, strongly marked by the foaming cataract, and the broad boiler that receives it ; but too distant below for its roaring tide to be audible by day.

As to the Fynach, its fall is so nearly perpendicular beneath the Devil’s Bridge, and it has so far to travel down to what is called the Devil’s Hole ; that, to view it in all its detail,  
 it

it is necessary to cross the bridge, and go round to the point of a mountain; whence, as from a stage, the whole lies delightfully expanded.

After passing deep below the bridge, as “through a narrow firth, with noises loud and “ruinous,” into a confined chasm; the fleet waters pour headlong and impetuous; and, leaping from rock to rock, with fury, *literally* “lash the mountain’s sides:” sometimes almost imbowered among deep groves, and flashing at last into a fan-like form, they fall rattling among the loose stones of the Devil’s Hole; where, to all appearance, it shoots into a gulph beneath, and silently steals away: for so much is carried off in spray, during the incessant repercussions it experiences, in this long tortuous shoot, that, in all probability, not above half the water arrives at the bottom of its profound and fullen grave.

Thus I have brought the reader to the end of my detail, and to a point where I may well be dispensed with; for it is not only beyond my abilities to enter into a full relation of the scenes about this place, but quite unnecessary, for all are now before him, expanded under the admiring and astonished eye—and never

D

eye,

eye, I will venture to affirm, beheld these scenes without astonishment: I shall therefore only say, at parting, from the divine poet I have so often quoted—that these hills like

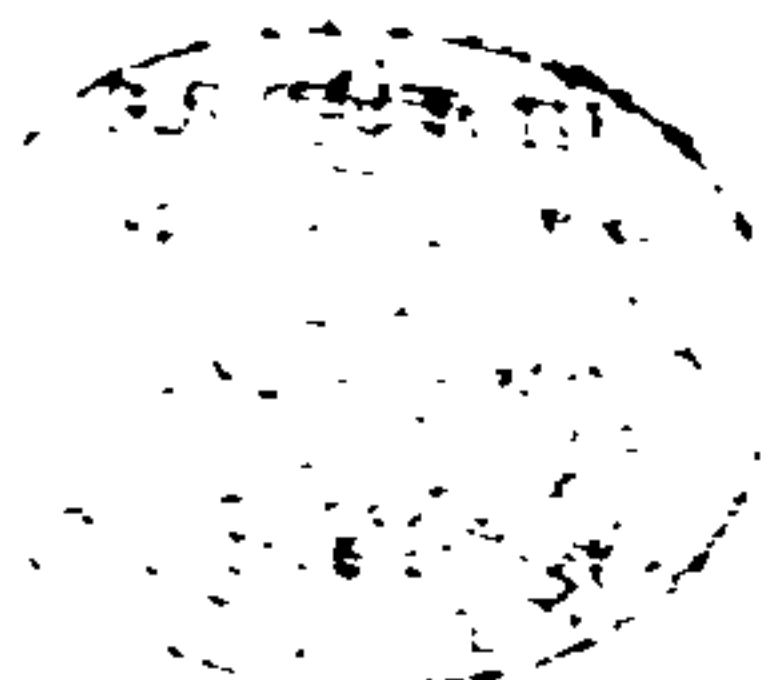
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Paradise,  
 Now nearer crowns with her enclosures green,  
 As with a rural mound, the champion head,  
 Of a steep wilderness; whose hairy sides,  
 With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,  
 Access denied; and overhead upgrew  
 Insuperable height of loftiest shade;  
 A sylvan scene; and, as the ranks ascend  
 Shade above shade, a woody theatre.

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Thus lovely seemed  
 That landscape, and of pure, now purer air,  
 Meets the approach, and to the heart inspires  
 Vernal delight and joy, able to drive  
 All sadness but despair.

MILTON, b. ix.



*FINIS.*

*E R R A T A.*

The Reference to the Note in Page 5, should be at *knowing how to chuse*, in Page 6, line 3.

Page 7, line 15, for *fuzzy* read *furzy*.

Page 9, in the note, for a comfortable *in*, read *inn*.

Page 16, line 2, for *the* pretty cascade, read *a* pretty cascade.

Page 21, line 7, read admit *of* a path.

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