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POEM

ON THE

LANDSCAPES OF GREAT-BRITAIN,

DEDICATED TO

JAMES IRVINE, Esq.

AT ROME,

BY

GEORGE CUMBERLAND.



WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1780.

NOR FAME I SLIGHT, NOR FOR HER FAVOURS CALL; SHE COMES UNLOOK'D FOR; IF SHE COMES AT ALL. POPE'S TEMPLE OF FAME, FER. 541.

WITH ETCHINGS BY THE AUTHOR.

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N DCC XCIII.

DEDICATION.

TO

JAMES IRVINE, Esq.

THE following Poem, having been literally written from a defire to encourage your former studies, cannot, with propriety, be dedicated to any other person.

As this trifle came genuine from the heart, and under the hand of oppression, uttered a sort of prediction of that which afterwards unexpectedly happened to its Author; with the like uncertainty he gives it to the Public, whose applause can add little to his happiness, whose neglect can take little away; sure only of one advantage from it, that it enables him to boast of the friendship of an honest and unprejudiced man.

G. CUMBERLAND.

Bishopsgate, Windsor Park.



POEM

ON THE

LANDSCAPES OF GREAT-BRITAIN.

PART I.

PROMPTED by friendship's undiminish'd fire, I wake, with willing hand, th' obedient lyre.

An

An infant muse, as yet untutor'd, sighs To sing our native sields, our native skies; Lest you, my friend, amid the charms of Rome, Neglecting traits peculiar to your home, Sink in the sameness of Campania's waste, The polish'd dictates of a former taste. And, as a father, when his hope explores, In search of future honours, distant shores, In the youth's breast to keep, his only care, The moral virtues, early planted there, With tales of old integrity, inspires To deeds of worth, and fans his virtuous fires; I, no less partial to that noble art, Which knows each changing season to impart, Seek, by presenting pictures to your view, That former lov'd employment to renew;

Which

Which sweetly o'er the vacant fancy stole,
When Wilson's matchless canvass warm'd your soul;
Such as compos'd the subject of our talk,
When, side by side, we trod the social walk.

With diff'ring landscapes diff'rent tastes accord,
This loves the wood, and that the open sward;
Or spacious fields of gently rising down,
Or those whose surface yellow harvests crown;
Where fruitful Ceres cloath'd in plenty reigns,
And sleecy droves are seen, and shepherd swains;
Where oft the jolly hunters wake the morn,
With cheerful notes, and wind the echoing horn;
With jocund sound their mingling voices rise,
And thund'ring o'er the glebe, the courser slies;

B 2

Sidelong

Sidelong the sturdy ploughman views the chace,

Turning a stubborn soil, with steady pace;

Their speed nor lights his eye, nor warms his breast,

His business labour, and his pleasure rest.

How diff'rent these from Hampshire's winding shores;
Flat, sertile, shady, crown'd with pleasing bow'rs;
Where sweet enclosures vary all the ground,
Whose bursting blooms, and springing slow'rs abound;
And, little vex'd by storms, which scourge the deep,
Of swelling bays the gentle waters sweep,
Or slow each day with the returning hours,
To bathe old Portchester's romantic tow'rs.

Yet sep'rate beauties each of these may boast; As may the beetling cliff, the rocky coast,

Where

Where jutling headlands part the driving wave,
And constant tides refreshing caverns lave.

Some love the dusky moor, and heath forlorn,
Whose unprolific nature seems to mourn;
While others joy the treach'rous bog to view;
And the rank marshes have admirers too.

For me, my foul delights to wander there,
Where nodding forests fan the peaceful air;
Whose leafy honours climb the mountain's side,
And gain its summit, with a giant stride;
Spread their green bosoms to the rising day,
To meet its radiance, and imbibe its ray;
Then melt in dews, draw the soft flow'rets forth,
And seed those beauteous children of the earth.

Thefe

These scenes I love---uncultur'd scenes like these,
Where wood-crown'd hills my roving fancies please;
While, far beneath, unnumber'd pastures lie,
And a smooth lake reflects the azure sky.

How fweet it is, to mark the deep'ning shade,
By varying forms enchantingly display'd.
The ancient trunk, low stooping to the ground,
By the blind ivy clasp'd in volumes round;
The graceful bandage of the pendant vine,
The waving cypress, and the nodding pine;
The lime sweet-scented, or the holly bright,
The tow'ring poplar trembling at her height;
The elm majestic, bending to the wind,
The beech wide-shooting, and her polish'd rind;

The

The healthy chesnut's mass, and clust'ring bloom, Or the white-branching birch athwart the gloom; All these, or each, as swift the seasons fly, In groups, or separate, delight the eye: But most the oak's broad venerable head Affords my foul a pleasure mix'd with dread; In spring the nightingale's belov'd retreat, In summer pleasant, as in autumn sweet; Ever the refuge of the weak and fair, The painter's idol, and the prince's care. Ah best of trees, and emblem of the blest! Like virtue, still in native grandeur drest; Strong to protect, and fruitful to sustain, The shelter, food, and riches of the plain!

Nor less I joy, at parting day, to trace The fun-gilt forms of Enfield's shaggy chace*; Elysian bow'rs! whose op'ning glades entice Our willing feet, a fairy paradise! Then, lost in mazes sweet, I frequent tread, Where branching canopies o'erhang my head; Or, pensive, wind along a gloomy pass, Whose envious shade consumes the scanty grass; While gadding vines and brakes its sides display, And the path widens as it leads to day; Till all around, on ev'ry side, is seen, Circled with varying plants, a level green, On whose enchanting bosom are display'd Clusters of humble flow'rs that love the shade.

There

^{*} Particularly alludes to that part of the Chace, which lies about two miles east of Enfield.

There fox-glove's purple spires surround each root, There the pale eglantine projects her shoot, Whose blushing tints with softest union meet, In ornamental neatness simply sweet: Above, in flaunting circles loosely born, Th' aspiring honeysuckle crowns the thorn; Like a gay mistress, innocently bold, She woos his straggling limbs with wanton fold; Whilst the dark ivy fring'd, and moss-clad vine, Grasp the distorted trunk with snaky twine. At our first step, the solitary jay Shoots thro' the glades, and thrids the wiry spray; Nor aught is heard but songs of birds around, And silence reigns for voice of human sound; Save when the ploughboy, with provincial squeal, Calls the stray cattle from their sav'ry meal.

O! how delightful here to sit unseen, Or stretch'd at ease upon the velvet green; As swift the hours unheeded roll along, To pore on Shakspeare's page, or Dryden's long; Imagine woodland nymphs of heav'nly make, Or the strong satyr bursting thro' the brake! Such as mild Gessner in his tales displays, In rude simplicity of ancient days. Ingenious Gessner!* who at once may claim The painter's honour, and the poet's fame; Nice to discriminate, and just to trace, Uniting strength with ease, and truth to grace. Here, at each turn, the various charms we find, Of RUYSDALE, CUYP, and WATERLOO, combin'd:

* Gessner of Zurich.

Men, who ran nature's virgin fancies thro',
And faithful all her living graces drew;
Nor e'er, with rash licentiousness of taste,
Her decent garment wantonly displac'd;
View well their works, their slightest touches hoard,
For these with nature liv'd in sweet accord.

Now shift the scene, and let us view a while,

The river-prospects of this favour'd isle.

And sirst, because the fairest of our stores,

Smooth Thames' gay borders, and delightful shores;

Thames, whose soft windings no obstructions vex;

Thames, whose smooth currents mark the gentler sex;

For female still to me the streams appear,

Thro' all the varying scasons of the year:

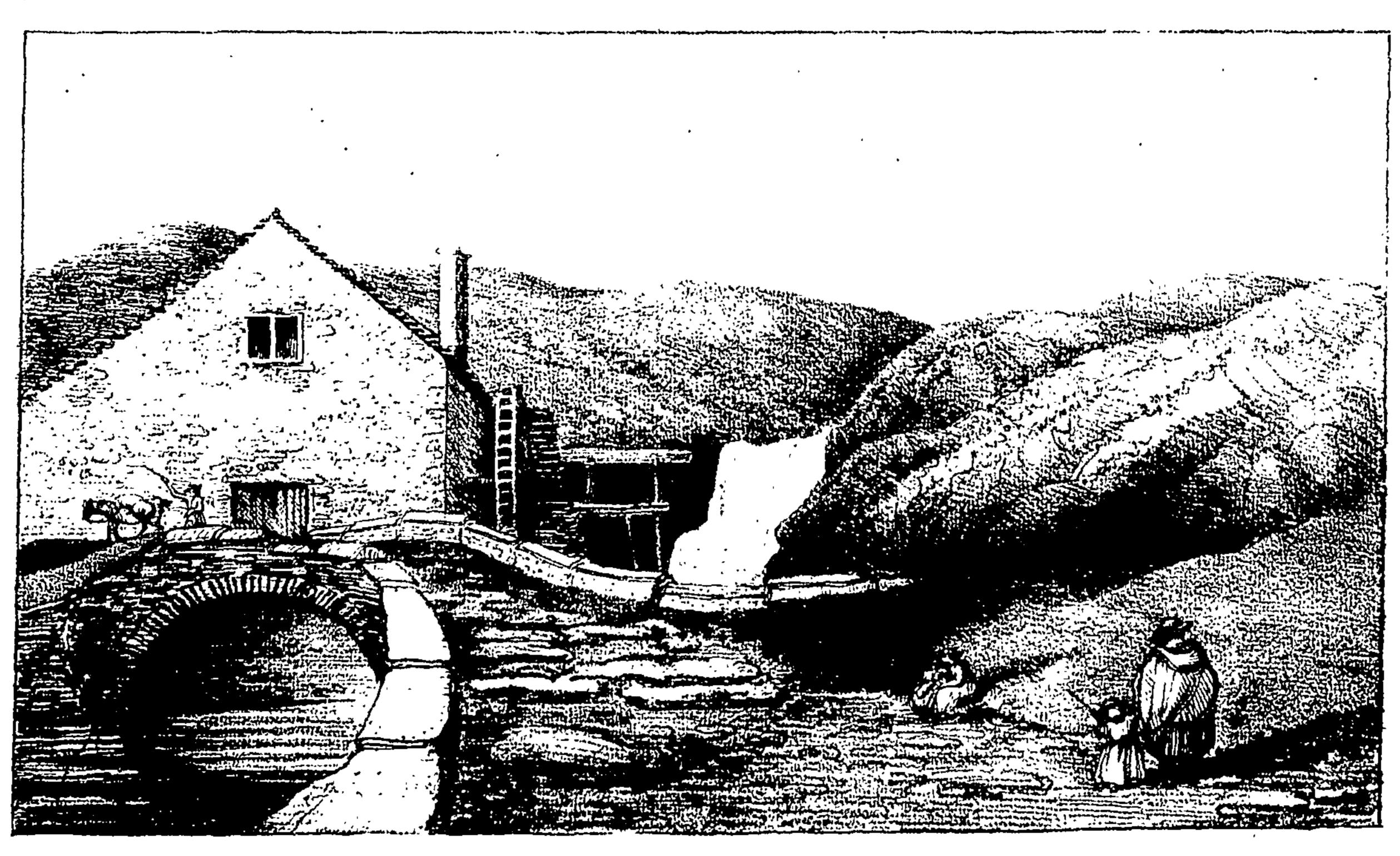
The

The flow'rs of ipring adorn her graffy vest, Summer's rich harvests wave around her breast; Mild autumn's mellow fruits confess her care, And clust'ring woods defend from winter's air. Thus do the circling moons the sex betray; Should FATHER THAMES be thus unfitly gay? Or suit these epithets with aged pow'rs, Fruitful, transparent, lucid, deck'd with flow'rs? Nor can I yield the male should be combin'd, With aught that bears the name of river kind; Ocean alone appears the wat'ry male, And all the fresh'ning streams his gay serail; Like gentle females, coyly first they trace Their winding banks; then flow with steady pace, Till, grown mature, they rush to his embrace.

But fay, my friend, will critic laws excuse
These novel fancies of a free-born muse?
It may be not; yet still this truth I know,
From use and habit half their maxims slow;
And all I boast is, simply to impart
A few slight sketches undisguis'd by art;
To stir your mind with traits from nature caught,
And rouse remembrance by exciting thought;
To call forth native character, whose voice
Loudly proclaims that all depends on choice;
As those who truly study can descry,
Up from the tinted plaister to the sky.

The crazy tow'r, with moss-incrusted head, The streaky marl-pit. or the ill-propp'd shed; Th' unequal bark, with stretching ivy bound, The blossom'd hedge, with roving tendrils crown'd; The giddy mill, that whirls with rapid course, The riling stream, that renovates its force; The ravin deep embost with many a bush, Thro' which discolour'd waters wildly rush; The rustic cottage, deck'd with straggling vines, And the flow wreathing brook's eccentric lines; Tho' simple all, yet each, if well exprest, Possesses pow'r to touch a feeling breast; And men of taste in this one point unite, To view such objects with confirm'd delight. This feeling REMBRANT knew, of skill confest, And of Batavian landscapes chose the best. Herein disclosing as much taste to view, As HE, who Latium's smiling pastures drew.

Grand



. 1. Hill near-Polyelly, drawn Seleked by G.

Grand as Poussin, to whom ev'n nature yields,
And great as Rosa from Calabrian fields.

O Taste! thou sure unerring guide to same,
Without whose insluence talents lead to shame;
Devoid of thee, tho' fashion yield them place,
Our labours sink to slow, but sure, disgrace;
Which, rein'd by reason, and with virtue nurst,
Of all created beings forms the first;
Whence life's best ornaments and honours spring,
That gives distinction by distinguishing;
Pow'r of the soul, whose influence all confess,
The polish'd garden, or the wilderness;
Whose wond'rous sitness makes thy nature known,
As well around the cottage as the throne;

Who.

Who, blending kindred forms, and chasing strife, Walk'st with complacent majesty through life: Taste! be my goddess, all accomplish'd maid! Sitting with Genius calmly in the shade, Oft bring thy graceful footsteps to my view; Where Vinci painted, and where Julio drew; 1. Where Michael's giant genius warms thy breast, Or RAPHAEL clasps thee in his arms comprest. Oh! had my fortunes led me to that coast Where Grecian arts exist, tho' Rome's be lost; And of its native honours dispossest, Taste only rears her ever blooming crest; Where just Etrurian, and Athenian forms, Delight the lover, and the artist warms; Then had I trac'd the fountain whence they came, And pass'd my days amid the seats of same:

all The came to pop.

Still

Still should the goddess, in a fickle mood, Who seldom flatters where she is not woo'd, With pleasing wealth obliterate the past, And give me independence at the last; Grateful I'll travel to that distant seat, For which my bounding heart so long has beat, Naples' broad bay, whose undulating wave Chafes the smooth bosom of each sun-gilt cave; Or, fann'd by cool refreshing breezes, plays In golden lines beneath his soften'd rays; Naple's wide bay, where palaces arise, Crown'd with fair islands, blest with cloudless skies, Where Baia's fields present a length'ning green, And proud Vesuvius terminates the scene. Naple's I'll feek, with fond affections warm, Where ev'ry element contends to charm;

And should Eliza, gentle, good, and fair,

She, whom my inmost thoughts adopt, be there;

And those, who know my heart, my plans approve,

Then, blest with friendship, competence, and love,

As years roll on, remark each changing scene,

And pity those, who tinge their hours with spleen.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

A

POEM

ON THE

LANDSCAPES OF GREAT-BRITAIN.

PART II.

BOLD is the man that dares attempt a rhyme,
Where tasteful talents are almost a crime;*

* The Author refers to two or three wretched individuals, on whom, at the period of writing, he had the misfortune to be dependent, and who, as he fears is but too often the case among mere men of business, endeavoured to render his liberal pursuits an obstacle to his advancement in life. The meanest of them having paid the debt of nature, shall not be named; the others are too callous or too ignorant to feel such gentle strokes as these; but as the situation is very common, he will not suppress the lines.

D 2 And,

And, trade exalted, with abhorrence views One only commerce, commerce with the muse. Yet once again, my foul, as yet untam'd, Break from the bonds necessity had fram'd; And, as a slave, with social thoughts possest, To meet his friend, contracts the hour of rest; Walks all unseen to execute his plan, And, in those moments, seels himself a man; So, when loud clamour with the day is flown, And evening brings me seasons of my own; When, stretch'd at ease within my humble cot, Each busy care that vex'd me is forgot; Still, calm, compos'd, and satisfied at heart, I woo the fong, or ply my fav'rite art: Then, wrapt in cool contempt of wealthy names, My bosom opens, and my spirit flames.

O! could those fools, who born to fortune, know No sprightly fancy, feel no secret glow; Or those, whom knavery, with supple knee, Well-feign'd respect, and winning flattery, Teaches to smile, and smile, with ceaseless art, Wind round an honest man, and gain his heart; And like a serpent, with a shining face, Wriggle, at last, to confidence and place: Could those behold me, in such hours as these, Richly contented, satisfied with ease; Could they conceive what dignity belongs To patience, smiling at detected wrongs; Straight they would ficken with averted eye, And disappointed, curse their gods, and die.

But turn my numbers to the theme ye fought, Nor fing of beings, scarcely worth a thought. Revive the welcome, pleasing task anew, Wave the white quill around, and bring to view (Where sportive fancy revels uncontroll'd) The torrents' rapid stream from mountains roll'd; Whose roaring waters, in a vortex flung, With dark and melancholy boughs o'erhung, Boiling, shoot upwards, from unfathom'd caves, And flow in broken forms of frothy waves. The troubl'd Severn thus, with devious course, Rolls in strong volumes from her mountain source; A thousand beauteous streams as yet unsung, Confess the haughty parent whence she sprung; A thousand meads, in everlasting green, Fed with her flowing bounties, own their queen;

While

While she, from ev'ry hill, her strength supplies,
Till, greatly wealthy, to the sea she slies,
Meets his broad wave, her gather'd streams to crown,
And sweetly yielding, pours her waters down.

Nor less her sister 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 the surface glow.
Fair healthful streams! a mighty, matchless pair!
Strong as your Cameria's sons, sweet as her fair;

Like

Like them, when thwarted, turbid, and enrag'd, Like them, tho' foon excited, foon affwag'd; Lovely in anger, beautiful in storms, And proudly conscious of unrivall'd forms: Yes, British females, yes, to you belong The earliest blossoms of my youthful song: The arching brows, the hazle-rolling eye, The open forehead, mouth of crimson dye; The clust'ring auburn locks of burnish'd glow, That kiss your ivory shoulders as they flow; The snowy whiteness of the swelling chest, Courting the eye, and suing to be prest; Cheeks, where the little loves delighted dwell, And lips, beyond what mortal lips can tell; All these are yours; and yours, ah more desired! Virtue, by rose-cheek'd modesty, attir'd;

Love, faithful love! the animated foul, And rich fertility to crown the whole.

With one of these, sweet-blooded chary maids,
To measure Clifden's walks, or Piercfield's shades,
Tasting soft converse from her syren tongue,
With all one's youthful nerves to pleasure strung;
Know you, my friend, a more delightful way
To speed the moments of a summer's day?
Or yield our modern modes, which time destroy,
So sweet, so solid, so sublime a joy?
Piercfield!* the sound still vibrates in mine ear,
Thy solemn mazes, still to mem'ry dear,

* PIERCFIELD, the late seat of VALENTINE MORRIS, Esq. is situated two miles from Chepstow, in Monmouthshire, and is indisputably the finest spot for natural beauties in this island. The owner's hospitality, it is said, soon deprived him of his residence.

E Rush

Rush on my fancy with renew'd delight,

And all thy varying foliage bursts to sight!

Here nature heaps the garden's wond'rous mound,

Here rears the windy cliffs tremendous bound;

Affords the fertile soil a rich supply,

And leads the windings of the graceful Wye:

Here nature feeds the verdure, points the views,

Whilst art, her handmaid, soberly pursues;

Supports her sacred train, divides the groves,

And, at due distance, with discretion moves.

O NATURE! hear the humblest of thy sons,
Whose blood, uncheck'd by soul intemp'rance, runs;
Who loves thy precepts, owns thy gentle sway,
And, by thy rules unerring, shapes his way;

Grant

Grant me, dear goddess, whether doom'd to bear The city's smoaky, health-destroying air; Or should some future accident allot A decent competence, and choice of spot; Grant me to find, in all thy wide domain, A seat where none disturbs thy quiet reign: Where no rich miscreant, fatally misplac'd, Narrows thy bounties by perverted taste; Lifts the sharp sounding axe among thy trees; (The fancied haunts of nymphs and dryades) And, with remorfeless ignorance and rage, Fells in a day the product of an age. Not so thy tenant, Piercfield, he, with care, Spread thy luxuriant shoots, and learnt to spare; Ah! cruel fate! that he whose bounteous hand, Dealt smiling plenty o'er thy grateful land;

Who

Who made thy venerable groves his care, That he, who nurst thy shades, should not be there.

Now, long neglected, in thy grass grown walks,
The wily fox unnoticed boldly stalks;
And, in the cool alcoves desir'd retreat,
The timid hare usurps the vacant seat.

To happier CLIFDEN* turn my muse, and sing Its wood-cloath'd winding hill, its stream, its spring.

A

^{*}CLIFDEN gives a fine specimen of the magnificent style 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 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 sew 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,

A wond'rous spring, with glades encompass'd round,
Whose rising waters yield a murm'ring sound;
High overhanging, nodding woods ascend,
Around, pale waving willows graceful bend;
Beneath, a dazied carpet sweetly blows,
And friendly seats invite to cool repose:
While Thames unruffl'd glides with transcient gleam,
Kis'd by the bending boughs that drink the stream.

Yet what are these, cries Fancy, what are these, (Tho' plann'd by princes in luxurious ease)

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 sace of nature with discriminate delight.

Compar'd

Compar'd with Cambria's wild untravell'd hills Worn with the waters of a thousand rills; Where torrents thunder down on ev'ry side, And subterraneous streams in silence glide? There barren rocks and shelving ridges frown, Whence ev'ry winter rolls a fragment down; There melancholy pools the vallies fill, Or cultivation climbs the topmost hill; And, till aspiring mountains part the skies, Meadows, fields, forests, in succession rise: How Cluyds laughing vale her wealth displays, Where Dee wide-rushing thro' her verdure strays; Roars in Llangollen's wild romantic feat, And bathes, with dingy wave, the Berwin's feet?

Matchless

Matchles Llangollen!* whose neglected charms

Are left to cottages and straggling farms;

For save Irene's friendly tasteful pair,

No gentle tenants deem them worth their care.

It was not thus, when on the mountain's brow,

Dinas'* proud battlements look'd down below;

It was not thus when grac'd with ladies' bow'rs,

Wit, valour, beauty, fill'd those cloud-capt tow'rs;

Then in each chamber flow'd the festive bowl,

Then the harp's merry tinkling cheer'd the soul;

^{*} LLANGOLLEN (pronounced CLANGOTHLIN), a village not far from WYN-STAY, which, although furrounded every way by the most romantic walks and rides, and healthily situated, has not been made the residence of any genteel people, except Miss Butler, and Miss Ponsonby, who, a few years ago, it is said, came from Ireland for that purpose.

^{*} CASTLE-DINAS-BRAN, or CROW-CASTLE, of which Mr. PENNANT gives some curious particulars in his Welch Tour.

And, as Myfanvy Vechan tript along,
Pale am'rous Hoel breath'd his love-sick song.
But now, of ev'ry social charm berest,
(Not e'en a vestige of thy greatness left)
To travelling winds, and blasting storms, a prey,
In the last stages of a slow decay;
Scarce of thy mould'ring walls enough remain,
To screen the shepherd from the driving rain.

Yet these are silent scenes, my friend, which still

Assist the painter, and excite his skill.

In the lone courts of Cheptow's ivy'd bow'rs,

Near Conway's, Kennilworth's, or Ludlow's tow'rs;

Oft the mild artist sits so long alone,

That birds approaching deem him turn'd to stone;

Lost in the pleasures of a pensive mood,

Forgets his nature, and neglects his food;

Nor end his labours till, with dusky stole,

Night drops her sable curtain o'er the whole.

Then in the grated chamber's dull retreat,

Some musing poet's pacing footsteps beat,

Where as the moon's unequal shadows fall,

His mutt'ring image glides along the wall.

How strong the fancy works on such a spot:

(No legend old or school-boy tale forgot),

First in the quickly-teeming bosom springs

The thought of captive maids, or murder'd kings;

Next proud usurpers, and intemp'rate hosts;

Then the swift rushing of unquiet ghosts;

Till

Till half affrighted from the thought we turn,
And bid the light-foot faries leave the fern:
They come, they gambol on the dazy'd green,
And fill the unfully'd mind with forms ferene.

But rest my hand, and check th' excursive tale,

Lest the lines languish, and attention fail.

Which of our country's frugal charms remain,

To shade the paper, or the canvas stain;

Tho' rude my notes, and slight my lyre be strung,

Which of our country's charms remain unsung?

The thymey hills, where slocks and shepherds rove,

The flow'ry pasture, and the shady grove;

The

The gushing rill, the torrent's rapid tide, The winding streams by shallow brooks supply'd; The filent greenwood's melancholy gloom, Where infects flutter, and where buds perfume; The naked rock, th' inhospitable moor; The roaring surges, and the sounding shore: Tho' rude my notes, and slight my lyre be strung; Each, as the muse inspir'd, my voice has sung. And if these traits, for that alone design'd, Recall the face of Albion to your mind; If, as the friendly numbers artless flow, Some rural features in description glow: Enough for me---for reason long has taught That, when the lab'ring foul is overwrought,

When

When pale with studious care, and close restraint,
The head is weary, and the heart is faint:
Then, if the rural song with ardour burns,
The mind relaxes, and its spring returns.

FINIS.

15 JY (30)

Of this Poem a very small number has been printed, and some of the Etchings laid aside that were intended for it, on account of the Author's Dissidence of success, it being his first essay in printing. Should it meet with the approbation of the judicious, it will then be reprinted, with Views of each of the Scenes mentioned in the Poem, from his original Drawings.