

what at a distance looks like moss, but which, on nearer inspection, turns out to be a mass of wilderness foliage. Not a house, not an inhabitant is to be seen. The only denizens of the place are the wild animals, which fly at our approach, and hide themselves in the thicket. In the other case, the hill is no loftier, but its proportions are better seen by comparison with objects of a different cast. A clearing has been made of trees too numerous for use, encumbering rather than beautifying the soil. The sunny slope has been converted into arable land, "the forest is become a fruitful field," crops of various kinds indicate the progress of labour, and hold out hopes of future wealth. A house is built; the whole spot assumes at once a habitable look; horses, oxen, poultry, pigs, and dogs, are discernible; indications to the eye, of labour, food, produce, skill, provision for the winter, and defence. A road is marked out, the symbol of communication, fellowship and intelligence, a neighbourhood begins to grow, a school house is built, a little spire rears its modest head, and intimates devotion to the great Father and Guardian of all. Shall I be pardoned for saying, that last, but not least, even a parson appears, riding to see a sick brother or sister, baptize a child, or marry a neighbour.

Thus view this same hill under these two different aspects, and how different is the feeling of the mind; produced by the soothing influence of association, which under the same heads I have enumerated, fills the mind with some degree of satisfaction, and insinuates a larger measure of hope. If then, taste even in natural objects, depend so much on association, it is obvious that good taste implies a selection of the best objects within our reach, by a careful study of the past, and a judicious reference to the present state of knowledge.

You will not, perhaps, be displeased, if I make a few brief remarks on the manner in which the history of the past may be employed. We are all influenced by the past in a far greater degree than we are willing to allow, but we must remember that the past history of mankind is a treasure given us by God for our present improvement. In referring to this history we ought to endeavour to form a cautious, charitable, and discriminating judgment, and we should be especially on our guard against two errors, equally pernicious, a *wholesale condemnation* and a *slavish imitation* of past ages.

To refer to the first, our ancestors and the ancestors of other nations, were men of like passions, beset by like temptations, and possessed of like virtues as ourselves, and in many respects neither much better, nor much worse. For the political institutions, or religious errors of their times, they were not wholly responsible, nor on the other hand, entirely irresponsible. But