

A VISIT TO HADDON HALL, DERBYSHIRE, IN 1838.

BY MRS. HOFLAND.

WHOEVER has visited that romantic district of Derbyshire, denominated "the Peak," whether in search of the picturesque scenery, for which it is justly celebrated, or been sojourners at Matlock or Baxton, for the purpose of regaining health, will have heard of this truly Baronial Hall, and most probably seen it. To them it may be pleasant to retrace their steps, and recall their feelings upon that occasion, and to those who have not had an opportunity hitherto, we may furnish additional reasons for finding one. Whoever has leisure for a tour, and taste for the beauties of nature, and the recollections attached to "olden times," should add this gratification to their stock of innocent and salubrious enjoyments.

Our drive towards Haddon lay through Abbey-dale, a beautiful valley, enriched by the remains of Beauchief Abbey, which forms now a chapel of ease to the parish of Totley. The stones of the monastery which was built in expiation of the murder of Thomas-a-Becket, by Robert Fitz-Ranulph, were employed in building Beauchief Hall, an extensive mansion, built in the style termed now the Elizabethan, and which, peering from amidst woods and crowning a bold eminence, is striking in effect.

But the rich valley and the cultivated lands, were soon past, and Derbyshire in its characteristic wastes of boundless moors, and rocky masses, succeeded—the winds blew cold even on one of the very hottest days of this hot summer, and although the sun shone brightly on many a hillock covered with the brilliant purple heath, for which this mountainous district is remarkable, shawls and cloaks were in requisition with all of us. We found, however, "beauty in the lap of horror," for many a crystal stream meandered through the gorse and heather; many a bright-eyed moorfowl started his wild brood, for his day of fate was yet a week distant; and the light clouds whose soft shadows form a peculiar charm in all mountain scenery, gave us that rich variety of light and shade which atones for the absence of objects more strictly beautiful, while the grandeur of these rocky solitudes are aided by their effects.

We have passed the Alp-like moors, caught a splendid view of Chatsworth, on whose richly-

colored walls the sun is shining gloriously in his morning radiance, and are hastening down the hill to Bakewell, the most picturesque town even of this romantic country, but certainly much injured as to appearance, by the loss of its church tower removed within a year or two.

The vale of Haddon now lies before us, watered by the river Wye—surely the most whimsical of all streams, for like a shining serpent, it winds in a thousand sinuosities through this whole valley, which now, green as an emerald, shows its silver current to advantage. On the right, are the Haddon pastures, spotted with countless herds of cattle, to the left, towering trees and occasionally masses of rock hem in the luxurious paradise watered as by the rivers of Eden. Two miles from Bakewell have brought us to Haddon Hall, towards which we ascend by a road, not trodden as of yore "by seven score servants" and their doughty lord, by numerous visitants with their trains, and wandering pilgrims with their claims—the mighty mansion, with its wide halls and numerous chambers, is now untenanted, though not dilapidated, and still magnificent.

We entered under the guidance of a youth who we understood to be the gamekeeper's son, in which capacity his ancestors have served the owners of Haddon for three hundred and eighteen years; as certain pictures testify. Passing through a strong portal, we found ourselves in a square court, surrounded by the Hall and its offices, including the chapel, which has been formerly very splendid, the seats being enriched by gilt mouldings, and the windows by painted glass—in one place we were shown a buff coat and boots, formerly worn by the sturdy vassals whose service was often that of soldiers.

We now entered the great entrance, and taking but little notice of a Norman altar, which is nevertheless mentioned by Camden and Fuller, proceeded to a large dining-hall, which like most of the other rooms, was floored with oak that grew upon the estate, and which is singularly beautiful. We then ascended a massive staircase, and were ushered into a room which runs the whole length of the south quadrangle, being one hundred and ten feet long, and lighted by three bay windows of magnificent dimensions. The room is completely pannelled with oak, and orna-