

and practical arrange-
 thing to amuse the
 nt in a room which
 and had none of the
 did not care in the
 in, provided it had
 ott could write any
 m, with talk going
 nished Abbotsford,
 l noble rooms, but
 round it. Dickens
 ed and cheerful, and
 n his writing-table.
 urround ourselves,
 one, with whatever
 ble to our work. I
 yed in would be a
 tion, and so too
 s in Chatsworth or
 with a Philistine
 ar pictures or en-
 these things often
 our and occupy it
 e better for having
 e and occupy his
 hink it is a right
 d themselves with
 , not too orderly
 y be pleasant sur-
 e.

so valuable as a
 prospect. It is
 the eye when we

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leave off working, and Montaigne did wisely to have his study up in a tower from which he had extensive views. There is a well-known objection to extensive views as wanting in snugness and comfort, but this objection scarcely applies to the especial case of literary men. What we want is not so much snugness as relief, refreshment, suggestion, and we get these, as a general rule, much better from wide prospects than from limited ones. I have just alluded to Montaigne,—will you permit me to imitate that dear old philosopher in his egotism and describe to you the view from the room I write in, which cheers and amuses me continually? But before describing this, let me describe another of which the recollection is very dear to me and as vivid as a freshly-painted picture. In years gone by, I had only to look up from my desk and see a noble loch in its inexhaustible loveliness, and a mountain in its majesty. It was a daily and hourly delight to watch the breezes play about the enchanted isles, on the delicate silvery surface, dimming some clear reflection, or trailing it out in length, or cutting sharply across it with acres of rippling blue. It was a frequent pleasure to see the clouds play about the crest of Cruachan and Ben Vorich's golden head, grey mists that crept upwards from the valleys till the sunshine suddenly caught them and made them brighter than the snows they shaded. And the leagues and leagues of heather on the lower land to the southward that became like the aniline dyes of deepest purple and blue, when the sky was grey in the evening—all save one orange-streak! Ah, those were spectacles never to be forgotten, splendours of light and glory, and sadness of deepening gloom when the eyes grew moist in the twilight and secretly drank their tears.

PART XII.

LETTER

III.

*Montaigne's
private
study.*

*The author's
prospect
in the
Highlands.*