

*Sacra Telluris Theoria* of the other Barnett, there is a passage—omitted, however, in his own English translation of the work—in which he gives utterance to his sensations, when, from a particular spot he beheld a view of the Alps rising before him on the one hand, and on the other the Mediterranean sea spread beneath him. Nothing can be worthier of the magnificent appearance he describes than his language. But with the exception of this author, the poet Gray, if I am not mistaken, was the first English traveller whose published writings would belie an assertion, that, where precipitous rocks and mountains are mentioned at all, they are spoken of as objects of dislike and fear, and not of admiration. Even Gray himself, describing, in his *Journal*, the steep at the entrance of Borrowdale, expresses his terror in the language of Dante:—"Let us not speak of them, but look and pass on." In my youth, I lived some time in the vale of Keswick, under the roof of a shrewd and sensible woman, who more than once exclaimed in my hearing, "Bless me! folks are always talking about prospects: when I was young, there was never sic a thing named." In fact, our ancestors, as everywhere appears, in choosing the sites of their houses, looked only at shelter and convenience, especially of water, and often would place a barn or any other out-house directly in front of their habitations, however beautiful the landscape which their windows might otherwise have commanded. The first house that was built in the Lake district, for the sake of the beauty of the country, was the work of a Mr. English, who had travelled in Italy, and chose for his site, some eighty years ago, the great island of Windermere; but it was sold before the building was finished, and he showed how little he was capable of appreciating the character of the situation by setting up a length of high garden wall, as exclusive as it was ugly, almost close to the house. The nuisance was swept away when the late Mr. Curwen became the owner of this favoured spot. Mr. English was followed by Mr. Poekington, a native of Nottinghamshire, who played strange pranks by his buildings and plantations upon Vier's Island in Derwentwater, which his admiration, such as it was, of the country, and probably a wish to be a leader in a new fashion, had tempted him to purchase. But what has all this to do with the subject?—Why to show that a vivid perception of romantic scenery is neither inherent in mankind, nor a necessary consequence of even a comprehensive education. It is benignly ordained that green fields, clear blue skies, running streams of pure water, rich groves and woods, orchards, and all the ordinary varieties of rural nature,

should find an easy way to the affections of all men, and more or less so from early childhood till the senses are impaired by old age, and the sources of mere earthly enjoyment have in a great measure failed. But a taste beyond this, however desirable it may be that every one should possess it, is not to be implanted at once; it must be gradually developed both in nations and individuals. Rocks and mountains, torrents and wide-spread waters, and all those features of nature which go to the composition of such things as this part of England is distinguished for, cannot, in their finer relations to the human mind, be comprehended, or even very imperfectly conceived, without processes of culture, or even opportunities of observation, in some degree habitual. In the eye of thousands, and tens of thousands, (and happy for them it is so,) a rich meadow, with fat cattle grazing upon it, or the sight of what they could call a heavy crop of corn, is worth all that the Alps and the Pyrenees, in their utmost grandeur and beauty, could show to them; and, notwithstanding the grateful influence, as we have observed, of ordinary nature, and the productions of the fields, it is noticeable what trifling conventional prepossessions will, in common minds, not only preclude pleasure from the sight of natural beauty, but will even turn it into an object of disgust. "If I had to do with this garden," said a respectable person one day, "I would sweep away all the black and dirty stuff from that wall." The wall was backed by a bank of earth, and was exquisitely decorated with ivy, flowers, moss, and ferns, such as grow of themselves in like places; but the mere notion of fitness associated with a trim garden wall prevented, in this instance, all sense of the spontaneous bounty and delicate care of nature. In the midst of a small pleasure-ground, immediately below my house, rises a detached rock, equally remarkable for the ancient oaks that grow out of it, and the flowers and shrubs which adorn it. "What a nice place this would be," said a Manchester tradesman, pointing to the rock, "if that ugly lump were but out of the way." Men as little advanced in the pleasure which such objects give to others are so far from being rare, that they may be said fairly to represent a large majority of mankind. But as a more susceptible taste is undoubtedly a great acquisition, and has been spreading among us for some years, the question is, what means are most likely to be beneficial in extending its operation? And I have no hesitation in saying that the good is not to be obtained, by transferring at once uneducated persons in large bodies to particular spots, where the combinations of natural objects are such, as would afford the greatest pleasure to