

TRAITS OF AN ENGLISH WATERING PLACE.

In one of those strolls through different parts of the country in which I have so often indulged myself, and in which I have always found so much enjoyment from the varieties of scenery and character which they laid open to me, I once came upon a watering place on the coast that afforded me no small matter for a day or two's amusement. What could have been the cause of the setting up of such a place as a scene of fashionable resort, it would be difficult to tell, except that it possessed a most bounteous provision of two great articles in demand in the autumnal months in cities—salt water and fresh air, for which a thousand inconveniences would be endured. It was situated quite on a flat coast of a flat country, a few miles from one of its sea-ports, yet near enough to obtain speedily thence all those good things which hungry mortals require—and who are so hungry as people bathing in sea water, and imbibing sea air, and taking three times their usual exercise without being distinctly aware of it?

Strolling along the coast, I found a good hotel, with the usual marks of such an establishment about it. There were quantities of people loitering about the sands in front and in the garden, and other quantities looking out of the windows with the sashes up; some of them, particularly the ladies, holding colloquies out of the windows of upper stories with some of the strollers below; post-chaises and gigs, and shandray carts, standing here and there in the side scenes; a row of bathing-machines on the shore, awaiting the hour of the tide; and a loud noise of voices from a neighbouring bowling-green. The odours of roasting and baking that came from the hotel, were of the most inviting description; I inclined to take up my abode there for a few hours at least, but on entering, I found that as to obtaining a room, or a tithe of a room, or even a chair at the table of the ordinary, it was quite out of the question. "Lord bless you, sir," said the landlady, a woman of most surprising corporal dimensions, in a white gown, an orange-coloured neckerchief, and a large and very rosy face, as she stood before the bar, filling a whole width in the passage; "Lord bless you, sir, if you'd give me a

thousand golden guineas in a silken purse, I should not know where to put you. We've turned hundreds and hundreds of most genteel people away, that we have, within this very week, and the house is fit to burst now, it's so hugeous full. But you'll get accommodated at the town." "What town?" said I; "is there a town near?" "Why, town we call it, but it's the village, you know; it's Fastside here, not more than a mile off; if you follow the bank along the shore, you'll go straight to it. You can't miss it." Accordingly, following the raised embankment along the shore, I soon descried Fastside, a few scattered cottages, placed amongst the respective crofts and gardens, and here and there a farm-house, with its substantial array of ricks about it, denoting that the dwellers were well-off in the world. But I soon found that all the cottages and many of the farm-houses, had their boarders for the season, and that there was scarcely one but was full. I had the good luck to spy an equipage, and something like a departing group at the door of one of the cottages, and as it moved away, to find that I could have the use of two rooms, a parlour and chamber over it, if I liked to go to the expense. "Perhaps," said the neat cottage housewife, "as a single gentleman, you may not like to occupy so much room, for just at this season we charge rather high." "And pray," said I, "what may be the enormous price you are charging for these rooms, then?" "Seven shillings a-week each room, and half-a-crown for attendance," looking at me with an inquiring eye, as if apprehensive that I should be astounded at the sum. "What! the vast charge of sixteen and sixpence per week," I replied, smiling, "for two rooms and attendance?" "Yes," said the simple dame; "but then, you see, you will have to live besides, and it all comes to a good deal. But may be you are a gentleman that doesn't mind a trifle." Having assured her that there would, at all events, be no insupportable obstacle in her terms, I entered and took possession of two as rustic and nicely clean rooms as could be found under such a humble roof. I had taken a fancy to spend a few days, or a week at least there. It was a new scene, and peopled with new characters,