



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford

In Five Volumes

Walpole, Horace

London, 1798

On Modern Gardening

Nutzungsbedingungen

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-55700](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-55700)

ON
MODERN GARDENING.

Faint, illegible text at the top of the page, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.

Faint, illegible text in the middle section of the page.

MODERN GARDENING

Faint, illegible text below the title.

Faint, illegible text in the lower middle section.

Faint, illegible text at the bottom of the page.

libe of a common ware in all probability the earliest laws and gardens
well and better succeeded to the Pison and Euphrates. As testimony in-
crease the extent and the abundance of the garden.

But we may well believe, remained long in the limbo; and though
the generality of mankind form the most of words in their
own use, we have no reason to think that for many centuries the term garden
implied more than a kitchen-garden or orchard. When a Frenchman reads
of the garden of Paradise, he is not to suppose that he is to understand
it as a garden in the modern sense, but as a garden in the ancient sense.

MODERN GARDENING.

It is not to be a garden in the modern sense, but as a garden in the ancient sense.
that four of the largest rivers in the world were said to be in the garden
of Paradise. It is not to be a garden in the modern sense, but as a garden in the ancient sense.

GARDENING was probably one of the first arts that succeeded to that
of building houses, and naturally attended property and individual pos-
session. Culinary and afterwards medicinal herbs were the objects of every
head of a family: it became convenient to have them within reach, without
seeking them at random in woods, in meadows, and on mountains, as often
as they were wanted. When the earth ceased to furnish spontaneously all
these primitive luxuries, and culture became requisite, separate enclosures for
rearing herbs grew expedient. Fruits were in the same predicament, and
those most in use, or that demand attention, must have entered into and ex-
tended the domestic enclosure. The good man Noah, we are told, planted a
vineyard, drank of the wine, and was drunken, and every body knows the
consequences. Thus we acquired kitchen-gardens, orchards, and vineyards.
I am apprized that the prototype of all these sorts was the garden of Eden;
but as that Paradise was a good deal larger than any we read of afterwards,
being enclosed by the rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates, as every
tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food grew in it, and as two
other trees were likewise found there, of which not a slip or sucker remains,
it does not belong to the present discussion. After the fall, no man living
was suffered to enter into the garden; and the poverty and necessities of our
first ancestors hardly allowed them time to make improvements on their estates
in imitation of it, supposing any plan had been preserved. A cottage and a
slip of ground for a cabbage and a gooseberry-bush, such as we see by the
side

side of a common, were in all probability the earliest seats and gardens: a well and bucket succeeded to the Pison and Euphrates. As settlements increased, the orchard and the vineyard followed; and the earliest princes of tribes possessed just the necessaries of a modern farmer.

Matters, we may well believe, remained long in this situation; and though the generality of mankind form their ideas from the import of words in their own age, we have no reason to think that for many centuries the term *garden* implied more than a kitchen-garden or orchard. When a Frenchman reads of the garden of Eden, I do not doubt but he concludes it was something approaching to that of Versailles, with clipped hedges, berceaux, and trellis-work. If his devotion humbles him so far as to allow that, considering who designed it, there might be a labyrinth full of Æsop's fables, yet he does not conceive that four of the largest rivers in the world were half so magnificent as an hundred fountains full of statues by Girardon. It is thus that the word *garden* has at all times passed for whatever was understood by that term in different countries. But that it meant no more than a kitchen-garden or orchard for several centuries, is evident from those few descriptions that are preserved of the most famous gardens of antiquity.

That of Alcinous, in the *Odyssey*, is the most renowned in the heroic times. Is there an admirer of Homer who can read his description without rapture; or who does not form to his imagination a scene of delights more picturesque than the landscapes of Tinian or Juan Fernandez? Yet what was that boasted Paradise with which

the gods ordain'd

To grace Alcinous and his happy land?

POPE.

Why, divested of harmonious Greek and bewitching poetry, it was a small orchard and vineyard, with some beds of herbs and two fountains that watered them, enclosed within a quickset hedge. The whole compass of this pompous garden enclosed—four acres.

Four acres was th' allotted space of ground,
Fenc'd with a green enclosure all around.

The trees were apples, figs, pomegranates, pears, olives, and vines.

Tall thriving trees confefs'd the fruitful mould;
 The redd'ning apple ripens into gold.
 Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'erflows,
 With deeper red the full pomegranate glows.
 The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear,
 And verdant olives flourish round the year.

* * * * *

Beds of all various herbs, for ever green,
 In beauteous order terminate the scene.

Alcinous's garden was planted by the poet, enriched by him with the fairy gift of eternal summer, and no doubt an effort of imagination surpassing any thing he had ever seen. As he has bestowed on the same happy prince a palace with brazen walls and columns of silver, he certainly intended that the garden should be proportionably magnificent. We are sure therefore, that as late as Homer's age an enclosure of four acres, comprehending orchard, vineyard, and kitchen-garden, was a stretch of luxury the world at that time had never beheld.

The hanging gardens of Babylon were a still greater prodigy. We are not acquainted with their disposition or contents; but as they are supposed to have been formed on terrasses and the walls of the palace, whither soil was conveyed on purpose, we are very certain of what they were not; I mean they must have been trifling, of no extent, and a wanton instance of expence and labour. In other words, they were what sumptuous gardens have been in all ages till the present, unnatural, enriched by art, possibly with fountains, statues, balustrades, and summer-houses, and were any thing but verdant and rural.

From the days of Homer to those of Pliny, we have no traces to lead our guesses to what were the gardens of the intervening ages. When Roman authors, whose climate instilled a wish for cool retreats, speak of their enjoyments in that kind, they sigh for grottos, caves, and the refreshing hollows of mountains, near irriguous and shady founts; or boast of their porticos, walks of planes, canals, baths, and breezes from the sea. Their gardens are never mentioned as affording shade and shelter from the rage of the dog-star. Pliny has left us descriptions of two of his villas. As he used his Laurentine villa for

his winter retreat, it is not surprizing that the garden makes no considerable part of the account. All he says of it is, that the gestatio or place of exercise, which surrounded the garden (the latter consequently not being very large), was bounded by a hedge of box, and, where that was perished, with rosemary; that there was a walk of vines, and that most of the trees were fig and mulberry, the soil not being proper for any other sorts.

On his Tuscan villa he is more diffuse, the garden makes a considerable part of the description—and what was the principal beauty of that pleasure-ground? Exactly what was the admiration of this country about threescore years ago; box-trees cut into monsters, animals, letters, and the names of the master and the artificer. In an age when architecture displayed all its grandeur, all its purity, and all its taste; when arose Vespasian's amphitheatre, the temple of Peace, Trajan's forum, Domitian's baths, and Adrian's villa, the ruins and vestiges of which still excite our astonishment and curiosity; a Roman consul, a polished emperor's friend, and a man of elegant literature and taste, delighted in what the mob now scarce admire in a college-garden. All the ingredients of Pliny's corresponded exactly with those laid out by London and Wise on Dutch principles. He talks of slopes, terrasses, a wilderness, shrubs methodically trimmed, a marble bason*, pipes spouting water, a cascade falling into the bason, bay-trees alternately planted with planes, and a straight walk, from whence issued others parted off by hedges of box, and apple-trees, with obelisks placed between every two. There wants nothing but the embroidery of a parterre, to make a garden in the reign of Trajan serve for a description of one in that of king William †. In one passage above, Pliny seems to have conceived that natural irregularity might

* The English gardens described by Hentzner in the reign of Elizabeth are exact copies of those of Pliny. In that at Whitehall was a sundial and a jet-d'eau, which on turning a cock spouted out water and sprinkled the spectators. In lord Burleigh's at Theobald's were obelisks, pyramids, and circular porticos, with cisterns of lead for bathing. At Hampton-court the garden walls were covered with rosemary; a custom, he says, very common in England. At Theobald's was a labyrinth also; an ingenuity I shall mention presently to have been frequent in that age.

† Dr. Plot, in his Natural history of Oxfordshire, p. 380, seems to have been a great admirer of trees carved into the most heterogeneous forms, which he calls *topiary works*, and quotes one Laurebergius for saying that the English are as expert as most nations in that kind of sculpture; for which Hampton-court was particularly remarkable. The doctor then names other gardens that flourished with animals and castles, formed *arte topiaria*, and above all a wren's nest that was capacious enough to receive a man to sit on a seat made within it for that purpose.

be a beauty: In opere urbanissimo, says he, subita velut illati ruris imitatio. Something like a rural view was contrived amidst so much polished composition. But the idea soon vanished, lineal walks immediately enveloped the flight scene, and names and inscriptions in box again succeeded to compensate for the daring introduction of nature*.

In the paintings found at Herculaneum are a few traces of gardens, as may be seen in the second volume of the prints. They are small square enclosures formed by trellis-work, and espaliers †, and regularly ornamented with vases, fountains and careatides, elegantly symmetrical, and proper for the narrow spaces allotted to the garden of a house in a capital city. From such I would not banish those playful waters that refresh a sultry mansion in town, nor the neat trellis, which preserves its wooden verdure better than natural greens exposed to dust. Those treillages in the gardens at Paris, particularly on the Boulevard, have a gay and delightful effect. They form light corridors, and transpicious arbours through which the sun-beams play and chequer the shade, set off the statues, vases and flowers, that marry with their gaudy hotels, and

* But though Pliny only caught an ideal glimpse of a possibility that nature might be no bad decoration; yet there had been a prince, who amidst all his wildness of extravagant expense (one of his slightest faults) had discovered real taste; and had also discovered two men of real genius who were capable of executing his most daring ideas: and his ideas had anticipated the principles of modern gardening, and bespoken as accompaniment to the most costly of all palaces ground laid out with all the freedom of nature. How will my readers be surprised to hear that Nero himself was the prince in question! The fact is indubitable, is recorded by a most admired classic, and yet has never been noticed, till a gentleman † who reads and writes with the penetrating observation of Tacitus, furnished me with the following quotation from book xv. of the Annals of that masterly author. Taciti Annal. lib. xv. near the middle. Ceterum Nero usus est patriæ ruinis, extruxitque

domum, in qua haud perinde gemmæ et aurum miraculo essent, solita pridem et luxu vulgata; quam arva, et stagna, et, in modum solitudinum, hinc silvæ, inde aperta spatia, et prospectus. Magistris et machinatoribus Severo et Celere, quibus ingenium et audacia erat etiam quæ natura denegavisset per artem tentare.

“ Besides, Nero availed himself of the ruins of his country, and built a house in which gems and gold, formerly of usual and common luxury, were not so much to be admired as fields and lakes; and, as in deserts, here woods, there open spaces and prospects. The masters and designers being Severus and Celer; men possessed of genius and courage to attempt by art even what nature had denied.”

† At Warwick-castle is an ancient suit of arras, in which there is a garden exactly resembling these pictures of Herculaneum.

† Mr. Pinkerton.

X x x 2

fuit

suit the gallant and idle society who paint the walks between their parterres, and realize the fantastic scenes of Watteau and D'Urfey.

From what I have said, it appears how naturally and insensibly the idea of a kitchen-garden slid into that which has for so many ages been peculiarly termed a garden, and by our ancestors in this country distinguished by the name of a pleasure-garden. A square piece of ground was originally parted off in early ages for the use of the family : to exclude cattle, and ascertain the property, it was separated from the fields by a hedge. As pride and desire of privacy increased, the enclosure was dignified by walls ; and in climes where fruits were not lavished by the ripening glow of nature and soil, fruit-trees were assisted and sheltered from surrounding winds by the like expedient ; for the inundation of luxuries which have swelled into general necessities, have almost all taken their source from the simple fountain of reason.

When the custom of making square gardens enclosed with walls was thus established, to the exclusion of nature and prospect*, pomp and solitude combined to call for something that might enrich and enliven the insipid and unanimated partition. Fountains, first invented for use, which grandeur loves to disguise and throw out of the question, received embellishments from costly marbles, and at last, to contradict utility, tossed their waste of waters into air in spouting columns. Art, in the hands of rude man, had at first been made a succedaneum to nature ; in the hands of ostentatious wealth, it became the means of opposing nature ; and the more it traversed the march of the latter, the more nobility thought its power was demonstrated. Canals measured by the line were introduced in lieu of meandering streams, and terrasses were hoisted aloft in opposition to the facile slopes that imperceptibly unite the valley to the hill. Balustrades defended these precipitate and dangerous elevations, and flights of steps rejoined them to the subjacent flat from which the terrass had been dug. Vases and sculpture were added to these unnecessary balconies, and statues finished the lifeless spot with mimic representations of the excluded sons of men. Thus difficulty and expence were the constituent parts of those sumptuous and selfish solitudes ; and every improvement that was made, was but a step farther from nature. The tricks of water-works to wet the unwary,

* It was not uncommon, after the circumad- to recover it by raising large mounts of earth to
jacent country had been shut out, to endeavour peep over the walls of the garden.

not to refresh the panting spectator, and parterres embroidered in patterns like a petticoat, were but the childish endeavours of fashion and novelty to reconcile greatness to what it had forfeited on. To crown these impotent displays of false taste, the sheers were applied to the lovely wildness of form with which nature has distinguished each various species of tree and shrub. The venerable oak, the romantic beech, the useful elm, even the aspiring circuit of the lime, the regular round of the chesnut, and the almost moulded orange-tree, were corrected by such fantastic admirers of symmetry. The compass and square were of more use in plantations than the nurseryman. The measured walk, the quincunx, and the étoile imposed their unsatisfying sameness on every royal and noble garden. Trees were headed, and their sides pared away; many French groves seem green chests set upon poles. Seats of marble, arbours and summer-houses, terminated every vista; and symmetry, even where the space was too large to permit its being remarked at one view, was so essential, that, as Pope observed,

— each alley has a brother,
And half the garden just reflects the other.

Knots of flowers were more defensibly subjected to the same regularity. Leisure, as Milton expressed it,

In trim gardens took his pleasure.

In the garden of marshal de Biron at Paris, consisting of fourteen acres, every walk is buttoned on each side by lines of flower-pots, which succeed in their seasons. When I saw it, there were nine thousand pots of asters, or la reine Marguerite.

We do not precisely know what our ancestors meant by a bower: it was probably an arbour; sometimes it meant the whole frittered enclosure, and in one instance it certainly included a labyrinth. Rosamond's bower was indubitably of that kind, though whether composed of walls or hedges we cannot determine*. A square and a round labyrinth were so capital ingredients of a

* Drayton, in a note to his Epistle of Rosamond, says, her labyrinth was built of vaults under ground, arched and walled with brick and stone—but, as Mr. Gough observes, he gives no authority for that assertion. Vide Pref. to 2d edit. of British Topography, p. xxx. Such vaults might remain to Drayton's time, but did not prove that there had been no superstructure.
garden

garden formerly, that in Du Cerceau's architecture, who lived in the time of Charles IX. and Henry III. there is scarce a ground-plot without one of each. The enchantment of antique appellations has consecrated a pleasing idea of a royal residence, of which we now regret the extinction. Havering in the Bower, the jointure of many dowager queens, conveys to us the notion of a romantic scene.

In Kip's views of the seats of our nobility and gentry, we see the same tiresome and returning uniformity. Every house is approached by two or three gardens, consisting perhaps of a gravel-walk and two grass-plats, or borders of flowers. Each rises above the other by two or three steps, and as many walls and terrasses; and so many iron gates, that we recollect those ancient romances, in which every entrance was guarded by nymphs or dragons. At lady Orford's at Piddletown in Dorsetshire, there was, when my brother married, a double enclosure of thirteen gardens, each I suppose not much above an hundred yards square, with an enfilade of correspondent gates; and before you arrived at these, you passed a narrow gut between two stone terrasses, that rose above your head, and which were crowned by a line of pyramidal yews. A bowling-green was all the lawn admitted in those times, a circular lake the extent of magnificence.

This, like other silly fashions, which, begun without meaning, are frequently continued with as little, lasted down to the reign of king William, and fell in with the mechanic taste of the Dutch. There was a maze in lord Arlington's garden, on the site where is now the queen's house in St. James's park, thus celebrated in Latin verse by Charles Dryden in a volume of his father's Miscellanies. Vide Horti Arlingtoniani, vol. i. part ii. p. 273. 276.

Nec te præteream, tenebris quæ dives opacis
 Sylva vires, vento motis peramabilis umbris!
 Hic magnus labor ille et inextricabilis error,
 Per quem mille viis errantem Thesea duxit
 Ah nimis infelix per fila sequentia virgo!
 Securi hic tenero ludunt in gramine amantes,
 Nec reperire viam curant, ubi lumina Vesper
 Deficiente die accendit; sed Jongius ipsam
 Hic secum placidè cupiunt consumere noctem,
 Dum

Dum super arboreos modulans luscinia ramos
Dulce melos iterat, tenerosque invitat amores.

In the royal garden at Hampton-court, planted in William's reign, there still exists, to the delight of school-boys and to the admiration of country visitors, a specimen of those insipid ingenuities.

Yet though these and such preposterous inconveniencies prevailed from age to age, good sense in this country had perceived the want of something at once more grand and more natural. These reflections, and the bounds set to the waste made by royal spoilers, gave origin to parks. They were contracted forests, and extended gardens. Hentzner says, that according to Rous of Warwick the first park was that at Woodstock. If so, it might be the foundation of a legend that Henry II. secured his mistress in a labyrinth: it was no doubt more difficult to find her in a park than in a palace, when the intricacy of the woods and various lodges buried in covert might conceal her actual habitation.

It is more extraordinary, that having so long ago stumbled on the principle of modern gardening, we should have persisted in retaining its reverse, symmetrical and unnatural gardens. That parks were rare in other countries, Hentzner, who travelled over great part of Europe, leads us to suppose, by observing that they were common in England. In France they retain the name, but nothing is more different both in compass and disposition. Their parks are usually square or oblong enclosures, regularly planted with walks of chestnuts or limes, and generally every large town has one for its public recreation. They are exactly like Burton's court at Chelsea college, and rarely larger.

One man, one great man we had, on whom nor education nor custom could impose their prejudices; who, *on evil days though fallen, and with darkness and solitude compassed round*, judged that the mistaken and fantastic ornaments he had seen in gardens, were unworthy of the almighty hand that planted the delights of Paradise. He seems with the prophetic eye of taste [as I have heard taste well* defined] to have conceived, to have foreseen modern gardening; as lord Bacon announced the discoveries since made by

* By the great lord Chatham, who had a good taste himself in modern gardening, as he showed by his own villas in Enfield Chace and at Hayes.

experi-

experimental philosophy. The description of Eden is a warmer and more just picture of the present style than Claud Lorrain could have painted from Hagley or Stourhead. The first lines I shall quote exhibit Stourhead on a more magnificent scale.

Thro' Eden went a river large,
Nor chang'd his course, but thro' the shaggy hill
Pass'd underneath ingulph'd; for God had thrown
That mountain as his garden-mound, high rais'd
Upon the rapid current——

Hagley seems pictured in what follows,

which thro' veins
Of porous earth with kindly thirst updrawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Water'd the garden——

What colouring, what freedom of pencil, what landscape in these lines,

——from that sapphire fount the crisped brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendent shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
Flow'rs worthy of Paradise, which not *nice art*
In beds and curious knots, but *nature* boon
Pour'd forth profuse on hill and dale and plain,
Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
The *open field*, and where the unpierc'd shade
Imbrown'd the noon-tide bow'rs.—*Thus was this place*
A happy rural seat of various view.

Read this transporting description, paint to your mind the scenes that follow, contrast them with the savage but respectable terror with which the poet guards the bounds of his Paradise, fenced

——with the champain head
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,

Access

Access denied; and over head upgrew
 Insuperable height of loftiest shade,
 Cedar and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
 A sylvan scene, and, as the ranks ascend,
 Shade above shade, a woody theatre
 Of stateliest view——

and then recollect that the author of this sublime vision had never seen a glimpse of any thing like what he has imagined; that his favourite ancients had dropped not a hint of such divine scenery; and that the conceits in Italian gardens, and Theobald's and Nonfuch, were the brightest originals that his memory could furnish. His intellectual eye saw a nobler plan, so little did he suffer by the loss of sight. It sufficed him to have seen the materials with which he could work. The vigour of a boundless imagination told him how a plan might be disposed, that would embellish nature, and restore art to its proper office, the just improvement or imitation of it*.

It is necessary that the concurrent testimony of the age should swear to posterity that the description above quoted was written above half a century before the introduction of modern gardening, or our incredulous descendants will defraud the poet of half his glory, by being persuaded that he copied some garden or gardens he had seen—so minutely do his ideas correspond with the present standard. But what shall we say for that intervening half century who could read that plan and never attempt to put it in execution?

Now let us turn to an admired writer, posterior to Milton, and see how cold, how insipid, how tasteless is his account of what he pronounced a perfect garden. I speak not of his style, which it was not necessary for him to animate with the colouring and glow of poetry. It is his want of ideas, of imagination, of taste, that I censure, when he dictated on a subject that is capable of all the graces that a knowledge of beautiful nature can bestow. Sir William Temple was an excellent man; Milton, a genius of the first order.

* Since the above was written, I have found called *The rise and progress of the present taste in planting*, printed in 1767. Milton praised and Sir William Temple censured, on the same foundations, in a poem.

We cannot wonder that sir William declares in favour of parterres, fountains and statues, as necessary to break the sameness of large grass-plats, which he thinks have an ill effect upon the eye, when he acknowledges that he discovers fancy in the gardens of Alcinous. Milton studied the ancients with equal enthusiasm, but no bigotry, and had judgment to distinguish between the want of invention and the beauties of poetry. Compare his Paradise with Homer's garden, both ascribed to a celestial design. For sir William, it is just to observe, that his ideas centred in a fruit-garden. He had the honour of giving to his country many delicate fruits, and he thought of little else than disposing them to the best advantage. Here is the passage I proposed to quote; it is long, but I need not make an apology to the reader for entertaining him with any other words instead of my own.

“The best figure of a garden is either a square or an oblong, and either upon a flat or a descent: they have all their beauties, but the best I esteem an oblong upon a descent. The beauty, the air, the view makes amends for the expence, which is very great in finishing and supporting the terraces-walks, in levelling the parterres, and in the stone-stairs that are necessary from one to the other.

“The perfectest figure of a garden I ever saw, either at home or abroad, was that of Moor-park in Hertfordshire, when I knew it about thirty years ago. It was made by the countess of Bedford, esteemed among the greatest wits of her time, and celebrated by doctor Donne; and with very great care, excellent contrivance, and much cost; but greater sums may be thrown away without effect or honour, if there want sense in proportion to money, or *if nature be not followed*, which I take to be the great rule in this, and perhaps in every thing else, as far as the conduct not only of our lives, but our governments.” [We shall see how *natural* that admired garden was.]

“Because I take* the garden I have named to have been in all kinds the most beautiful and perfect, at least in the figure and disposition, that I have ever seen, I will describe it for a model to those that meet with such a situation, and are above the regards of common expence. It lies on the side of a hill, upon which the house stands, but not very steep. The length of the

* This garden seems to have been made after the plan laid down by lord Bacon in his 4th essay; to which, that I may not multiply quotations, I will refer the reader.

house,

house, where the best rooms and of most use or pleasure are, lies upon the breadth of the garden; the great parlour opens into the middle of a terrass gravel-walk that lies even with it, and which may lie, as I remember, about three hundred paces long, and broad in proportion; the border set with standard laurels and at large distances, which have the beauty of orange-trees out of flower and fruit. From this walk are three descents by many stone steps, in the middle and at each end, into a very large parterre. This is divided into quarters by gravel-walks, and adorned with two fountains and eight statues in the several quarters. At the end of the terrass-walk are two summer-houses, and the sides of the parterre are ranged with two large cloisters open to the garden, upon arches of stone, and ending with two other summer-houses even with the cloisters, which are paved with stone, and designed for walks of shade, there being none other in the whole parterre. Over these two cloisters are two terrasses covered with lead and fenced with balusters; and the passage into these airy walks is out of the two summer-houses at the end of the first terrass-walk. The cloister facing the south is covered with vines, and would have been proper for an orange-house, and the other for myrtles or other more common greens, and had, I doubt not, been cast for that purpose, if this piece of gardening had been then in as much vogue as it is now.

“ From the middle of this parterre is a descent by many steps flying on each side of a grotto that lies between them, covered with lead and flat, into the lower garden, which is all fruit-trees ranged about the several quarters of a wilderness which is very shady; the walks here are all green, the grotto embellished with figures of shell rock-work, fountains, and water-works. If the hill had not ended with the lower garden, and the wall were not bounded by a common way that goes through the park, they might have added a third quarter of all greens; but this want is supplied by a garden on the other side the house, which is all of that sort, very wild, shady, and adorned with rough rock-work and fountains.

“ This was Moor-park, when I was acquainted with it, and the sweetest place, I think, that I have seen in my life, either before or since, at home or abroad.”

I will make no farther remarks on this description. Any man might de-

figh and *build* as sweet a garden, who had been born in and never stirred out of Holbourn. It was not peculiar to sir William Temple to think in that manner. How many Frenchmen are there who have seen *our* gardens, and still prefer *natural* flights of steps and shady cloisters covered with lead! Le Nôtre, the architect of the groves and grottos at Versailles, came hither on a mission to improve our taste. He planted St. James's and Greenwich parks—no great monuments of his invention.

To do farther justice to sir William Temple, I must not omit what he adds: "What I have said of the best forms of gardens, is meant only of such as are in some sort regular; for there may be other forms wholly irregular, that may, for aught I know, have more beauty than any of the others: but they must owe it to some extraordinary dispositions of nature in the seat, or *some great race of fancy or judgment in the contrivance*, which may reduce many disagreeing parts *into some figure*, which shall yet, upon the whole, be very agreeable. Something of this I have seen in some places, but heard more of it from others, who have lived much among the Chinese, a people whose way of thinking seems to lie as wide of ours in Europe, as their country does. Their greatest reach of imagination is employed in contriving figures, where the beauty shall be great and strike the eye, but without any order or disposition of parts that shall be commonly or easily observed. And though we have hardly any notion of this sort of beauty, yet they have a particular word to express it; and where they find it hit their eye at first sight, they say the *sharawadgi* is fine or is admirable, or any such expression of esteem—but I should hardly advise any of these attempts in the figure of gardens among us; they are adventures of too hard achievement for any common hands: and though there may be more honour if they succeed well, yet there is more dishonour if they fail, and it is twenty to one they will; whereas in regular figures it is hard to make any great and remarkable faults."

Fortunately Kent and a few others were not quite so timid, or we might still be going up and down stairs in the open air.

It is true, we have heard much lately, as sir William Temple did, of irregularity and imitations of nature in the gardens or grounds of the Chinese. The former is certainly true; they are as whimsically irregular as European gardens are formally uniform and unvaried—but with regard to nature, it

seems as much avoided as in the squares and oblongs and straight lines of our ancestors. An artificial perpendicular rock starting out of a flat plain, and connected with nothing, often pierced through in various places with oval hollows, has no more pretension to be deemed natural than a lineal terrass or a parterre. The late Mr. Joseph Spence, who had both taste and zeal for the present style, was so persuaded of the Chinese emperor's pleasure-ground being laid out on principles resembling ours, that he translated and published, under the name of sir Harry Beaumont, a particular account of that enclosure from the collection of the letters of the Jesuits. I have looked it over, and, except a determined irregularity, can find nothing in it that gives me any idea of attention being paid to nature. It is of vast circumference, and contains 200 palaces, besides as many contiguous for the eunuchs, all gilt, painted and varnished. There are raised hills from 20 to 60 feet high, streams and lakes, and one of the latter five miles round. These waters are passed by bridges, but even their bridges must not be straight—they serpentine as much as the rivulets, and are sometimes so long as to be furnished with resting-places, and begin and end with triumphal arches. Methinks a straight canal is as rational at least as a meandering bridge. The colonnades undulate in the same manner. In short, this pretty gaudy scene is the work of caprice and whim, and, when we reflect on their buildings, presents no image but that of unsubstantial tawdriness. Nor is this all. Within this fantastical paradise is a square town, each side a mile long. Here the eunuchs of the court, to entertain his imperial majesty with the bustle and business of the capital in which he resides, but which it is not of his dignity ever to see, act merchants and all sorts of trades, and even designedly exercise for his royal amusement every art of knavery that is practised under his auspicious government. Methinks this is the childish solace and repose of grandeur, not a retirement from affairs to the delights of rural life. Here too his majesty plays at agriculture; there is a quarter set apart for that purpose; the eunuchs sow, reap, and carry in their harvest in the imperial presence; and his majesty returns to Peking persuaded that he has been in the country*.

* The French have of late years adopted our style in gardens; but choosing to be fundamentally obliged to more remote rivals, they deny us half the merit, or rather the originality of the invention, by ascribing the discovery to the Chi-

Having
nese, and by calling our taste in gardening le goût Anglo-Chinois. I think I have shown that this is a blunder, and that the Chinese have passed to one extremity of absurdity, as the French and all antiquity had advanced to the other, both being

Having thus cleared my way by ascertaining what have been the ideas on gardening in all ages, as far as we have materials to judge by, it remains to show to what degree Mr. Kent invented the new style, and what hints he had received to suggest and conduct his undertaking.

We have seen what Moor-park was, when pronounced a standard. But as no succeeding generation in an opulent and luxurious country contents itself with the perfection established by its ancestors, more perfect perfection was still sought; and improvements had gone on, till London and Wife had stocked our gardens with giants, animals, monsters*, coats of arms and mottos, in yew, box and holly. Absurdity could go no farther, and the tide turned. Bridgman,

ing equally remote from nature: regular formality is the opposite point to fantastic tharawadgis. The French, indeed, during the fashionable paroxysm of philosophy, have surpassed us, at least in meditation on the art. I have perused a grave treatise of recent date, in which the author, extending his views beyond mere luxury and amusement, has endeavoured to inspire his countrymen, even in the gratification of their expensive pleasures, with benevolent projects. He proposes to them to combine gardening with charity, and to make every step of their walks an act of generosity and a lesson of morality. Instead of adorning favourite points with a heathen temple, a Chinese pagoda, a Gothic tower, or fictitious bridge, he proposes to them, at the first resting-place to erect a school; a little farther to found an academy; at a third distance, a manufacture; and at the termination of the park to endow an hospital. Thus, says he, the proprietor would be led to meditate, as he saunters, on the different stages of human life; and both his expence and thoughts would march in a progression of patriotic acts and reflections. When he was laying out so magnificent, charitable, and philosophic an Utopian villa, it would have cost no more to have added a foundling-hospital, a senate-house, and a burying-ground.—If I smile at such visions, still one must be glad that in the whirl of fashions beneficence should have its turn in vogue; and though the French treat the virtues like every

thing else, but as an object of mode, it is to be hoped that they too will, every now and then, come into fashion again. The author I have been mentioning reminds me of a French gentleman, who some years ago made me a visit at Strawberry-hill. He was so complaisant as to commend the place, and to approve our taste in gardens—but in the same style of thinking with the above-cited author, he said, “I do not like your imaginary temples and fictitious terminations of views: I would have real points of view with moving objects: for instance, here I would have—(I forget what)—and there a watering-place.” “That is not so easy,” I replied; “one cannot oblige others to assemble at such or such a spot for one’s amusement:—however, I am glad you would like a watering-place, for *there* happens to be one; in that creek of the Thames the inhabitants of the village do actually water their horses: but I doubt whether, if it were not *convenient* to them to do so, they would frequent the spot only to enliven my prospect.”—Such Gallo-Chinois gardens, I apprehend, will rarely be executed.

* On the piers of a garden-gate not far from Paris I observed two very coquet sphinxes. These lady monsters had straw hats gracefully smart on one side of their heads, and silken cloaks half veiling their necks; all executed in stone.

the next fashionable designer of gardens, was far more chaste; and, whether from good sense, or that the nation had been struck and reformed by the admirable paper in the *Guardian*, N^o 173, he banished verdant sculpture, and did not even revert to the square precision of the foregoing age. He enlarged his plans, disdained to make every division tally to its opposite; and though he still adhered much to straight walks with high clipped hedges, they were only his great lines; the rest he diversified by wilderness, and with loose groves of oak, though still within surrounding hedges. I have observed in the garden * at Gubbins in Hertfordshire many detached thoughts that strongly indicate the dawn of modern taste. As his reformation gained footing, he ventured farther, and in the royal garden at Richmond dared to introduce cultivated fields, and even morsels of a forest appearance, by the sides of those endless and tiresome walks, that stretched out of one into another without intermission. But this was not till other innovators had broken loose too from rigid symmetry.

But the capital stroke, the leading step to all that has followed, was (I believe the first thought was Bridgman's) the destruction of walls for boundaries, and the invention of fossés—an attempt then deemed so astonishing, that the common people called them Ha! Ha's! to express their surprise at finding a sudden and unperceived check to their walk.

One of the first gardens planted in this simple though still formal style, was my father's at Houghton. It was laid out by Mr. Eyre, an imitator of Bridgman. It contains three-and-twenty acres, then reckoned a considerable portion.

I call a funk fence the leading step, for these reasons: No sooner was this simple enchantment made, than levelling, mowing and rolling, followed. The contiguous ground of the park without the funk fence was to be harmonised with the lawn within; and the garden in its turn was to be set free from its prim regularity, that it might assort with the wilder country without. The funk fence ascertained the specific garden; but that it might not draw too ob-

* The seat of the late sir Jeremy Sambroke. the execution of sir Thomas, though not her
It had formerly belonged to lady More, mother- son, and though her jointure from a former
in-law of sir Thomas More, and had been tyran- husband.
nically wrenched from her by Henry VIII. on

vious a line of distinction between the neat and the rude, the contiguous outlying parts came to be included in a kind of general design: and when nature was taken into the plan, under improvements, every step that was made, pointed out new beauties and inspired new ideas. At that moment appeared Kent, painter enough to taste the charms of landscape, bold and opinionative enough to dare and to dictate, and born with a genius to strike out a great system from the twilight of imperfect essays. He leaped the fence, and saw that all nature was a garden. He felt the delicious contrast of hill and valley changing imperceptibly into each other, tasted the beauty of the gentle swell, or concave scoop, and remarked how loose groves crowned an easy eminence with happy ornament, and, while they called in the distant view between their graceful stems, removed and extended the perspective by delusive comparison.

Thus the pencil of his imagination bestowed all the arts of landscape on the scenes he handled. The great principles on which he worked were perspective, and light and shade. Groupes of trees broke too uniform or too extensive a lawn; evergreens and woods were opposed to the glare of the champain; and where the view was less fortunate, or so much exposed as to be beheld at once, he blotted out some parts by thick shades, to divide it into variety, or to make the richest scene more enchanting by reserving it to a farther advance of the spectator's step. Thus selecting favourite objects, and veiling deformities by screens of plantation, sometimes allowing the rudest waste to add its foil to the richest theatre, he realised the compositions of the greatest masters in painting. Where objects were wanting to animate his horizon, his taste as an architect could bestow immediate termination. His buildings, his seats, his temples, were more the works of his pencil than of his compasses. We owe the restoration of Greece and the diffusion of architecture to his skill in landscape.

But of all the beauties he added to the face of this beautiful country, none surpassed his management of water. Adieu to canals, circular basons, and cascades tumbling down marble steps, that last absurd magnificence of Italian and French villas. The forced elevation of cataracts was no more. The gentle stream was taught to serpentine seemingly at its pleasure; and where discontinued by different levels, its course appeared to be concealed by thickets properly interspersed, and glittered again at a distance where it might be supposed naturally to arrive. Its borders were smoothed, but preserved their waving irregularity.

irregularity. A few trees scattered here and there on its edges sprinkled the tame bank that accompanied its meanders; and when it disappeared among the hills, shades descending from the heights leaned towards its progress, and framed the distant point of light under which it was lost, as it turned aside to either hand of the blue horizon.

Thus dealing in none but the colours of nature, and catching its most favourable features, men saw a new creation opening before their eyes. The living landscape was chastened or polished, not transformed. Freedom was given to the forms of trees; they extended their branches unrestricted; and where any eminent oak, or master beech, had escaped maiming, and survived the forest, bush and bramble were removed, and all its honours were restored to distinguish and shade the plain. Where the united plumage of an ancient wood extended wide its undulating canopy, and stood venerable in its darkness, Kent thinned the foremost ranks, and left but so many detached and scattered trees, as softened the approach of gloom, and blended a chequered light with the thus lengthened shadows of the remaining columns.

Succeeding artists have added new master-strokes to these touches; perhaps improved or brought to perfection some that I have named. The introduction of foreign trees and plants, which we owe principally to Archibald duke of Argyle, contributed essentially to the richness of colouring so peculiar to our modern landscape. The mixture of various greens, the contrast of forms between our forest-trees and the northern and West-Indian firs and pines, are improvements more recent than Kent, or but little known to him. The weeping-willow and every florid shrub, each tree of delicate or bold leaf, are new tints in the composition of our gardens. The last century was certainly acquainted with many of those rare plants we now admire. The Weymouth pine has long been naturalised here; the patriarch plant still exists at Long-leat. The light and graceful acacia was known as early; witness those ancient stems in the court of Bedford-house in Bloomsbury-square; and in the bishop of London's garden at Fulham are many exotics of very ancient date. I doubt therefore whether the difficulty of preserving them in a clime so foreign to their nature did not convince our ancestors of their inutility in general; unless the shapeliness of the lime and horse-chestnut, which accorded so well with established regularity, and which thence and from their novelty grew in fashion, did not occasion the neglect of the more curious plants.

But just as the encomiums are that I have bestowed on Kent's discoveries, he was neither without assistance nor faults. Mr. Pope undoubtedly contributed to form his taste. The design of the prince of Wales's garden at Carlton-house was evidently borrowed from the poet's at Twickenham. There was a little of affected modesty in the latter, when he said, of all his works he was most proud of his garden. And yet it was a singular effort of art and taste to impress so much variety and scenery on a spot of five acres. The passing through the gloom from the grotto to the opening day, the retiring and again assembling shades, the dusky groves, the larger lawn, and the solemnity of the termination at the cypresses that lead up to his mother's tomb, are managed with exquisite judgment: and though lord Peterborough assisted him

To form his quincunx and to rank his vines,

those were not the most pleasing ingredients of his little perspective.

I do not know whether the disposition of the garden at Rousham, laid out for general Dormer, and in my opinion the most engaging of all Kent's works, was not planned on the model of Mr. Pope's, at least in the opening and retiring shades of Venus's vale. The whole is as elegant and antique as if the emperor Julian had selected the most pleasing solitude about Daphne to enjoy a philosophic retirement.

That Kent's ideas were but rarely great, was in some measure owing to the novelty of his art. It would have been difficult to have transported the style of gardening at once from a few acres to tumbling of forests: and though new fashions like new religions (which are new fashions) often lead men to the most opposite excesses, it could not be the case in gardening, where the experiments would have been so expensive. Yet it is true too that the features in Kent's landscapes were seldom majestic. His clumps were puny; he aimed at immediate effect, and planted not for futurity. One sees no large woods sketched out by his direction. Nor are we yet entirely risen above a too great frequency of small clumps, especially in the elbows of serpentine rivers. How common to see three or four beeches, then as many larches, a third knot of cypresses, and a revolution of all three! Kent's last designs were in a higher style, as his ideas opened on success. The north terraces at Claremont was much superior to the rest of the garden.

A return

A return of some particular thoughts was common to him with other painters, and made his *band* known. A small lake edged by a winding bank with scattered trees that led to a seat at the head of the pond, was common to Claremont, Esher, and others of his designs. At Esher,

Where Kent and nature vied for Pelham's love,

the prospects more than aided the painter's genius—they marked out the points where his art was necessary or not; but thence left his judgment in possession of all its glory.

Having routed *professed* art, for the modern gardener exerts his talents to conceal his art, Kent, like other reformers, knew not how to stop at the just limits. He had followed nature, and imitated her so happily, that he began to think all her works were equally proper for imitation. In Kensington-garden he planted dead trees, to give a greater air of truth to the scene—but he was soon laughed out of this excess. His ruling principle was, that *nature abhors a straight line*—His mimics, for every genius has his apes, seemed to think that she could love nothing but what was crooked. Yet so many men of taste of all ranks devoted themselves to the new improvements, that it is surprising how much beauty has been struck out, with how few absurdities. Still in some lights the reformation seems to me to have been pushed too far. Though an avenue crossing a park or separating a lawn, and intercepting views from the seat to which it leads, are capital faults; yet a great avenue* cut through woods, perhaps before entering a park, has a noble air, and,

Like footmen running before coaches
To tell the inn what lord approaches,

announces the habitation of some man of distinction. In other places, the total banishment of all particular neatness immediately about a house, which is frequently left gazing by itself in the middle of a park, is a defect.

* Of this kind one of the most noble is that of Stanstead, the seat of the earl of Halifax, traversing an ancient wood for two miles and bounded by the sea. The very extensive lawns at that seat, richly enclosed by venerable beech woods, and chequered by single beeches of vast size, particularly when you stand in the portico of the temple and survey the landscape that wastes itself in rivers of broken sea, recall such exact pictures of Claud Lorrain, that it is difficult to conceive that he did not paint them from this very spot.

Sheltered and even close walks, in so very uncertain a climate as ours, are comforts ill exchanged for the few picturesque days that we enjoy: and whenever a family can purloin a warm and even something of an old-fashioned garden from the landscape designed for them by the undertaker in fashion, without interfering with the picture, they will find satisfactions on those days that do not invite strangers to come and see their improvements.

Fountains have with great reason been banished from gardens as unnatural; but it surprises me that they have not been allotted to their proper positions, to cities, towns, and the courts of great houses, as proper accompaniments to architecture, and as works of grandeur in themselves. Their decorations admit the utmost invention; and when the waters are thrown up to different stages, and tumble over their border, nothing has a more imposing or a more refreshing sound. A palace demands its external graces and attributes, as much as a garden. Fountains and cypresses peculiarly become buildings; and no man can have been at Rome, and seen the vast basins of marble dashed with perpetual cascades in the area of St. Peter's, without retaining an idea of taste and splendour. Those in the piazza Navona are as useful as sublimely conceived.

Grottos in this climate are recesses only to be looked at transiently. When they are regularly composed within of symmetry and architecture, as in Italy, they are only splendid improprieties. The most judiciously, indeed most fortunately placed grotto is that at Stourhead, where the river bursts from the urn of its god, and passes on its course through the cave.

But it is not my business to lay down rules for gardens, but to give the history of them. A system of rules pushed to a great degree of refinement, and collected from the best examples and practice, has been lately given in a book entitled *Observations on modern Gardening*. The work is very ingeniously and carefully executed, and in point of utility rather exceeds than omits any necessary directions. The author will excuse me if I think it a little excess, when he examines that rude and unappropriated scene of Matlock-bath, and criticises nature for having bestowed on the rapid river Derwent too many cascades. How can this censure be brought home to gardening? The management of rocks is a province can fall to few directors of gardens; still in our distant provinces such a guide may be necessary.

The

The author divides his subject into gardens, parks, farms, and ridings. I do not mean to find fault with this division. Directions are requisite to each kind, and each has its department at many of the great scenes from whence he drew his observations. In the historic light, I distinguish them into the garden that connects itself with a park, into the ornamented farm, and into the forest or savage garden. Kent, as I have shown, invented or established the first sort. Mr. Philip Southcote founded the second, or *ferme ornée**, of which is a very just description in the author I have been quoting. The third I think he has not enough distinguished. I mean that kind of alpine scene, composed almost wholly of pines and firs, a few birch, and such trees as assimilate with a savage and mountainous country. Mr. Charles Hamilton, at Pain's-hill, in my opinion has given a perfect example of this mode in the utmost boundary of his garden. All is great and foreign and rude; the walks seem not designed, but cut through the wood of pines; and the style of the whole is so grand, and conducted with so serious an air of wild and uncultivated extent, that, when you look down on this seeming forest, you are amazed to find it contain a very few acres. In general, except as a screen to conceal some deformity, or as a shelter in winter, I am not fond of total plantations of ever-greens. Firs in particular form a very ungraceful summit, all broken into angles.

Sir Henry Englefield was one of the first improvers on the new style, and selected with singular taste that chief beauty of all gardens, prospect and fortunate points of view: we tire of all the painter's art when it wants these finishing touches. The fairest scenes, that depend on themselves alone, weary when often seen. The Doric portico, the Palladian bridge, the Gothic ruin, the Chinese pagoda, that surprise the stranger, soon lose their charms to their surfeited master. The lake that floats the valley is still more lifeless, and its lord seldom enjoys his expence but when he shows it to a visitor. But the ornament whose merit soonest fades, is the hermitage, or scene adapted to contemplation. It is almost comic to set aside a quarter of one's garden to be melancholy in. Prospect, animated prospect, is the theatre that will always be the most frequented. Prospects formerly were sacrificed to convenience and warmth. Thus Burleigh stands behind a hill, from the top of which it would command Stamford. Our ancestors, who resided the greatest part of the year at their seats, as others did two years together or more, had an eye to

* At Wobourn-farm in Surry.

comfort first, before expence. Their vast mansions received and harboured all the younger branches, the dowagers and ancient maiden aunts of the families; and other families visited them for a month together. The method of living is now totally changed; and yet the same superb palaces are still created, becoming a pompous solitude to the owner, and a transient entertainment to a few travellers.

If any incident abolishes or restrains the modern style of gardening, it will be this circumstance of solitariness. The greater the scene, the more distant it is probably from the capital; in the neighbourhood of which land is too dear to admit considerable extent of property. Men tire of expence that is obvious to few spectators. Still there is a more imminent danger that threatens the present, as it has ever done all taste. I mean the pursuit of variety. A modern French writer has in a very affected phrase given a just account of this, I will call it, distemper. He says, *l'ennui du beau amene le goût du singulier*. The noble simplicity of the Augustan age was driven out by false taste. The gigantic, the puerile, the quaint, and at last the barbarous and the monkish, had each their successive admirers. Music has been improved, till it is a science of tricks and slight of hand. The sober greatness of Titian is lost, and painting since Carlo Maratti has little more relief than Indian paper. Borromini twisted and curled architecture*, as if it was subject to the change of fashions like a head of hair. If we once lose sight of the propriety of landscape in our gardens, we shall wander into all the fantastic shawwadgis of the Chinese. We have discovered the point of perfection. We have given the true model of gardening to the world; let other countries mimic or corrupt our taste; but let it reign here on its verdant throne, original by its elegant simplicity, and proud of no other art than that of softening nature's harshnesses and copying her graceful touch.

The ingenious author of the Observations on modern Gardening is, I think, too rigid when he condemns some deceptions because they have been often used. If those deceptions, as a feigned steeple of a distant church, or an unreal bridge to disguise the termination of water, were intended only to surprize, they were indeed tricks that would not bear repetition; but, being intended to improve the landscape, are no more to be condemned because

* In particular, he inverted the volutes of the Ionic order.

common,

common, than they would be if employed by a painter in the composition of a picture. Ought one man's garden to be deprived of a happy object, because that object has been employed by another? The more we exact novelty, the sooner our taste will be vitiated. Situations are every where so various, that there never can be a sameness, while the disposition of the ground is studied and followed, and every incident of view turned to advantage.

In the mean time how rich, how gay, how picturesque the face of the country! The demolition of walls laying open each improvement, every journey is made through a succession of pictures; and even where taste is wanting in the spot improved, the general view is embellished by variety. If no relapse to barbarism, formality, and seclusion, is made, what landscapes will dignify every quarter of our island, when the daily plantations that are making have attained venerable maturity! A specimen of what our gardens will be, may be seen at Petworth, where the portion of the park nearest the house has been allotted to the modern style. It is a garden of oaks two hundred years old. If there is a fault in so august a fragment of improved nature, it is, that the size of the trees is out of all proportion to the shrubs and accompaniments. In truth, shrubs should not only be reserved for particular spots and home delight, but are past their beauty in less than twenty years.

Enough has been done to establish such a school of landscape as cannot be found on the rest of the globe. If we have the seeds of a Claud or a Gaspar amongst us, he must come forth. If wood, water, groves, valleys, glades, can inspire poet or painter, this is the country, or this is the age to produce them. The flocks, the herds, that now are admitted into, now graze on the borders of our cultivated plains, are ready before the painter's eyes, and groupe themselves to animate his picture. One misfortune in truth there is that throws a difficulty on the artist. A principal beauty in our gardens is the lawn and smoothness of turf: in a picture it becomes a dead and uniform spot, incapable of *chiaro scuro*, and to be broken inspidly by children, dogs, and other unmeaning figures.

Since we have been familiarized to the study of landscape, we hear less of what delighted our sportsmen-ancestors, *a fine open country*. Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, and such ocean-like extents were formerly preferred to the rich blue prospects of Kent, to the Thames-watered views in Berkshire, and to the magnificent

magnificent scale of nature in Yorkshire. An open country is but a canvas on which a landscape might be designed.

It was fortunate for the country and Mr. Kent, that he was succeeded by a very able master; and did living artists come within my plan, I should be glad to do justice to Mr. Brown; but he may be a gainer, by being reserved for some abler pen.

In general it is probably true, that the possessor, if he has any taste, must be the best designer of his own improvements. He sees his situation in all seasons of the year, at all times of the day. He knows where beauty will not clash with convenience, and observes in his silent walks or accidental rides a thousand hints that must escape a person who in a few days sketches out a pretty picture, but has not had leisure to examine the details and relations of every part.

Truth, which, after the opposition given to most revolutions, preponderates at last, will probably not carry our style of garden into general use on the continent. The expence is only suited to the opulence of a free country, where emulation reigns among many independent particulars. The keeping of our grounds is an obstacle, as well as the cost of the first formation. A flat country, like Holland, is incapable of landscape. In France and Italy the nobility do not reside much, and make small expence, at their villas. I should think the little princes of Germany, who spare no profusion on their palaces and country-houses, most likely to be our imitators; especially as their country and climate bear in many parts resemblance to ours. In France, and still less in Italy, they could with difficulty attain that verdure which the humidity of our clime bestows as the groundwork of our improvements. As great an obstacle in France is the embargo laid on the growth of their trees. As after a certain age, when they would rise to bulk, they are liable to be marked by the crown's surveyors as royal timber, it is a curiosity to see an old tree. A landscape and a crown-surveyor are incompatible.

I have thus brought down to the conclusion of the last reign (the period I had marked to this work) the history of our arts and artists, from the earliest æra in which we can be said to have had either. Though there have been only gleams of light and flashes of genius, rather than progressive improvements, or
flourishing

flourishing schools; the inequality and insufficiency of the execution have flowed more from my own defects than from those of the subject. The merits of the work, if it has any, are owing to the indefatigable industry of Mr. Vertue in amassing all possible materials. As my task is finished, it will, I hope, at least excite others to collect and preserve notices and anecdotes for some future continuator. The æra promises to furnish a nobler harvest. Our exhibitions, and the institution of a royal academy, inspire the artists with emulation, diffuse their reputation, and recommend them to employment. The public examines and reasons on their works, and spectators by degrees become judges. Nor are persons of the first rank mere patrons. Lord * Harcourt's etchings are superior in boldness and freedom of stroke to any thing we have seen from established artists. Gardening and architecture owe as much to the nobility and to men of fortune as to the professors. I need but name general Conway's rustic bridge at Park-place, of which every stone was placed by his own direction, in one of the most beautiful scenes in nature; and the theatric stair-case designed and just erected by Mr. Chute † at his seat of the Vine in Hampshire. If a model is sought of the most perfect taste in architecture, where grace softens dignity, and lightness attempers magnificence; where proportion removes every part from peculiar observation, and delicacy of execution recalls every part to notice; where the position is the most happy, and even the colour of the stone the most harmonious; the virtuoso should be directed to the new ‡ front of Wentworth-castle: the result of the same elegant judgment that had before distributed so many beauties over that domain, and called from wood, water, hills, prospects and buildings, a compendium of picturesque nature, improved by the chastity of art. Such an æra will demand a better historian. With pleasure therefore I resign my pen; presuming to recommend nothing to my successor, but to observe as strict impartiality.

* George Simon, second earl of Harcourt.

† John Chute, last male-heir of that family, descended from Chaloner Chute, speaker to Richard Cromwell's parliament.

‡ The old front, still extant, was erected by Thomas Wentworth late earl of Strafford: the new one was entirely designed by the present earl William himself.

