

NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

No. CXVIII.

JANUARY, 1843.

- ART. I. — 1. *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening.* By A. S. DOWNING. New York and London. Wiley & Putnam. 8vo. pp. 451.
2. *Cottage Residences, or a Series of Designs for Rural Cottages and Villas, with their Gardens and Grounds.* By A. S. DOWNING. New York and London. 8vo. pp. 187.

WE are glad to record the appearance of works like these ; partly because they show, that there is already a demand for, as well as a want of, such guides in matters of taste, and also because the effect of reading such graceful and interesting essays is often to create a taste of the kind where none had previously existed. We find in this country, as we presume it is found in every other, that men always return from business and care, to look for their enjoyment in the presence of nature. There is a powerful instinct, which sends them homeward from those exciting pursuits, in which fortunes are gained or lost, to find that repose in quiet and contented activity, which no excitement on the stirring field of public action is ever able to bestow. Not only does the seaman come back from the ocean, thinking it a high privilege to sit down quietly in a cottage, the very one perhaps from which he ran away in his early days ; the merchant, whether prosperous, or broken, if he has moral strength to throw off the burden, while he is yet able to bear it, applies him to the cultivation of the soil, where, if the

VOL. LVI. — NO. 118.

1

dividends are small, they are sure, which is more than can be said of any other investment, and where, without hazard of loss, he may secure that gain to his health and happiness, which no amount of wealth can buy. It is in pursuits of this kind alone, that politicians are able to break the force of their fall, and a fall is surely in store for them, unless they are cut off in the flower of their days. The wheel of public life is "all mutabilities and variations," and a constant succession of aspirants are lifted into the upper air for the sole purpose, as it would seem, of being dashed below. The country does not seem to take such reverses of public men very much to heart. The business of state finds new hands to do it, and all goes on as if nothing had happened; while the victims themselves, if they have the grace to reconcile themselves to the common lot, find that the green fields of retirement are better, on the whole, than the white mountains of honor, which they curse as heartily as David did those on which Saul and Jonathan had fallen.

But those circumstances which send a man into retirement, and place him in a condition for rural labor, do not necessarily give him the taste to improve his grounds, and make them grateful to the eye; so that he either consults his gain in all his efforts, or, if he does any thing for the gratification of the eye, is apt to be smitten with a fierce ambition of display, which is perhaps the most decidedly hostile influence that good taste has to encounter. This ambition is forthwith manifested in glorious architectural combinations. Athens and Palestine are laid under contribution to furnish columns and entablatures to disguise the honest mansion, but without success, for its homely, unpretending features look quietly out through all the pomp that surrounds it. We observe, that De Tocqueville and others, who notice this propensity in our countrymen, complain of these architectural ornaments, that they are made of perishable materials. To our eyes this is their crowning merit, and we should earnestly deprecate any change that should preserve them from swift decay. So much attention is given to the house, that very little can be spared for the grounds; or, more probably, the resources are exhausted in the process of building, and the mansion is compelled to stand finished, or not, as the case may be, without a leaf to cover its shame. In fact, this ambition of finery, which is essentially savage, is in-

consistent with a quiet, natural, and gentle taste. That is the result of a cultivation which disowns and scorns ambition, and it is such a taste only that can produce any results in gardening satisfactory to the eye. Many are conscious of errors and deficiencies, who cannot tell what it is that offends them. But those, who are in the habit of analyzing their own impressions, know that nothing is pleasant in the landscape, which is not in harmony with nature. Lavish decoration is, of all things, most unnatural; so that these ferocious displays of architectural ambition, to which many of our countrymen are addicted, must be suppressed and abandoned, before a true taste can flourish and abound.

If any have been sufficiently manly and enlightened to avoid the ridiculous mistakes into which so many have fallen, there still has been a difficulty, arising from the want of proper guides. It is not always that one, who desires to keep within the bounds of good taste, knows what arrangements it would require. He could easily detect offences against it in the arrangements of others; but it is one thing to criticize, and another to execute. Some men, who have a nice and just discrimination with respect to these matters, have nevertheless no gift at all to construct the buildings, nor to plan the grounds, which their taste would approve. If they refer to similar works in other countries, they may find such as are well suited, doubtless, to the wants and circumstances of their proprietors; but transfer them to this land, in servile copies, made without regard to the peculiarity of climate, the difference of the accommodation required, or the natural scenery that surrounds them, and the same villa, which is beautiful in itself and in representations of it, becomes, as imitations are apt to be, a vicious enormity, unsuited to the wants of the owner, and offensive to every eye. The proprietor exalts himself in his first ecstasies, at the sight of the Babylon he has built; but the suspicion gradually comes over him, that, after all, he has not realized his bright vision. He cannot say, that he is himself quite satisfied with his costly exploits. His neighbours are less delicate in their expression of feeling. They see no reason for suppressing the opinion that his attempt is a failure; and, after striving in vain to ascribe their unfavorable judgment to envy, or some unworthy passion, he at last confesses in his heart that it is just, only lamenting that he must keep company, through

life, with the unsightly buildings and plantations with which he has cumbered the ground. One reason, no doubt, of our countrymen having so little local attachment, is to be sought for in this want of attraction in the outward aspect of their homes. When time and death have changed the inmates of the domestic circle, there is little in the exterior which one is willing to see on those pictures which the memory delights to draw.

We apprehend that it might be found on examination, that the houses and places in which the gratification of taste was least thought of, are those which make the happiest impression upon the eye. If the artist would draw an American landscape, he rejoices not in the tall mansion, with its Grecian *façade*, and its kitchen after the manner of a tail in the rear; but rather in the steep-roofed work of antiquity, with its projecting upper floor, in which the obvious purpose of defence, against the snowstorms and savages of former days, give it the grace of fitness, if it has no other. The cottage, which never rejoiced in whiteness, but patiently bears the complexion which sun and tempests engrained upon it, is also an agreeable feature in the prospect to the artist's eye; and even the log-hut, set in an indentation of the forest, with no works of art, save blackened stumps of trees around, figures to advantage, because it pretends to nothing. Much does the self-satisfied proprietor wonder why the practised eye should descend to subjects so unworthy, when his palace, as fine as cornice and column can make it, is towering at their sides. But he dies without solving the problem to his own satisfaction, for it is not within the compass of possibility, that he should understand the beauty of fitness, and adaptation to place and circumstances, which he has himself been at so much expense to disregard.

We think that there are signs of a better taste about us. It is quite in the order of nature that first attempts should be falsely ambitious. But they may serve as a warning, if not an example; and, as they are too frail in their construction ever to be sanctified by the moss and weather-stains of antiquity, they will soon give way to others, not built in the eclipse of good taste, like themselves. The reform, too, can be general; for the indulgence of good taste is not expensive. It rather throws contempt on idle display, hardly

ever admitting an ornament, simply because it is one, and always consults, in its arrangements, those wants of the possessor, which ambitious display is anxious to conceal and disregard. When good sense and good taste thus lead to the same result, and one may be consulted without any sacrifice of the other, there is no reason to fear that our countrymen will be blind to advantages once placed within their reach. It is not from any thing in their character that the false taste has grown; it is simply from ignorance of the true.

It is idle to make comparisons between this and other countries; but it is certain, that, in the facilities which it offers for these improvements, no one can excel our own. There is, indeed, a temptation growing out of this abundance. The great proportion of our country dwellings are made of wood, a material easily procured, and quite sufficient, so far as protection from the cold and dampness is concerned; but, on the other hand, exposed to the danger of conflagration, and sure of early decay. We are not certain, that its frailty is any objection to it in the minds of many of our countrymen. Such is the taste for adventure, and such the inducements to emigrate, offered by new and fertile regions, that there are few cases, comparatively, in which the son can be depended on to finish what his sire began; few, indeed, in which the son thinks of spending his days near the paternal residence of his father. Of course, but little concern is felt for the family mansion, which soon passes into the hands of strangers, or, if any interest in it remains, the least unpleasant change is that of time and decay. We rejoice to believe that this will be altered. The improved methods of cultivation now encouraged among us, are not means for increasing the fertility of the soil only, and making two blades of grass grow where but one grew before. They are rather civil and social improvements, enabling two members of the family to fix their residence where none could remain before, and, in process of time, to establish those local attachments, and gather those venerable and touching associations round them, in which our countrymen have been deficient, for want of the opportunity of forming them. In the neighbourhood of our cities, it is found, that a family can subsist on the returns of a few acres well tilled, better than on the produce of large farms, partially cultivated, as such estates are now. The

next result will be, that of building permanent habitations, on plans tried and approved by the experience of ages. The materials are everywhere abundant; and there are so many advantages, beside the gratification of taste, in these durable constructions, that houses of stone will hereafter become as common as frame houses are now. One good consequence of the waste and neglect of our forests, is to bring about this result. In our larger villages, at present, the cost of brick and wood is about the same; and, though stone is at present more expensive, the time is not distant when mechanical improvements will diminish the cost, and a large demand will create a proportionate supply.

The vegetation of our forests, also, is very favorable to that external embellishment of the grounds, which a dwelling requires, to make it pleasing to the eye. One error of our countrymen is, that they regard the house as the only or the chief thing; and, if they rejoice in what they consider a successful architectural exploit, they are as unwilling to veil its beauties by a single tree, as were our fathers, in the day when a grove, or a single trunk, might serve as a stalking-horse for an Indian marksman. This taste for nakedness, however, is passing away; and now the danger is on the opposite side; that of having trees set out in profusion, without regard to the shade required, or to those circumstances of position and adaptation, without which they sometimes disfigure the place which they are meant to adorn. In many public and private places we see them set in long files, as if the hint were taken from a military review. Where single trees and clumps judiciously distributed, would have a fine effect, the proprietor seems to borrow all his notions of beauty from the posts in a fence, or the buttons on a coat, and thinks it a serious misfortune if accident, or the decay of a few, breaks up his much-loved order. When he comes to the comprehension of the fact, that art can do no better than follow the lead of nature, and that it sins and fails, when it runs off into ambitious originalities of its own, he finds, that, with labor and expense comparatively light, and within narrow bounds, he can produce results of beauty, which he never dreamed of before, and on which his eye can rest with perfect satisfaction and delight. The sense of local attachment then, for the first time perhaps, opens upon his mind. Up to that time he has thought with pleasure of the fireside, and the

circle within the dwelling ; but the prospect without the walls has never, in his seasons of absence, come up before him. Now the fireside has little to do with place ; it can be transferred across the continent, or the ocean, without breaking its charm. But the taste, of which we have spoken, makes the home a place ; it becomes a local habitation ; it becomes an important element in that grace of life, the love of country, which is not only itself an honorable feeling, but also the parent of many others, which should not be strangers to any manly breast.

The author of the works before us has judiciously aimed to inspire a taste for such improvements, as are within the reach of the great proportion of our people. We want no rules for parks and palaces, and happily we have no reason to fear the painful variety and contrast of condition which such luxuries, and the poor cottages that surround them, imply. There is a moral taste, which can find infinitely greater satisfaction in a landscape, where the uniform cultivation and improvement of every part, shows that all are prosperous and all equal, if not in their possessions, in what is better, the taste to appreciate the beautiful, and the means of making it their own. The attempts and failures to which we have alluded, which are so common everywhere, show that the desire and the means are not wanting ; and, when they are accompanied by the taste to employ them to advantage, we shall no doubt find, not perhaps villas meant for show, but habitations suited to give pleasure to the inhabitants, as well as to strangers ; places not made to exhibit, but rather to enjoy.

The reason why early attempts at such improvements are unsuccessful, is sufficiently plain. The pioneer, who subdues the native forest, is apt to be of the opinion, that he sees something too much of nature ; as his whole business is to root out the woods and shrubbery which she has planted. He feels no gratitude to her for the plantations, which it costs him so much labor to remove ; least of all, can he be brought to think it an improvement, when his successful warfare is over, to replace the trees with others, and to sink art in nature again. The natural aspect is associated in his mind with the poverty and hard struggles of his early days ; while the angular cornfield, the unshaded pasture, and the checkered garden, remind him of that prosperity and plenty, which have long been the day-dream of his soul. Now, as all

beauty depends in a great measure on association; it is perfectly natural, that, in all his attempts at improvement, he should consult that which it gives him pleasure to see. In the minds of his children these associations have never existed; there is nothing to prevent them from receiving light upon the subject; they accordingly welcome the suggestions of true taste, as soon as they are presented.

With respect to domestic architecture, our author says well, that fitness is the first thing to be regarded; fitness, however, not simply with respect to convenience, but to size, aspect, warmth, air, and other circumstances, which are all important, and should be secured, as far as possible, in the arrangements of the building. In a city there is less choice in this respect; but in the country, where it is wholly under control, the common practice is, to make the chief apartments front the public road, even if it give them a northwestern exposure, which is the least desirable in most parts of this country. It has been a common practice, too, from time immemorial, to build houses for summer only, as if the inhabitants were to remain torpid during that season, which stretches through so much of the year, as to make the summer a small interlude, which needs but little preparation. This, however, is passing away; and the danger now is, that of contracting and crowding apartments, so that there shall be no room for comfort in them at any season of the year. Considering what our climate is, and is likely to be, the chief apartment of the family should look toward the morning sun; and the same situation, which gives it that advantage in winter, will save it from the fierce blaze of the sun in the summer afternoons. Many rules are here given for securing the convenience of every part of the dwelling, all of which are judicious and important, but which it is not necessary for us to set down.

Mr. Downing dwells on the expression of purpose in a building, which is a point sorely violated in a great proportion of our architecture. Who can tell, in these times, when every thing is so desperately Grecian, whether he is looking on a church, a bank, or a town hall? The private dwelling carries its own testimony with it, in the aspect of its chimneys; but these are generally made to appear like necessary evils, when they might be made to contribute much to the ornament of the building. In this respect the

modern are very inferior to our ancient buildings. In some of the houses of the seventeenth century which yet remain, the chimney is graceful in its proportion, and offers a fine outline against the sky, while in modern houses it resembles a timber shooting upwards from the roof, studiously ugly, and as disproportioned as the art of man can make it.

We are less sure with respect to the colonnade, which this writer thinks an essential part of every inhabited building. It certainly is highly ornamental, and in a portion, though not, as he says, a considerable portion of the year, is a pleasant retreat for the family. Our summers are short, and there are few evenings in which one can be in the open air without danger. The same roof, which protects from the sun's rays at one season, may intercept them at another, when they would be welcome. If colonnades can be so arranged as not to darken the windows in the short winter days, they may be regarded as desirable in the climate of New England ; and if the external aspect of the building is the first object, no house can afford to be without them. There is no such objection to balconies, terraces, and bay-windows. These are beautiful always, and everywhere, not simply as ornaments, but as signs and expressions of the refinement and grace of life.

The greater portion of readers will hardly sympathize with the author in his opinions as to the proper color of buildings, though they are, on the whole, appropriate and just. The American eye has become so accustomed to the white villa or cottage, with its dark-green Venetian windows, and their bright contrast with the foliage that surrounds them, that it will seem like a heresy to say, that good taste frowns upon this kind of ambitious decoration. Nor are we sure that it is always so. Nothing is finer than the pale marble of the vase or statue, looking out from its leafy cavern. The small white cottage has something of the same effect. It is only when the building is large, open, and partially shaded, that it seems to stand forth as if desirous to attract the beholder's eye ; and in that case, it certainly is, like all ostentatious display, misplaced and offensive. The eye resents the attraction by which it is drawn toward them, and would fain sink them in the masses of foliage which almost every landscape supplies. As most houses require to be open and unshaded in front, at least, not to be buried in shadow, it

certainly is better to give them a color, harmonizing with the soft hue of the landscape, which may easily be done by almost any imitation of stone. Mr. Downing has given specimens of various tints of gray, drab, and fawn color, either of which is well suited to the purpose, and pleasing to every eye.

But without dwelling on these particulars, we wish to see a kind of rural architecture suited to this country. Every one is weary of the eternal Grecian, in which the architect is obliged to lower his roof till it is wholly unsuited to our regions of storm and snow ; to suppress his chimneys entirely, or to hide them, with what art he may, in some ornamental part of the building ; and, since the windows cannot be dispensed with, nor concealed, to put them just where they are wanted in open defiance of the rules which, in all other respects, he has treated with slavish regard. The Gothic too, so far as cottages are concerned, has nearly had its day. The sight of the well-fed, portly citizen in chivalrous armour would not be more unsuited to our present habits of thought, than the application of that style, with all its venerable associations, to the comfortable villa and the homely cottage, which always seem uneasy and out of place in such masquerades. The Tudor style, though much nearer to what is wanted in this country, and suggestive of associations, which, with such objects, are much more welcome, reminding us of the heartiness and hospitality which are or should be cherished in rural domestic life, still is not altogether in place in this new land. But there may be appropriate forms, not slavishly borrowed from any other, nor yet fastidiously rejecting any of their advantages, which shall be characteristic of life in this country, making the exterior expressive of that which is within ; as, for example, the chimney, with the graceful column of smoke, shows that the cheerful wood fire is not yet given up ; or the old fashioned *well-sweep* of the cottage, which shows, that modern improvements have not yet reached them.

We have not anywhere seen a style which is sufficiently appropriate to our uses, to answer for general imitation ; and we fully agree with this writer, that it is not only desirable, but practicable, to produce an American cottage style, which shall be so well adapted to our wants, so harmonious with our landscape, and so grateful to the eye, as gradually to supplant all

others, and to become the prevailing domestic architecture in this country. In his fifth design, he has given a specimen of this kind, in the *bracketted* mode of building, which is sufficiently homely for any farm-house, and yet ornamental enough to be a beautiful object in almost any situation, particularly for the level ground, which is most common, and for which this plan is intended.

It is easy to see, that almost all the designs, which are given in this work, apply to buildings of a very unpretending kind. The body of the house, unfinished, resembles that of the barn. If the gable is furnished with Grecian columns, it will by no means be transfigured into a miracle of art ; nay, more, it will wear its disguise with the ass's ears, in the shape of chimneys, thrusting themselves roughly through. If, on the other hand, it be decorated with crocketed pinnacles, it will neither be a cathedral, nor a chapel, and will wear a discontented aspect, as if the pretension was forced upon it sorely against its will. But if the proprietor be content to have it appear as it is, a dwellinghouse of moderate dimensions, with arrangements suited to the wants and convenience of the inhabitants, it is easy, not only to accomplish his purpose without any sacrifice in these respects, but to make these very things, which are now necessary evils, enter into the plan harmoniously, and please, instead of offending, the eye. The bay-window, with its balcony, will be a beautiful ornament to the parlour, both without and within. The roof can be extended at the eaves and the gables, and, with brackets cut in graceful forms, to support it, will answer good purpose as a decoration merely, apart from the protection it gives to the sides of the building. The chimneys, if carried up with a view to appearing in separate flues above the roof, will be less likely to smoke, than at present, especially if they are circular within. With respect to this last improvement, we are glad to find, that chimney-tops cut in stone are now furnished in our cities ; and bricks, in proper forms for the purpose, may be had in any part of the country.

The author well suggests, that, if the attention can be turned to that which is really beautiful in matters of art, it leads on to a better appreciation, and deeper feeling, of nature ; and, as the construction of a dwelling is one of those concerns in which almost every man engages with earnest-

ness, arising from the impression, that it is to be his home for life, it is on this point that he will be most open to suggestions on the subject. Ornaments, connected with convenience, will gain his attention, when, simply as ornaments, he would treat them with utter disregard. In the arrangement of his apartments he will see a grace in fitness and proportion. As soon as this perception dawns upon him, he will throw from him the savage taste for finery, and begin to consult some principle of taste in the selection of his furniture and the color of his walls. He will learn to take offence at that heedlessness, which confounds the simple with the showy, puts right things in wrong places, and blends in violent contrasts those which ought to be kept apart.

When a new sensibility is thus awakened to appearances within the dwelling, he will begin to look abroad and around it with more discrimination than before ; and, if the sunflower and peony are near neighbours to the daisy and heliotrope, in his garden, he will begin to inquire within himself, whether either gains any real advantage from the immediate vicinity of the other. So, too, with the foliage of the trees that happen to be near. He will begin to notice the graceful dignity of the elm, the firm grandeur of the oak, the tender gloom of the evergreen, and the pensive leaning of the willow. Where, in former days, he saw nothing but fuel and timber, he will find value, apart from domestic uses, in the expression of their forms, and the images which they awaken in his mind. Nor will it be long before he undertakes, by his own efforts, to produce those combinations which make the most pleasing impression. He will ascertain by experiment, where the rich velvet of the locust, the cheerful green of the plane-tree, the autumnal scarlet of the maple, and the blood red of the oak, can be set with the best effect. Without the least interference with his graver cares, indeed with a recreation, which gives him more energy for those pursuits that exhaust the frame or the mind, he can go on with this work of improvement ; which in every sense deserves the name, since he refines his own taste, and quickens his sensibility, not only to external nature, but to every thing in the moral and intellectual world. Even if he gained nothing for himself, but the satisfaction which it is sure to give, his children will grow up with tastes and perceptions, to which his early days were strangers ; and all ex-

perience is false, if they are not better, as well as happier, in consequence of these powers and affections, which, growing with their growth and strengthening with their strength, will act with commanding influence on their destiny, not to make them artists or amateurs, but to raise them to the high standing of refined and cultivated men. Well may the children congratulate themselves on such an inheritance. It is more than wealth can bestow. Such a home is one of the dearest recollections they can carry with them through life ; and, when they die, it is the last earthly vision which fades and lessens upon their hearts, as they depart to the land of souls.

The work before us, on the theory and practice of Landscape Gardening, is one which does credit to the writer ; and the time is come when it is extensively needed in this country. There are few, comparatively, who have the means to employ professional skill, in laying out their grounds, though even this expensive accomplishment is fast growing in public demand ; but there are very few, who have not brought up with them from youth some recollection of a garden, which, however simple, was the scene of their early enjoyment ; and, accordingly, in arranging, in fancy, the paradise of their choice, they think of the garden as the chief luxury which wealth, when acquired, is to give them. As soon, therefore, as they feel able to realize the vision, they begin with their favorite plans ; generally as coarse and rude as their first attempts in landscape painting would be, from their ignorance of the principles on which they should proceed. That defect may be supplied by such works as this, which suggest new ideas on the subject of beauty and the means of giving pleasure to the eye, which otherwise they would not have known. A great proportion of what has been done in this way is tasteless in proportion to its ambition ; but the whole is but little ; and there could not be a better time for such improvements to begin.

The natural style of gardening is now universally approved. We do not mean by that name an exact imitation of nature ; there is often an error in this respect, similar to that which requires the sculptor to copy the exact costume by which his living original was deformed. What we want is, art following the lead of nature, and arranging and combining the different elements of the scene, in such a manner

as to show the different effects of art and nature, blended harmoniously into one. There are situations, however, in which it is best to leave nature as it is ; making no attempts at alteration, and simply clearing away whatever interferes with the prospect, or offends the eye. There are others, in which the botanical arrangement is desirable ; so that every tree and shrub must stand by itself, the effect depending upon the beauty of individuals, placed as near to each other as possible, without losing their singleness of form. In the picturesque style, there must be a much greater variety of combination ; the perfection of individual forms is not necessary, since the foliage of trees and shrubs is meant to be blended with other verdure, and the main thing to be regarded is the expression of the whole.

The chief requisites for producing fine effects in landscape gardening abound to profusion in every part of this country. There is no finer object than a flourishing tree. It bears every variety of expression, from the plain and lowly, to the majestic and commanding. In every season, trees are ornamental to the landscape ; whether bearing the tender green of spring, the rich masses of summer foliage, or seen in winter with their clear outlines drawn upon the sky. They can be disposed in every variety of arrangement, whether clumps, thickets, groves, or single trees, and placed in such a manner, as to hide the unsightly parts of the prospect, with open vistas for the finer points of view. In our new regions, where the forest seems already too abundant, foreign trees can be introduced, in contrast, to vary the monotony of green. In the open vicinity of our cities, a deeper shade would be more desirable to the inmate of the dwelling, and more pleasing to the eye. In all cases the trees should form the background, against which the mansion is seen. If its form and proportions are graceful, they are set forth to advantage by this arrangement, while every thing can be hidden by it, that requires to be concealed. On the lawn before the house, trees of unusual shape, or rich foliage, and flowers, can be sprinkled everywhere, taking care to avoid that formal regularity, which is never found in nature, and which is instantly resented by the practised eye. Trees of various height should be grouped with a view to the upper line of foliage, to break up its uniformity ; and those of smaller growth, on the outer edges, to connect it with the verdure of

the ground below. The thick belt should never be used, like a palisade, to surround the enclosure; but the line should be varied with projections and recesses, which disguise the extent of the estate, and excite the imagination of the beholder. In every case of improvement, the scene has a natural character, and the aim should be to follow that suggestion, and produce the effect desired, by deepening the expression which it already bears. Hints for these purposes are furnished in this work, which are illustrated by sketches so abundant and well drawn, that there is no excuse for any one, who is disposed to arrange his grounds with taste, and who relies upon this guidance, if he fails to do it with success. But these leading principles must be studied, in order to know how to apply them. Improvements are not to be boldly and hastily made, without taking pains to understand their application. Whoever will give the subject the time and attention it deserves, will soon master them, and he will rejoice the more in the success of his efforts at improvement, because they are so much his own.

One of the greatest defects in the American landscape, is the unsightly boundary which separates estates, or parts of the same estate, from each other; and one of the first things to be done, in the way of improvement, is to substitute the hedge for the fence, which can be done to as much advantage here as in any country, since the perpetual decay of the wooden barrier balances its cheapness at first, and the hedge, after the care of a few years, fully answers its purpose, and makes few other demands. Some prejudice has been excited against the hedge by the unsuitable trees that have been employed. The hawthorn is entirely unsuited to our climate. Its rich green is parched to brownness by our summer suns, and a borer, also, has of late seized upon it as its prey. But there is no such objection to the buckthorn, which is equally beautiful; and if the want of sufficient spine is brought against this tree, the cockspur or white American thorn is a sufficient defence for any enclosure, easily raised to sufficient strength, and equal to any shrub for the depth and richness of its green. For ornament merely, nothing can exceed the arbor vitæ; and, for protection, the honey locust may be cultivated into a boundary, which neither man nor beast would be easily tempted to break through.

Many judicious suggestions are here given for improving

the natural surface of the ground ; not to remove its unevenness and subdue it to a plain, but to heighten the native character of the scene by filling up rough hollows, removing unsightly hills and ridges, and bringing all the parts into easy connexion and full harmony with each other. Where the ground is impracticable for improvement, the various accessories in which landscape gardening abounds may be easily thrown in, to soften abruptness, and melt down the discordant elements of the scene. With such means as this, the level surface, which is the most difficult of all others to manage, can be made to have the appearance of variety, without forcing nature by creating artificial hills and hollows, which would betray, by their embarrassed aspect, that they have no business there. Walks and avenues should be made in accordance with the surface. On a level surface the approach to the mansion need not be direct and formal. Some variety may be given by a graceful sweep, which will carry its own explanation to the eye ; and those which run through the different portions of the estate should be rough or smooth, careless or labored, according to the scene through which they go.

There are many excellent suggestions for the treatment of water in landscape gardening ; and, as ours is a land of rivers and fountains, where there are few estates of any extent, without a stream running through them, or so near, that a supply of water is at hand, such directions are greatly needed ; since the improver is too apt to begin with artificial forms, and in the creation of them he effaces those natural features, which afterwards he would give much to restore. The straight watercourses and circular ponds, which he parades so ambitiously, as his taste grows more correct become wearisome to the eye. For a time he suspects all parts of the scenery, rather than his own expensive efforts ; but at last the conviction forces itself upon him, that all he has been doing would have been better left undone. The streamlet should be suffered to wander, or, at least, seem to wander, at its own sweet will. The cascades and waterfalls should appear, as if the hand of nature formed whatever masonry may be hidden below. The sheets of water should not bear the marks of mathematical calculation ; but the shores should have natural bays and indentations, and patches of verdure should occasionally overhang the edge.

We cannot follow the author through his remarks on the embellishments, which landscape gardening either admits or requires. They are sensible and well expressed, and will leave no apology, and perhaps no taste, for those costly enormities by which many ambitious places are disfigured. Jets and fountains perhaps will not be common, though in proper situations they are eminently beautiful and refreshing in the summer day; but rustic summer-houses, bridges, seats, and arbors, will everywhere be in request. There is no landscape in the country where they will not be an appropriate ornament, and the ease with which they are constructed places them in every man's reach. There is no greater public benefactor, than those who bring such indulgences home to the poor. They have taste, as well as the rich; and it is well for all that they should share in the power to indulge it.

We dismiss these works with much respect for the taste and judgment of the author, and with full confidence, that they will exert a commanding influence. For this purpose our recommendation shall not be wanting. They are valuable and instructive; and every man of taste, though he may not need, will do well to possess them.

ART. II. — 1. *Sketches Abroad and Rhapsodies at Home.*

By a Veteran Traveller. 2 vols. 8vo. London. 1836.

2. *At Home and Abroad.* By RODERICK O'FLANAGAN. 2 vols. 8vo. London. 1836.

3. *Pictures of Life at Home and Abroad.* By the Author of Tremaine. 2 vols. 1838.

4. *Sketches at Home and Abroad.* By MRS. JAMESON. 2 vols. 1839.

ONE of the chief advantages of the late Ashburton treaty, that great healing measure between England and this country, is the liberty which it has given to the expression of international opinion. This is quite as important in a moral sense, as