

devoted too much, and to some too little time, in proportion to the degree of interest which attached to them. The Leasowes detained me considerably longer than Stratford-on-Avon ; and I oftener refer to Shenstone than to Shakspeare. It will, I trust, be found, however, that I was influenced in such cases by no suspicious sympathy with the little and the mediocre ; and that, if I preferred at times the less fertile to the richer and better field, it has been simply, not because I failed to estimate their comparative values, but because I found a positive though scanty harvest awaiting me on the one, and on the other the originally luxuriant swathe cut down and carried away, and but a vacant breadth of stubble left to the belated gleaner. Besides, it is not in his character as a merely tasteful versifier, but as a master in the art of developing the beauties of landscape, that I have had occasion to refer to Shenstone. He is introduced to the reader as the *author* of the Leasowes, — a work which cost him more thought and labor than all his other compositions put together, and which the general reader, who has to prosecute his travels by the fire-side, can study but at second hand, — as it now exists in sketches such as mine, or as it existed, at the death of its author, in the more elaborate description of Dodsley. It is thus not to a minor poet that I have devoted a chapter or two, but to a fine rural poem, some two or three hundred acres in extent, that cannot be printed, and that exists nowhere in duplicate.

It does matter considerably in some things that a man's cradle should have been rocked to the north of the Tweed ; and as I have been at less pains to suppress in my writings the peculiarities of the