

it recedes from the eye, seems to close its meshes, as if drawn awry by the hand, till at length the openings can be no longer seen, and the hedge-rows lie piled on each other in one bosky mass. The geologic framework of the scene is various, and each distinct portion bears its own marked characteristics. In the foreground we have the undulating trap, so suited to remind one, by the picturesque abruptnesses of its outlines, of those somewhat fantastic backgrounds one sees in the old prints which illustrate, in our early English translations, the pastorals of Virgil and Theocritus. Next succeeds an extended plane of the richly-cultivated New Red Sandstone, which, occupying fully two-thirds of the entire landscape, forms the whole of what a painter would term its middle ground, and a little more. There rises over this plane, in the distance, a ridgy acclivity, much fretted by inequalities, composed of an Old Red Sandstone formation, coherent enough to have resisted those denuding agencies by which the softer deposits have been worn down; while the distant sea of blue hills, that seems as if toppling over it, has been scooped out of the Silurian formations, Upper and Lower, and demonstrates, in its commanding altitude and bold wavy outline, the still greater solidity of the materials which compose it.

The entire prospect, — one of the finest in England, and eminently characteristic of what is best in English scenery, — enabled me to understand what I had used to deem a peculiarity, — in some measure a defect, — in the landscapes of the poet Thomson. It must have often struck the Scotch reader, that in dealing with very extended prospects, he rather enumerates than describes. His pictures are often mere catalogues, in which single words stand for classes of objects, and in which the entire poetry seems to consist in an overmastering sense of vast extent, occupied by amazing multiplicity. I cannot better