

stagnate where it will be seen,— to leave intervals where the eye will be pleased, and to thicken the plantation where there is something to be hidden,— demand any great powers of mind, I will not inquire: perhaps a surly and sullen spectator may think such performances rather the sport than the business of human reason. But it must be at least confessed, that to embellish the form of Nature is an innocent amusement; and some praise must be allowed, by the most supercilious observer, to him who does best what such multitudes are contending to do well.”

But though England had no such landscape-gardener as Shenstone, it possessed denizens not a few who thought more highly of their own taste than of his; and so the history of the Leasowes, for the ten years that immediately succeeded his death, is a history of laborious attempts to improve what he had rendered perfect. This history we find recorded by Goldsmith in one of his less known essays. Considerable allowance must be made for the peculiar humor of the writer, and its exaggerative tendency; for no story, real or imaginary, ever lost in the hands of Goldsmith; but there is at least an air of truth about its general details. “The garden,” he says, “was completely grown and finished: the marks of every art were covered up by the luxuriance of nature,— the winding walks were grown dark,— the brooks assumed a natural selvage,— and the rocks were covered with moss. Nothing now remained but to enjoy the beauties of the place, when the poor poet died, and his garden was obliged to be sold for the benefit of those who had contributed to its embellishment.

“The beauties of the place had now for some time been celebrated as well in prose as in verse; and all men of taste wished for so envied a spot, where every turn was marked with the poet’s pencil, and every walk awakened genius and