

first improver. Could the original possessor but revive, with what a sorrowful heart would he look upon his favorite spot again! He would scarcely recollect a dryad or a wood nymph of his former acquaintance; and might perhaps find himself as much a stranger in his own plantation as in the deserts of Siberia."

The after history of the Leasowes is more simple. Time, as certainly as taste, though much less offensively, had been busy with seat and temple, obelisk and root-house; and it was soon found that, though the poet had planted, he had not built, for posterity. The ingenious antiquary of Wheatfield discovered in the parsonage-house garden of his village, some time about the middle of the last century, a temple of lath and plaster, which had been erected, he held, by the old Romans, and dedicated to Claudius Cæsar; but the lath and plaster of these degenerate days do not last quite so long. The progress of dilapidation was further accelerated by the active habits of occasional visitors. Young men tried their strength by setting their shoulders to the obelisks; and old women demonstrated their wisdom by carrying home pieces of the seats to their fires: a robust young fellow sent poor Mr. Somerville's urn a spinning down the hill; a vigorous iconoclast beheaded the piping fawn at a blow. There were at first large additions made to the inscriptions, of a kind which Shenstone could scarce have anticipated; but anon inscriptions and additions too began to disappear; the tablet in the dingle suddenly failed to compliment Mr. Spence; and Virgil's Grove no longer exhibited the name of Virgil. "The ruined Priory wall" became too thoroughly a ruin; the punch-bowl was shivered on its stand; the iron ladle wrenched from beside the ferruginous spring; in short, much about the time when young Walter Scott was gloating over Dodsley, and wishing he, too, had a property of