

CHAPTER X.

Shenstone's Verses. — The singular Unhappiness of his Paradise. — English Cider. — Scotch and English Dwellings contrasted. — The Nailers of Hales Owen; their Politics a Century ago. — Competition of the Scotch Nailers; unsuccessful, and why. — Samuel Salt, the Hales Owen Poet. — Village Church. — Salt Works at Droitwich; their great Antiquity. — Appearance of the Village. — Problem furnished by the Salt Deposits of England; various Theories. — Rock Salt deemed by some a Volcanic Product; by others the Deposition of an overcharged Sea; by yet others the Produce of vast Lagoons. — Leland. — The Manufacture of Salt from Sea-water superseded, even in Scotland, by the Rock Salt of England.

It was now near sunset, and high time that I should be leaving the Leasowes, to "take mine ease in mine inn." By the way, one of the most finished among Shenstone's lesser pieces is a paraphrase on the apophthegm of old Sir John. We find Dr. Samuel Johnson, as exhibited in the chronicle of Boswell, conning it over with meikle glee in an inn at Chapel-house; and it was certainly no easy matter to write verse that satisfied the doctor.

"To thee, fair Freedom! I retire,
From flattery, cards, and dice, and din;
Nor art thou found in mansions higher
Than the low cot or humble inn.

"'T is here with boundless power I reign;
And every health which I begin
Converts dull port to bright champagne;
Such freedom crowns it at an inn.