

“Iron tears down Pluto’s cheek”

at once electrified the meeting. “Iron tears!” “Iron tears!” Could there be anything finer or more original? Tears made of iron were the only kind of iron articles not manufactured in Birmingham.

I visited the Botanic Gardens in the neighborhood, but found them greatly inferior to those of Edinburgh; and made several short excursions into the surrounding country, merely to ascertain, as it proved, that unless one extends one’s walk some ten or twelve miles into the Dudley, Hagley, Droitwich, or Hales Owen districts, there is not a great deal worth seeing to be seen. Still, it was something to get the eye familiarized with the externals of English life, and to throw one’s self in the way of those chance opportunities of conversation with the common people, which loiterings by the lanes and road-sides present. My ear was now gradually becoming acquainted with the several varieties of the English dialect, and my eye with the peculiarities of the English form and countenance. How comes it that in Great Britain, and, I suppose, everywhere else, every six or eight square miles of area, nay, every little town or village, has its own distinguishing intonations, phrases, modes of pronunciation, in short, its own style of speaking the general language, almost always sufficiently characteristic to mark its inhabitants? There are not two towns or counties in Scotland that speak Scotch after exactly the same fashion; and I now found, in the sister country, varieties of English quite as marked, parcelled out into geographical patches as minute. In workmen’s barracks, where parties of mechanics, gathered from all parts of the country, spend the greater part of a twelvemonth together at a time, I have, if I mistake not, marked these colloquial peculiarities in the forming. There