

dilapidated gateway, entered the pleasure-grounds, — the scene of the walk so enchantingly described in the opening book of “The Task.” But, before taking up in detail the minuter features of the place, I must attempt communicating to the reader some conception of it as a whole.

The road from Olney to Weston-Underwood lies parallel to the valley of the Ouse, at little more than a field’s breadth up the slope. On its upper side, just where it enters Weston, there lies based upon it (like the parallelogram of a tyro geometrician, raised on a given right line) an old-fashioned rectangular park, — that of the Throckmortons, — about half a mile in breadth by about three-quarters of a mile in length. The sides of the enclosure are bordered by a broad belting of very tall and very ancient wood; its grassy area is mottled by numerous trees, scattered irregularly; its surface partakes of the general slope; it is traversed by a green valley, with a small stream trotting along the bottom, that enters it from above, nearly about the middle of the upper side, and that then, cutting it diagonally, passes outwards and downwards towards the Ouse through the lower corner. About the middle of the park this valley sends out an off-shoot valley, or dell rather, towards that upper corner furthest removed from the corner by which it makes its exit; the off-shoot dell has no stream a-bottom, but is a mere grassy depression, dotted with trees. It serves, however, with the valleys into which it opens, so to break the surface of the park that the rectangular formality of the lines of boundary almost escape notice. Now, the walk described in “The Task” lay along three of the four sides of this parallelogram. The poet, quitting the Olney road at that lower corner where the diagonal valley finds egress, struck up along the side of the park, turned at the nearer upper corner, and passed through the belting of wood that runs along the