

A
P R O S P E C T
FROM
B A R R O W H I L L,
IN STAFFORDSHIRE.

A
P R O S P E C T
F R O M
B A R R O W H I L L,
N E A R
R O C E S T E R,
I N
S T A F F O R D S H I R E.



Wide and undetermined prospects are as pleasing to the fancy, as speculations of eternity or infinitude are to the understanding. But if there be a beauty or uncommonness joined with this grandeur, as in a spacious landscape, cut out into rivers, woods, rocks, and meadows, the pleasure still grows upon us, as it arises from more than a single principle.

SPECTATOR, N^o. 412.

B I R M I N G H A M :
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T O
THE REVEREND
JOSEPH CLOWES,
MINISTER OF ROCESTER,
THE
FOLLOWING PAGES
ARE
RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY HIS
AFFECTIONATE SERVANT,

DAN. ASTLE.

*your bro of Tho. A. & fond of
Dan! A. keeper of Brickley lodge in Need
wood forest. He was a Captain Daning now a curate*

A
P R O S P E C T
F R O M
B A R R O W H I L L, &c.

ROCESTER is a neat little village, about five miles to the north of 'Uttoxeter, in Staffordshire; situated among rich and beautiful meadows, in a valley between two rivers, called the Dove and the Churnet; the former of these passing by the eastern side of the town, at the distance of a quarter of a mile, and the latter by the western, not farther from it than two hundred yards.

From

From hence you are conducted by an excellent turnpike-road (which goes through this place to Ashborn in the Peak) to a high situation immediately beyond the town.-----This aspiring eminence, on your near approach to it's top, excites the idea of a vast pyramid, erected in the centre of a magnificent amphitheatre of hills, with design to afford the eye of the spectator as perfect a landscape, as can be found within the circuit of an island, on which nature has lavished all her charms.

The base of this hill is some miles in circumference, and projects itself in such a manner that the whole adjacent plain appears to be divided into a number of spacious valleys, which wander several ways, with a most pleasing irregularity, among the hills that are the distant boundaries of this very extensive area. It's descent is equally sudden every way from the top to the bottom, so that

that the two rivers are seen with peculiar advantage from the same point of view; sometimes nearer to you in their meanders through the verdant lawn, sometimes more remote, but seemingly confined to no particular channels; so mazy, so various are the forms in which they glide along.

The hills every where rise from the margin of the vales, one behind another, in successive ranges, their different slopes having all the beautiful inequalities that nature or art can produce. Each hill lifts it's smooth or shaggy head above the other with proud superiority, guarding the ample plain with an high-surrounding azure rampart----The whole scene is delicately chequered with groves, corn-fields, and pasture-ground, whose verdure acquires at each distance a fresh diversity of tints that affect the eye with exquisite delight.

The entrance of the valley towards the north is bounded on the left by steep stupendous mountains, called Weever-hills.----These are entirely naked and undivided from their summits downwards, for some miles; but their lower parts are adorned with every improvement that agriculture can bestow upon them----spacious enclosures appropriated to the cultivation of different kinds of grain; fertile fields grazed by numerous flocks and herds; all interspersed with spruce cottages, small clumps of fir-trees, broken rocks, and woody declivities.

Nor is the right hand-side less swelling and elevated, though it by no means presents you with so formidable an aspect, as it principally consists of little chearful villages, well-cultivated farms and meadows, beautifully intersected by shady hedge-rows.

The

The object that first attracts the eye is a well finished stone-bridge consisting of four arches over the river Dove, in the road between two villages that now appear in view. They are called Ellaſton and Norbury. The tower-ſteeple of the former embellishes the ſcene before us: the ſacred edifice ſtands on a riſing ground near the entrance of a deep irriguous dale, cloathed on both ſides with buſhes and low trees, which cauſe a finely wild variety. Norbury is diſtinguiſhed by a venerable Gothic church, and an handsome parſonage-houſe, ſituated on a romantic hill, from whence there is a proſpect inferior only to that which is the ſubject of the preſent deſcription.

What moſt engages the attention next, is Calwich, the ſeat of Mr. Dews, a clergyman. It lies deep in the peaceful ſecurity of a ſweet vale, upon the flowery borders of the river Dove, almoſt direct-

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ly

ly under Norbury; so that an exchange of each others most striking beauties is produced by this lovely vicinity. — But this part of the landscape is so richly embellished with wood, water and architecture, and contains such a variety, that it is impossible to set it out in all it's charming colours.

As you pursue your view still further up the valley, the prospect appears greatly enriched by the pleasant village of Mathfield and it's neat parish church, together with the fair seat of Thomas Ley, Esquire. This view is terminated at the distance of nine miles by the mountains of the Peak, towering one above another in grotesque shapes, 'till their blue summits are confounded in the clouds, of which themselves often appear to be a part. — At the foot of these, Ashborn spire-sleeple presents itself to charming advantage; but the town cannot be seen by reason of it's situation behind one of the hills.

These

These huge masses of earth being strongly impregnated with limestone, the torrents that descend from them in rainy seasons have the happiest effect on the soil, which imbibes their fertilizing qualities. Hence the whole vale over which the eye now expatiates, receives a vigour that cannot be impaired, and a verdure that will never fade, so long as the river Dove continues to flow through this country of perpetual spring — where

“ Full handed plenty revels in each lawn.”

Among other things which add beauty to the prospect, we must not omit Alverton-castle, now in ruins, but once the magnificent abode of the respectable family of Verdon, it's founder. After the intervention of four miles of uneven country, watered by the Churnet, this monument of antiquity offers itself to our view. It is situated on
the

the top of an high rocky precipice, to the West, a little on the left hand of Weever-hills. Still above this castle, on the same declivity, stands a large stony building, named Bailey-hill, which, from it's abrupt, and airy station, seems to have been erected for a place of strength, and observation. Besides these artificial objects, the eye now surveys two extensive tracts of land, called Hollington-heath and Stubwood. The hilly parts of these uncultivated places, present themselves in fine sable ranges, producing a very agreeable contrast with the lively scenes below.

Directly under you, at an immense depth, lies a little hamlet, known by the name of Denston. Looking downwards you descry it's rustic houses softly embosomed in tufted blossoms of pear and apple trees. The whole has a pretty effect, but every thing appears in miniature, agreeable to
that

that law of nature which ordains that objects shall be apparently lessened as their distance increases.

Upon turning round to the South, you instantly command a prospect down a delicious green vale of great extent, guarded on every side by high hills, either nodding with wood, waving with corn, or covered with cattle. — But the spectator is not confined within the limits of this beautiful plain. The eye penetrates into Shropshire, and has a distant view of the Wrekin, with the country, out of which rises that celebrated hill.

The church and town of Rocester are seated at your feet. You overlook a thousand flowery fields, enlivened with lowing herds, and bleating flocks. The Dove and Churnet glide through them in sportive meanders; or tumble headlong in cascades, that fill the air with pleasing sounds. By and by they join their silver streams, and become
one

one rapid river. — In this channel it goes boiling along with a mighty noise, 'till it comes to a sleep, where, (through a vista of slender trees,) you again behold it in it's impetuous fall. Then you hear it's gentler murmurs, and see the limpid stream shining in distant parts of the vale, and at last retiring from the sight, after having reflected in it's pure bosom, all that can enrich or beautify a country.

On the right, at the distance of a mile and an half, appears an handsome edifice composed of brick and stone, the residence of Thomas Baimbrigg, Esquire, who has lately given it the name of Wood-seat. This house is built on the side of a gentle hill, which is adorned with single shady trees, and screened from the northern winds by a plantation of flourishing evergreens.

Opposite

Opposite to Wood-seat are a chain of hills not only finely indented, but crowned for near two miles together with a spreading foliage of stately oaks. Underneath their embowering shades stands Eaton-hall, a venerable old pile, now going to ruin: yet these ruins still retain some features of magnificence, and command that respect which is due to the remains of antiquity.

Agreeable objects still multiply upon the sight. The next in order is Crakemarsh, the seat of the Reverend Doctor Cotton, about three miles below you, in the middle of the plain. This spot has many natural beauties, and is likewise set off by some artificial ones, particularly a canal terminated by a handsome Chinese bridge, with a fall of water sounding under it. — But there is an object on the borders of these decorations which deserves particular Notice. A little more

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than

than a quarter of a mile to the right of the house, a conical hill rears it's head, on the top of which is fixed a circular plantation of tall Scotch fir-trees: these are placed at equal distances from each other, and their closely compacted branches are so exactly of an height, that they altogether afford the strongest resemblance imaginable, of a wide-spreading fable canopy, supported by fifty or sixty beautiful Corinthian pillars of jet black marble; all proportioned with masterly skill. The last faint rays of a western sun streaming through these intervals, occasion a most pleasing and uncommon effect.

At the length of a few hundred yards beyond Crakemarsh, a lovely rivulet shoots straight across the mead, with such fearful speed and complaint, that one would imagine it to be making it's escape from some confinement or oppression. The Dove,
moved

moved by the lamentations of the defenceless nymph, stretches out his paternal arm to receive her into his embraces; and adopts her into his family of waters as his youngest-born. —

Directly facing you, at the distance of five miles, is the market-town of Uttoxeter, seated on an eminence which rises out of the wide-extended vale. A finer obelisk cannot be imagined than its well-shaped spire-steeple, mounting gracefully above the houses of the town.

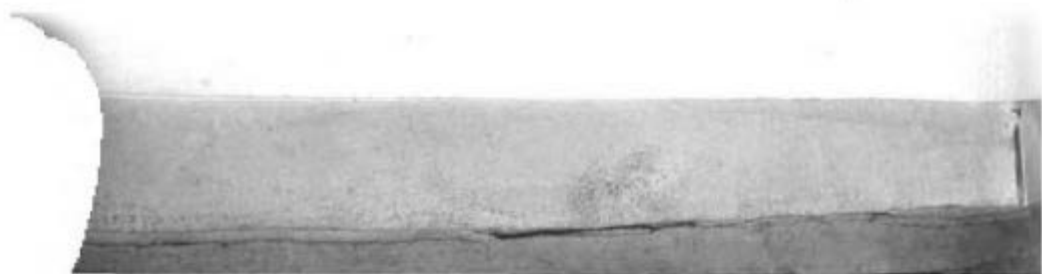
The prospect is terminated by the umbrageous tops of Bagot's Woods and Needwood Forest, backed by the fine hills of Cannock-heath, which make their appearance over a ridge of lofty land, about a mile beyond Uttoxeter, called the High-wood, on whose summit is conspicuously placed a large antient house, shaded by a clump of tall

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trees.

trees. — This range of hill, which runs from East to West, shews Loxley-park to the right, but does not preserve it's height towards the left more than half a mile, before it makes a gradual descent towards the plain, which is here confined by two opposite hills. The intervening space opens a fresh view of the wild banks of Needwood, a most beautiful outline ! excelling all that can be formed by the painter's skill, or poet's fancy. — It ought to be observed, as the last recommendation of the hill which affords these enchanting prospects, that the two landscapes now delineated, are entirely secluded from each other, and no where to be seen together, but from this happy situation. — The whole scene certainly comprehends every thing that is requisite to the composition of a perfect picture, and the words of a very eminent writer may with great propriety be applied to Barrow-Hill.

“ With



"With the woman one loves, with the friend of
one's heart, and a good study of books, one might
pass whole ages here, and think it a day."

D. A.

Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, June 25, 1777.
where my sister lives, who married
1. Ralph Wood of Market Bosworth
2. Rhonda of Uttoxeter

End of a prospect, &c.

A
POETICAL ADDRESS
TO
BARRROW HILL.

FAR from the scenes of luxury and pride,
Health in my train, and freedom by my side,
On your enchanting heights I seem to stand,
And view the wonders of the happy land.
The laughing morn, the gales that round me blow,
New life, new vigour on my frame bestow.
The venerable oaks before me rise,
And tow'ring hills that bear th' incumbent skies.
O'er verdant vales my fancy wings her flight,
And distant Needwood strikes the ravish'd sight.
Here glitt'ring spires in airy state ascend,
There ruins nod, and vaulted arches bend.
Waves the gay flow'ret here it's blushing head,
There wand'ring streams their glassy surface spread,
While Dove's loud accents fill the sounding shore,
And vocal rocks reverberate the roar.
Adieu, O fav'rite hill! O happy fields!
To whom Parnassus bows, and Tempe yields.

J. CLOWES.