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Thomas Love Peacock, *Headlong Hall*, 1816.

Mr. Milestone had produced his portfolio for the edification and amusement of Miss Tenorina, Miss Graziosa, and Squire Headlong, to whom he was pointing out the various beauties of his plan for Lord Littlebrain's park.

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MR. MILESTONE.

This, you perceive, is the natural state of one part of the grounds. Here is a wood, never yet touched by the finger of taste; thick, intricate, and gloomy. Here is a little stream, dashing from stone to stone, and overshadowed with these untrimmed boughs.

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MISS TENORINA.

The sweet romantic spot! how beautifully the birds must sing there on a summer evening!

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MISS GRAZIOSA.

Dear sister! how can you endure the horrid thicket?

MR. MILESTONE.

You are right, Miss Graziosa; your taste is correct — perfectly *en règle*. Now, here is the same place corrected — trimmed — polished — decorated — adorned. Here sweeps a plantation, in that beautiful regular curve: there winds a gravel walk: here are parts of the old wood, left in these majestic circular clumps, disposed at equal distances with wonderful symmetry: there are some single shrubs scattered in elegant profusion: here a Portugal laurel, there a juniper: here a lauristinus, there a spruce fir; here a larch, there a lilac; here a rhododendron, there an arbutus. The stream, you see, is become a canal: the banks are perfectly smooth and green, sloping to the water's edge: and there is Lord Littlebrain, rowing in an elegant boat.

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SQUIRE HEADLONG.

Magical, faith!

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MR. MILESTONE.

Here is another part of the grounds in its natural state. Here is a large rock, with the mountain-ash rooted in its fissures, overgrown, as you see, with ivy and moss, and from this part of it bursts a little fountain, that runs bubbling down its ragged sides.

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MISS TENORINA.

O how beautiful! How I should love the melody of that miniature cascade!

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MR. MILESTONE.

Beautiful, Miss Tenorina! Hideous. Base, common, and popular. Such a thing as you may see anywhere, in wild and mountainous districts. Now observe the metamorphosis. Here is the same rock, cut into the shape of a giant. In one hand he holds a horn, through which that little fountain is thrown to a prodigious elevation. In the other is a ponderous stone, so exactly balanced as to be apparently ready to fall on the head of any person who may happen to be beneath; and there is Lord Littlebrain walking under it.

SQUIRE HEADLONG.

Miraculous, by Mahomet!

MR. MILESTONE.

This is the summit of a hill, covered, as you perceive, with wood, and with those massy stones scattered at random under the trees.

MISS TENORINA.

What a delightful spot to read in on a summer's day! The air must be so pure, and the wind must sound so divinely in the tops of those old pines!

MR. MILESTONE.

Bad taste, Miss Tenorina. Bad taste, I assure you. Here is the spot improved. The trees are cut down: the stones are cleared away: this is an octagonal pavilion, exactly on the centre of the summit: and there you see Lord Littlebrain, on the top of the pavilion, enjoying the prospect with a telescope.

SQUIRE HEADLONG.

Glorious, egad!

MR. MILESTONE.

Here is a rugged mountainous road, leading through impervious shades: the ass and the four goats characterize a wild uncultured scene. Here, as you perceive, it is totally changed into a beautiful gravel-road, gracefully curving through a belt of limes: and there is Lord Littlebrain driving four-in-hand.

SQUIRE HEADLONG.

Exquisite, upon my soul!

MR. MILESTONE.

Here is Littlebrain Castle, a Gothic moss-grown structure, half-bosomed in trees. Near the casement of that turret is an owl peeping from the ivy.

SQUIRE HEADLONG.

And devilish wise he looks.

MR. MILESTONE.

Here is the new house, without a tree near it, standing in the midst of an undulating lawn — a white, polished, angular building, reflected to a nicety in this waveless lake: and there you see Lord Littlebrain looking out of the window.

SQUIRE HEADLONG.

And devilish wise he looks too. You shall cut me a giant before you go.

MR. MILESTONE.

Good. I'll order down my little corps of pioneers.

William Gilpin, *Remarks on Forest Scenery*, 1791.

FROM *clumps* we naturally proceed to *park-scenery*, which is generally composed of *combinations of clumps*, interspersed with lawns. It is seldom composed of any large district of wood: which is the characteristic of forest-scenery. 1

The park, which is a species of landscape little known, except in England, is one of the noblest appendages of a great house. Nothing gives a mansion so much dignity as these home demesns; nor contributes more to mark it's consequence. A great house, in a course of years, naturally acquires space around it. A noble park therefore is the natural appendage of an ancient mansion. 5

To the size, and grandeur of the house, the park should be proportioned. *Benheim-castle* with a paddock around it; or a small villa in the middle of *Woodstock-park*, would be equally out of place. 10

The house should stand nearly in the centre of the park; that is, it should have ample room about it on every side. *Perworth-house*, one of the grandest piles in England, loses much of it's grandeur from being placed at the extremity of the park, where it is elbowed by a church-yard. 15

The *exact spot* depends intirely on the ground. There are grand situations of various kinds. In general, houses are built first; and parks are added afterwards by the occasional removal of inclosures. A great house stands most nobly on an elevated knoll, from whence it may overlook the distant country; while the woods of the park screen the regularity of the intervening cultivation. 20

Or it stands well on the side of a valley, which winds along it's front: and is adorned with wood, or a natural stream hiding, and discovering itself among the clumps at the bottom of the vale. Or it stands with dignity, as *Longleat* does, in the centre of demesns, which shelve gently down to it on every side. — Even on a dead flat I have seen a house draw beauties around it. At the seat of the late Mr. *Bilson Legge*, (now lord *Stawel's*) in the middle of *Holt-forest*, a lawn unvaried by a single swell, is yet varied with clumps of different forms, receding behind each other, in so pleasing a manner, as to make an agreeable scene. 25

By these observations I mean only to shew, that in whatever part of a park a house may have been originally placed, it can hardly have been placed so awkwardly, but that, in some way or other, the scenery may be happily adapted to it. There are some situations indeed so very untoward, that scarce any remedy can be applied: as when the front of a house immediately urges on a rising ground. But such awkward situations are rare; and in general, the variety of landscape is such, that it may almost always be brought in one form, or other, to serve the purposes of beauty. The many improvements of the ingenious Mr. *Brown*, in various parts of England, bear witness to the truth of these observations. — The beauty however of park-scenery is undoubtedly *best* displayed on a *varied surface* — where the ground swells, and falls — where hanging lawns, screened with wood, are connected with vallies — and where one part is continually playing in contrast with another. 30

As the park is an appendage of the house, it follows, that it should participate of it's neatness, and elegance. Nature, in all her great walks of landscape, observes this accommodating rule. She seldom passes abruptly from one mode of scenery to another; but generally connects different species of landscape by some third species, which participates of both. A mountainous country rarely sinks immediately into a level one; the swellings and heavings of the earth, grow gradually less. Thus as the house is connected with the country through the medium of the park; the park should partake of the neatness of the one, and of the wildness of the other. 35

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As the park is a scene either planted by art, or, if naturally woody, artificially improved, we expect a beauty, and contrast in it's *chumps*, which we do not look for in the wild scenes of nature. We expect to see it's lawns, and their appendages, contrasted with each other, in shape, size, and disposition: from which a variety of artificial scenes will arise. We expect, that when trees are left standing as *individuals*, they should be the most beautiful of their kind, elegant and well-balanced. We expect, that all offensive trumpery, and all the rough luxuriance of undergrowth, should be removed: unless where it is necessary to thicken, or connect a scene; or hide some staring boundary. In the wild scenes of nature we have grander exhibitions, but greater deformities, than are generally met with in the works of art. As we seldom meet with these sublime passages in improved landscape; it would be unpardonable if any thing disgusting should appear.

In the park-scene we wish for no expensive ornament. Temples, Chinese-bridges, obelisks, and all the labour'd works of art, suggest inharmonious ideas. If a bridge be necessary, let it be elegantly plain. If a deer-shed, or a

keeper's lodge be required; let the fashion of each be as simple, as it's use. Let nothing appear with ostentation, or parade. — Within restrictions however of this kind we mean not to include piles of *superior grandeur*. Such a palace as Blenheim-castle distributes it's greatness far and wide. There, if the bridge be immense, or the obelisk superb, it is only what we naturally expect. It is the chain of ideas properly carried on, and *gradually lost*. My remarks regard only such houses, as may be rich indeed, and elegant; but have nothing in them of *superior magnificence*.

One ornament of this kind, I should be inclined to allow; and that is a handsome gate at the entrance of the park: but it should be proportioned in richness, and elegance to the house; and should also correspond with it in stile. It should raise the first impression of what you are to expect. Warwick-castle requires a mode of entrance very different from lord Scarsdale's at Kettlestone; and Burleigh-house, very different from both. The park-gate of Sion-house is certainly elegant; but it raises the idea of a stile of architecture, which you must drop, when you arrive at the house.

The road also through the park should bear the same proportion. It should be spacious, or moderate, like the house it approaches. Let it wind: but let it not take any deviation, which is not well accounted for. To have the convenience of winding along a valley, or passing a commodious bridge, or avoiding a wood, or a piece of water, any traveller would naturally wish to deviate a little; and obstacles of this kind, if necessary, must be interposed. Mr. Brown was often very happy in creating these artificial obstructions.

From every part of the approach, and from the ridings, and favourite walks about the park, let all the boundaries be secreted. A view of paling, tho in some cases it may be picturesque, is in general disgusting.

If there be a *natural* river, or a real ruin in the scene, it may be a happy circumstance: let the best use be made of it: but I should be cautious in advising the *creation* of either. At least, I have rarely seen either ruins, or rivers well manufactured. Mr. Brown, I think, has failed more in river-making than in any of his attempts. An artificial lake has sometimes a good effect; but neither propriety, nor beauty can arise from it, unless the heads and extremities of it are perfectly well managed, and concealed: and after all, the success is hazardous. You must always suppose it a portion of a larger piece of water; and it is not easy to carry on the imposition. If the house be magnificent, it seldom receives much benefit from an artificial production of this kind. Grandeur is rarely produced.

Seldom art

Can emulate that magnitude sublime,  
Which spreads the native lake: and filling there,  
Her works betray their character, and name;  
And dwindle into pools



Two etchings by Hearne and Pouncy from Richard Payne Knight,  
*The Landscape*, 1794