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978-1-108-06939-7 - *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1776, on Several Parts of Great Britain: Particularly the High-Lands of Scotland: Volume 1*

William Gilpin

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Clergyman, schoolmaster and writer on aesthetics, William Gilpin (1724–1804) is best known for his works on the picturesque. In his *Essay on Prints*, published in 1768 and reissued in this series, he defined picturesque as ‘a term expressive of that peculiar kind of beauty, which is agreeable in a picture’. First published in 1789, this two-volume work forms part of a series which records his reflections on the picturesque across British landscapes. It traces the journey he made in 1776, equipped with notebook and sketching materials, exploring the landscape of the Scottish Highlands via northern England, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Reproductions of his pen-and-wash drawings are included. The companion volumes of Gilpin’s *Observations* on other parts of Britain are also reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection. Volume 1 of the present work takes in such notable sites as Holyrood Palace, Stirling Castle, the Grampian Mountains and Glencoe.

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VOLUME 1

WILLIAM GILPIN



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PICTURESQUE BEAUTY,  
Made in the YEAR 1776,  
On several PARTS of GREAT BRITAIN;  
PARTICULARLY THE  
HIGH-LANDS of SCOTLAND.

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V O L. I.

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By WILLIAM GILPIN, A. M.  
PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY; AND  
VICAR OF BOLDRE IN NEW-FOREST, NEAR LYMINGTON.

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L O N D O N;  
PRINTED FOR R. BLAMIRE, STRAND.

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T O T H E  
E A R L H A R C O U R T .

M Y L O R D ,

B E S I D E S your Lordship's great attachment to the polite arts, I have other reasons for placing your name before these papers. If you will accept this address as an instance of my gratitude, I leave it to the world to judge of it's propriety.

In perusing these remarks your Lordship will be pleased to recollect, they were written in the year 1776 ;

A 2                      since

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since which time many of the artificial scenes taken notice of in them, have probably undergone great improvement. In such instances I only shew how much has been done, by shewing how much was wanting.

The subject of these volumes, my Lord, is so nearly that of a late publication on the lakes, and mountains of Cumberland, that similar ideas must of course frequently occur. In this case I have endeavoured to vary my object by throwing different lights upon it--- and to vary my remarks by throwing them on different circumstances.

In



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In the work I have just alluded to, many thought my language too luxuriant---particularly a friend of your Lordship's, whose practice in versification makes his taste the more easily offended, when prose, deviating into poetical phrase, transgresses it's proper bounds. Your Lordship's correct judgment may probably likewise have taken offence on this head. I can only say, I endeavoured, as I could, to adapt my language to my subject; and as *picturesque description* was rather a novel mode of writing, I thought I had some little right to adopt my own. But as I find many of my friends disallow my apology, I submit; conscious that

no

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no man is a proper judge in his own case. I have endeavoured therefore to make the following observations less liable to that objection.

But however justly I may have been censured on this head, I have heard other criticisms, founded on plain ignorance of the subject. Picturesque ideas lie not in the common road of genius and learning. They require perhaps a distinct faculty to comprehend them---at least they require more attention to the scenes of nature, and the rules of art, than men of letters in general, unless stimulated by a peculiar inclination, bestow upon them. Such men therefore are improper judges.

If

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If your Lordship's name, and countenance can screen me from critics of this kind, I shall rejoice at having secured myself behind so good a shield.

On the whole, if my remarks are so fortunate as to meet your Lordship's approbation; I have little doubt, but it will be an earnest of the approbation of the public. I am, my Lord, with great respect,

Your Lordship's obliged,

and most obedient

humble servant,

VICAR'S HILL,  
APRIL 20, 1789.

WILLIAM GILPIN.

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