



T H E
CIT'S COUNTRY-BOX, 1757.

By ROBERT LLOYD, A.M.

*Vos sapere & solos aio bene vivere, quorum,
Conspicitur nitidis fundata pecunia villis.* HOR.

TH E wealthy cit, grown old in trade,
Now wishes for the rural shade,
And buckles to his one-horse chair,
Old Dobbin, or the founder'd mare;
While wedg'd in closely by his side,
Sits madam, his unweildly bride,
With Jacky on a stool before 'em,
And out they jog in due decorum.
Scarce past the turnpike half a mile,
How all the country seems to smile!
And as they slowly jog together,
The cit commends the road and weather;
While madam doats upon the trees,
And longs for ev'ry house she fees,
Admires its views, its situation,
And thus she opens her oration.

What signify the loads of wealth,
Without that richest jewel, health?

Excuse the fondness of a wife,
 Who doats upon your precious life !
 Such easeless toil, such constant care,
 Is more than human strength can bear.
 One may observe it in your face—
 Indeed, my dear, you break apace :
 And nothing can your health repair,
 But exercise, and country air.
 Sir Traffic has a house, you know,
 About a mile from Cheney-Row :
 He's a good man, indeed 'tis true,
 But not so warm, my dear, as you :
 And folks are always apt to sneer—
 One would not be out-done, my dear !

Sir Traffic's name so well apply'd
 Awak'd his brother merchant's pride ;
 And Thrifty, who had all his life
 Paid utmost deference to his wife,
 Confess'd her arguments had reason,
 And by th' approaching summer season,
 Draws a few hundreds from the stocks,
 And purchases his country box.

Some three or four mile out of town,
 (An hour's ride will bring you down,)
 He fixes on his choice abode,
 Not half a furlong from the road :
 And so convenient does it lay,
 The stages pass it ev'ry day :
 And then so snug, so mighty pretty,
 To have an house so near the city !

Take

Take but your places at the Boar
You're set down at the very door.

Well then, suppose them fix'd at last,
White-washing, painting, scrubbing past,
Hugging themselves in ease and clover,
With all the fufs of moving over;
Lo, a new heap of whims are bred!
And wanton in my lady's head.

Well to be sure, it must be own'd,
It is a charming spot of ground;
So sweet a distance for a ride,
And all about so countrified!
'Twould come to but a trifling price
To make it quite a paradise;
I cannot bear those nasty rails,
Those ugly broken mouldy pales:
Suppose, my dear, instead of these,
We build a railing, all Chinese,
Although one hates to be expos'd,
'Tis dismal to be thus inclos'd;
One hardly any object fees—
I wish you'd fell those odious trees.
Objects continual passing by
Were something to amuse the eye,
But to be pent within the walls—
One might as well be at St. Paul's.
Our house beholders would adore,
Was there a level lawn before,
Nothing its views to incommode,
But quite laid open to the road;

While

While ev'ry trav'ler in amaze,
Should on our little mansion gaze,
And pointing to the choice retreat,
Cry, that's Sir Thrifty's country seat.

No doubt her arguments prevail,
For madam's TASTE can never fail.

Blest age! when all men may procure
The title of a connoisseur;
When noble and ignoble herd
Are govern'd by a single word;
Though, like the royal German dames,
It bears an hundred Christian names;
As Genius, Fancy, Judgment, Goût,
Whim, Caprice, Je-ne-scai-quoi, Virtù:
Which appellations all describe
TASTE, and the modern tasteful tribe.

Now bricklay'rs, carpenters, and joiners,
With Chinese artists, and designers,
Produce their schemes of alteration,
To work this wond'rous reformation.
The useful dome, which secret stood,
Embosom'd in the yew-tree's wood,
The trav'ler with amazement sees
A temple, Gothic, or Chinese,
With many a bell, and tawdry rag on,
And crested with a sprawling dragon;
A wooden arch is bent astride
A ditch of water, four foot wide,
With angles, curves, and zigzag lines,
From Halfpenny's exact designs.

F

In

In front, a level lawn is seen,
 Without a shrub upon the green,
 Where Taste would want its first great law,
 But for the skulking, fly ha-ha,
 By whose miraculous assistance,
 You gain a prospect two fields distance.
 And now from Hyde-Park Corner come
 The gods of Athens, and of Rome.
 Here squabby Cupids take their places,
 With Venus, and the clumsy graces :
 Apollo there, with aim so clever,
 Stretches his leaden bow for ever ;
 And there, without the pow'r to fly,
 Stands fix'd a tip-toe Mercury.

The villa thus completely grac'd,
 All own, that Thrifty has a taste ;
 And madam's female friends, and cousins,
 With common-council-men, by dozens,
 Flock ev'ry Sunday to the seat,
 To stare about them, and to eat.

