

Sylva Abbotsfordiensis

Introductory Note

The following text is a diplomatic transcription of a manuscript in Walter Scott's hand held at Abbotsford . This text represents an unedited and uncorrected version of the manuscript. Errors in penmanship and meaning (including possible mistakes of fact and in names of places, objects and people) have been retained.

Material deleted by Scott has been indicated by the use of angle brackets: < > and revisions added afterwards are indicated by arrows: ↑↓. Contraction and ampersands have been retained, along with Scott's at times idiosyncratic grammar, punctuation and spelling. Where it has been impossible to read a deleted word this is indicated by a question mark within the angle brackets. There is one word in the main body of the text that the transcribers have been unable to read. This appears on page 32 of this document and has been acknowledged. The transcribed text follows Scott's own page divisions.

This manuscript is owned by the Faculty of Advocates Abbotsford Collection Trust, having been accepted by the Faculty on 7 May 1937, following an offer by Sir Walter Maxwell Scott on 15 April 1937. An unbound note inside the notebook states that it is an "Account of Plantations at Abbotsford Bequeathed to Miss Hope Scott by her Father 10th May 1873".

The manuscript is contained within a notebook with marbled edges measuring 233mm by 190mm and bound in cream vellum with border tooling. The notebook contains a frontispiece which is a pencil drawing of a landscape including tree, chopped down tree with axe, and a hill and incorporating the words "Sylva Abbotsfordiensis". This has been drawn separately and pasted into the notebook. The notebook also contains a loose leaf note in a hand not identified which details the planting of items around the seats above Abbotsford on 7 April 1831.

As Scott indicates in the Preface to "Sylva Abbotsfordiensis" this document is intended as "a journal... recording all the facts & experiences concerning the management of wood" on the Abbotsford estate. The journal begins on 1 January 1819 and it is clear that it was his intention to supplement it each year with an account of the changed conditions within his plantations. To this purpose Scott divides the journal into sections according to the areas of the Abbotsford estate, leaving space to update each of these on a yearly basis. The last entries are in 1825 just before Scott's financial crash.

It is clear from Scott's fiction and letters and from his articles "On Planting Waste Lands", a review of "Monteath's Forester's Guide" (*Miscellaneous Prose Works*, 21. 1– 76) and "On Landscape Gardening", a review of Sir. H. Steuart's "Planters' Guide" (*Miscellaneous Prose Works*, 21.77 – 151) that both the management of wood and landscape gardening were keen interests of his throughout his life. This document adds valuable insight into Scott's thinking and practice on these subjects on his own estate. However, no attempt here has been made to provide annotation or to place this

journal within its rich biographical and cultural contexts. Any historical, specialist or local information that would shed further light on the journal would be gratefully received.

Please contact:

Dr Gerard Carruthers, Department of Scottish Literature, 7 University Gardens, Glasgow G12 8QH (email: gec@arts.gla.ac.uk).

Dr Alison Lumsden, School of Language and Literature, King's College, University of Aberdeen AB24 3UJ (email: a.lumsden@abdn.ac.uk).

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Sylva Abbotsfordiensis

Memoranda

Concerning the woods and plantations at

ABBOT'S FORD.

Commenced 1st. January 1819.

PREFACE

I have long imagined that a journal of this sort recording all the facts & experiences concerning the management of wood which occur on particular properties ought to be kept by all who are fond of this species of improvement and would by judicious collating afford in time light to illustrate many circumstances concerning which the professional writings on planting who are equally positive and such are at variance. Whether fir-trees ought or ought not to be pruned – whether trees succeed best raised from the seed or transplanted from the nursery – whether plantations succeed best on cultivated ground or on lea – are all points on which experienced planters are at great variance and which can only be decided by collecting a sufficient map of information.

Although however I have been a planter for six years and to a considerable extent in proportion to my property I have only in this present year (January 1819) adopted a measure which I have so often recommended to others. As however I have from three to four hundred acres of plantations chiefly (indeed almost entirely) raised by myself and those upon various exposures and soils and sites I hope I may be able merely by mentioning the regular treatment of this extensive & valuable property from year to year and noting the results to add something to

the

the map of correct knowlege on this interesting <t> ↑&↓ natural topic so at least to amuse myself and to interest those whose lot it may be to walk under the shade of the trees which I am now engaged in planting:

Abbotsford

1st. January 1819

Abbotsford

Larch-Know

This with the stripe leading up to the Gardeners house was planted by D.^r Douglas in Winter 1799-1800.

In 1812 when I bought the property this plantation shewd little excepting the larches all the hard wood having been neglected or destroyd. By gradual thinning the hard-wood chiefly ashes and elms has now had room to rise & makes a good appearance. The Doctor sowd acorns in the bank and I sowd with my own hands an additional number in 1812 which came up and promised well for two years but have since <?> disappeard.

In 1818 this plantation was again thin'd of larch & fir.

Sept.^r 1820 Some large larches & wellgrown Scotch firs again taken out. & the lower rows of elms and ashes markd for thinning in winter.

<October> ↑Spring↓ 1821. More larches taken out: the formality of the rows in which they were planted is now destroyd and the hard wood makes so great a shew that the name of Larch Know is now scarce applicable.

Spring 1822. More of the larches removed

Spring 1823. At the bottom of the plantation removed some half grown trees to the water side and dug circles around others to be removed next year.

Abbotsford

Home plantation

Eastern half planted in 1811-12.

A mixed plantation made after turnip and potatoes

Behind the seat called the round table was about half an acre of clover where the plants have failed in some measure.

In 1815 the hard-wood plants were cut over & the shoots have since been most luxuriant. In the same year the firs & larches were pruned.

In 1818 the hard wood was pruned.

This plantation is exceedingly thriving & will require thinning next year

In 1819 there were several firs taken out the rest pruned up and the hard-wood also pruned. The whole was found in admirable order.

In 1820 a general revision and thinning about October.

Western half of the same home-plantation was planted in 1813-14. after a crop of oats.

A mixed plantation like the former. It did not thrive so well for several years but is now coming on very well.

A great number of acorns were sown in the steep parts of the bank in 1813 but few can now be noticed though many came up. Probably the hares eat them down.

In 1816 the hard wood was cut over & firs pruned

In 1818 hard-wood and firs carefully pruned

<In 1819 The same process was gone through>

This

This plantation is upon the whole very thriving excepting one or two flat spots betwixt the public road and the edge of the bank.

1819 In August we began thinning and pruning the Home-plantation commencing with the bank opposite to the House. In some places it had already become an absolute thicket the firs and larches choaking the hard wood – in these we thin'd liberally judging from the rapid growth that the soil was good and [↑]conceiving that [↓]the hardwood would be well shelterd. In barer spots we contented our selves with pruning leaving the firs for shelter. I am satisfied of two things

st1. That a system of <prun> thinning as frequently practiced which should take out every fourth or fifth nurse all over the plantation is a bad one. Better make the wood thin in favoured spots by cutting out the nurses altogether and letting them stand thick on others for shelter.

2^d. Scotch firs when mingled with the hardwood should be pruned early and freely otherwise they grow to mere bushes and are worth little or nothing when the advantage of the rest of the plantation requires them to be cut. And nothing can be so wretched as to let them grow till they are worth something and meanwhile destroy the hard wood & each other.

In the revision of this wood we are careful to look at and thin to the best shoot the young stock-shots coming up from the trees cut down in 1817. They are doing very well. I have made a point of having the thinnings very carefully removed by men carrying them on their shoulders. The trailing them is very destructive to young plants.

1820 This year we again thin'd & pruned and find the wood very much improved Many of the young firs are now fit for stockings which they could not have been but for the early use of the knife and axe. The larches cut out are worth 2^d or 3^d

The stock-shots have thriven very well and a great number of acorns planted seven years ago are now to be seen. They are to be heedfully pruned and I expect will at length begin to grow.

Spring 1821. There was a revision where the hard wood had been cut down in order to single out shoots to stand for principal trees.

Autumn <1822> ↑1821↓ A general revision of the whole of the Home plantation with moderate thinning where firs or larches oppressed the hard wood.

Spring 1822. A general revision chiefly for the sake of thinning out larches this being the period for taking the bark of them. I think I could now show this plantation with some pride to any one who understands the subject. The trees stand free & have an equal share of light and air without being exposd and by judicious pruning are formd to handsome and thriving plants. It is capable of being varied by making some part thicket some part open grove. as taste & circumstances may determine. I cannot but remark that notwithstanding the eastern half of this plantation is a year older than the western and was < af> planted after turnip having all the advantage of the manure yet the western half in the hollows fully equals or even exceeds it in growth.

Spring 1823. General revision on the same principles as above and a good many larches taken out. The thinnings (bark included) do more than pay labour may ↑well↓ make some positive return if bark holds the price and the clearing the trees which remain is of great consequence. I firmly believe plantations may be brought many years in advance by judicious thinning.

Autumn 1823. The plantation again thind of Scots firs which are now pretty large – some far fit to sew into thin paling. The hardwood much improved <much> by their removal. The young plants seem particularly well formd

And will I trust have no occasion to be hackd with the axe at a future period: a calamity which maybe easily avoided by timely use of the knife.

March 1824 About 100 roods of good paling was cut from <among the heards> the Scotch firs – not of the size for fencing against cattle but sufficient for a defence against sheep.

May 1824 A considerable number of larch trees cut & puld which has rather added to than diminishd even the immediate beauty of the planting. This plantation in July seems to have sufferd much less by the insect than those which lie higher

May 1825 A quantity of larch and firs were taken out of which I hope to give an accurate account.

Abbotsford
Thicket.

Planted by D^r. Douglas about 1806-7

In 1812 as it seemd in a very neglected state it was beeted up with hard-wood plants with an unnecessary profusion. The whins were at the same time destroyd

In 1813-14 both firs and hard wood were pruned and the beneficial effect upon the oaks in particular has been most apparent as from low bushes they suddenly shot up into thriving young trees

In 1818 the plantation was considerably thind of firs & larches and a good<s> many young plants were lifted as they are growing too thick.

On the whole this plantation is luxuriant.

In 1819 the firs underwent another thinning: they are now of size fit for paling but rather too soft. The hard-wood looks admirable especially in the hollows. It is pruned this season (October)

In 1820. A considerable number both of firs and larches were cut out under my own inspection sparing none which stood in the way of hard-wood though it costs a momentary effort of resolution to destroy fine thriving young trees. The firs now make good paling the larches gates & so forth. They <are> The larches are well worth 6/ per dozen as most of them will bear the saw.

Spring 1822 so many tall larches about the thickness of a mans thigh were cut down that L^y.S. declares I have ruind the thicket. I believe on the contrary that I have perhaps been too gentle. Will: Straiton told me that if I was as hard a judge of men as of trees he would not like to come before me.

Unquestionably it is painful to cut down a fine tree but if stands in the midst of and destroys half a dozen why should this unprofitable feeling be indulged. It is fair however to record my own blunders. In 1812 as above noted I

I beeted the thicket with injudicious prodigality and though many planted have been since removed the hard-wood is still too thick and I am compelld to make way for it by <lifting> ↑cutting↓ larches which I might otherwise have permitted to stand for years

Spring 1823. The thicket so far from seeming too thin for the name has required another revision and some larches have been again taken out; half grown trees

Spring 1825 A good many Scotch firs and several well grown larches are again thind out Some of both particular the latter I grudge a good deal but the Beeting has made the plantation too thick – we cant help it.

Abbotsford
Water-Side-Upper Haugh

In 1814 a number of alders were planted to protect the water dike – They have thriven very well.

Same year a copse was formd of hard-wood trees without any firs at the <eastern> western end of the under-haugh. It has not thriven very well being exposed both to floods and to high winds

In 1818-19 a little copse of the same kind formd still more to the westward betwixt the upper haugh and the Tweed. Both copses are to be filld up with firs & larches for temporary shelter to bring up the copse if possible.

<In 1819 (October) I slit ↑the bark of↓ several of the transplanted trees upwards longitudinally from the root to the setting on of the branches to see if it would relieve their hide-bound appearance. This recommend by my kinsman John Swinton of Meadowhouse.>

In 1820 a great number of cuttings of the sand-willow were stuck in on the outside of the flood-dike to break the force of the water. I had tried willows of other kinds without success the soil being shallow. This kind was got on Melrose-haugh where it grows amongst the sand & shingles.

Spring 1821 In consequence of the drought of last year the sand-willows have almost wholly faild.

Autumn 1822. These trees were pruned & make a good figure – the willows shew themselves but feebly.

Spring 1823. Several trees removed on Sir Henry Stuarts plan i.e. without balls of earth and sitting them carefully keeping the stem elevated and depressing the extremities the roots while the earth is thrust in & ramd hard with the hand This is but a brevi manu attempt at his plan but I have cut circles round several trees to be lifted with more care next season. The trees were at the junction of

upper & under haugh

Abbotsford
Waterside Under Haugh.

About Christmas 1814 a number of large single trees were removed with balls of earth around the roots and very carefully planted by the water-side. They were brought from the bottom of the larch-know. They have almost all lived but cannot be said to have thriven. The bank is planted up with other trees to succeed them. A few pretty large trees planted in front of the house have succeeded better.

October 1819 On the recommendation of John Swinton of MeadowHouse I slit the bark of several of these transplanted trees longitudinally from the root to the setting on of the branches to relieve their hide-bound appearance.

Spring 1821. The above discipline seems to have answered very well. The single trees by the waterside have assumed a more healthy appearance – those before the house are actually flourishing and have made good shoots.

March 1822. Above 300 Alders were planted in this bank

March 1823. Added two or three trees transplanted on Sir H. Stuarts principle and prepared others for removal.

March 1824 I removed the trees prepared on Sir Henrys plan that is having their roots cut round about a year before and lifting them at the expiry of that period divesting their roots of all the earth which adheres to them and carefully of now incorporating them with the soil in which they are planted by laying them out regularly and kneading the earth <and> in by handfulls observing that the centre or trunk of the tree should be kept highest in the ground & all the roots made to tend downwards towards the extremity of the circle. I believe the effect of this process, is much more easily to incorporate

transplanted trees with the soil and to secure them against being wind-shaken the greatest evil to which a transplanted tree is liable. A tree thus secured to the earth by its roots is like a ship secured by many anchors. Whereas in the ordinary way of lifting trees with a ball as it is calld of earth it is plain that it must for some time roll like a bowl in a socket and that it has no intimate means of adhesion to the new situation which it occupys. Some of the trees thus transplanted in <february or> March are placed in the haugh & by the water side. They are coming in to leaf & their foliage on this their first year is as might have been expected slow and small & scatterd thinly over the branches. But their every twig bears leaves small as they are to the very extremity which shews the plants are compleatly alive & uninjured in their vessells.

May 1825 The trees planted as above mentiond seem to succeed uncommonly <th> well. The failiors may be as one to five even including some which are only disfigured and will come round I have this year transplanted about a dozen trees to border the road from the under-haugh (Laird Mercers to the stables.

Abbotsford
Haugh.

Planted in winter 1811 but from defects in the mode of pitting & want of experience succeeded very indifferently & has been since beeted up chiefly with larches which now make a considerable show.

1820 The hard-wood is now so advanced in this spot of planting that it admits of a number of larch trees being cut out. Accordingly Tom Purdie & I cut to the number of fourscore about the thickness of a mans leg and such as usually sell at 4/ or 5/ per dozen.

The result of this plantation & its present appearance satisfies me

1st. That cattle may be turnd into larch plantations without injury about the tenth or twelfth year 2. That from seven or eight years onward the return of such plantations must be considerable.

1822 April a quantity of larch was cut out of this planting at the barking season. Here and in the thicket I got a ton & a half of bark value £8,,

1823 May Cut a quantity of young larch as before.

1824 May. Took out a number of larches now six inches in diameter and fit for saving for paling.

Abbotsford
Parsons ↑Doctors↓ Patch and Strip

These small plantations rest against the eastern march of Abbotsford above the road –
They were planted by D.^r Douglas in 1806.

The stripe was thin'd in 1816 and 1818 and contains at the upper end some very
valuable young trees.

The patch has not required thinning.

1819 The patch was thin'd. It was much tangled with self sewn firs from Moss's
neighbouring stripe. Looks but poorly

1820 Sept. The patch was thind Several stout larches were cut and many of the wind-
waven trees staked up. The hard wood at the upper end looks admirably.

1821. Most of the larches & Scots firs were cut out The hard wood is in high order.
Much improved by the staking.

1822. Spring. Almost all the larch-trees were removed from the stripe. The hard-wood
comes on finely.

Abbotsford Fountain-wood.

Fountain-wood. This surrounds three sides of the Horse or high park and was planted 1814-15

The southern line is almost entirely larch and is tolerably thriving

The west side is planted on cold boggy wet ground and is only now beginning to thrive.

The north fountain-bank facing Abbotsford House has succeeded as ill or worse than any plantation <the> on the property which we impute to the land having been formerly used by the feuars of Bridge End for casting turf by which barbarous practice it has been much exhausted.

1819 The north-bank still looks poorly. Nothing thrives in it but the larches. It is mending however.

1820. The plantation seems improving but required no thinning

1821. Nothing done. The plantation continues to improve The trees in the little hollows are now rising fast especially larches & firs.

1823 Spring The growth seems vigorous & next year the plantation will require thinning on the North Bank. Same season thinned the upper or Southern line and took out a good many young larches.

1824. In spring I transplanted some of the trees removed from the bottom of the Spylaw, & the lower point of the home plantation to the Fountain park. They seem to promise very well tho the foliage is very thin.

Abbotsford

Constitution-hill Divides the Middle park from the Fountain park and was planted in 1814-15

The hard wood was cut down in 1817.

This plantation begins to thrive very fairly but the more shelterd verges of the bank are arising in a much faster proportion than the brow where the trees probably will not grow fast till shelterd by their neighbours.

1820 A slight thinning with much pruning was thought necessary. The stock-shots have grown well and much encourage the system of cutting down the hard wood.

1821. Again thind slightly and pruned with attention to the rising hard-wood.

Spring 1822. The tremendous gales of March having swayd a number of young trees I had them all trode hard into the earth again

Autumn 1823 We thind this plantation on the edges; the centre does not so much require it.

June 1824. It was here that the curse of the fir-worm was most remarkable this year probably because the young firs are closer toward the head of these plantings than in any of the others on the estate

October 1824 The whole was thind of firs and the hard wood pruned.

Abbotsford

Oak-Bank.

Runs up from the public road to the old Abbotsford-march & comprehends a patch of copse wood.

The lower bank was planted in 1814-15

The Oak patch in 1815-16

The upper oak bank in 1816-17.

In 1817 the hard wood was cut over.

The western side of the oak-bank though most exposed rises faster and freer than the eastern probably because two whole crops were taken from the latter side of the bank & from the western only one.

1820 This plantation was slightly thinned on the crowded places and had a complete pruning firs and hardwood.

1822 Young trees swayed by the March winds were replaced and trod in.

1823 Spring – Slight thinning.

1824 June. The fir-worm see remarks for this year is uncommonly numerous at the upper part of this plantation where the fir-trees are very thick.

1824 In the corner of the park adjoining to Abbotslee we have planted a few of the removed trees securing them from cattle by paling. Except one birch which is dead they have all come in to small leaves thinly scattered but healthy & reaching the very ends of each twig so I conclude this interesting experiment will succeed. Sir H. Stuart thinks birch is most apt to misgive during the operation. One or two of mine seem to live.

October 1824 Thinned firs and the hard wood pruned.

October 1825 The Oak patch or Birch copse as it might rather be termed was thinned of firs

Abbotsford
Lower Carline's wood

Runs from the border of the west park to the upper thicket.

Planted in 1815.

A very thriving plantation in 1818. & hard wood cut down.

1820 The Low Carlines wood was well pruned & the hardwood <cut> singled of to the single shoots which are very fine. I am sorry the hardwood was not cut down every plant of it. No comparaisn betwixt what was left to stand and the shots made from those cut down. The whole looks very well.

1822 The wind swayd trees were trode in

1823 The wood revised and pruned.

October 1825. This plantation being now nine years old the end of the last month & beginning of this was employd in thinning out Scots firs which we found obliged to do with an unsparing hand the hard wood having succeeded in a most flattering manner. The oaks in partiular are very fine. The wood must be thind of larches next spring.

Abbotsford
Upper Thicket

Planted D^r. Douglas in 1808

The hard-wood much of which had died was beeted up in 1813 but with little success. The firs were pruned and in some few places thind in this present season 1818-19. There are some hollows in which hard-wood has thriven very well especially near the Western march.

But either the deep heather or the hares or the exposure or all these circumstances have greatly destroyd the hard wood on the heights. So that it is intended in future thinning to reserve Scots firs and larches to be standard trees. For this purpose it will be necessary to give them more room to spread their branches than is usually allowd. 1819 The upper thicket was thind and pruned attending to the resolution above expressd.

1820 The firs & larches were thind out of the hollows where the hard wood was thriving. In other places firs were taken out to give air to hard wood plants that seemd thriving: All under my own eye. The North east corner was cut off to give a better line to the plantation looking from the belfrey at Abbotsford.

June 1821 On a review of this plantation the shoots of hard wood seem very flourishing and that too in many places where they had been dispaired of. The whole plantation is in the way of being much reclaimd and it was certainly in a most unpromising <way> ↑state↓. The change may be ascribed (Sumere superbeam quæsitam) entirely to judicious thinning pruning and above all patience.

Spring 1823 Revised and a few larches cut out.

March 1824 A large number of firs cut out for paling for they are now very suitable. On this <occasion> ↑occasion↓ I had

occasion the great <of> advantage of the unsightly but <beneficially> beneficial practice of depriving the Scotch firs of several rows of their branches. This operation makes them grow to thickness & will enable the persevering forester to answer the classical question Stemmata quid provant. for no treatment makes the trees grow so rapidly to bulk of wood whereas left untrimd exhaust themselves in branches. This spring [↑](1824)_↓ we also prepared thirty or forty trees for transplantation on Sir Henrys principle by cutting circular trenches around them about two feet or three feet distant from the stem of the tree. These we expect to remove next year with success. The trees selected were chiefly ash sycomore & elm but we have also circumcized oaks & birches.

Kaeside
Moss's Stripe

A strip of old firs planted without any mixture of hard wood about 25 years [↑]since_↓ and thind only as a stick was wanted. Of course there is not a good tree among them excepting a few on the edges

In 1816-17 after thinning this rank of hopeless starvlings they were planted up with oaks birches beeches spruces & other smooth-leaved trees on Lord Meadowbanks plan. It has ansverd however but partially many of the young plants dying In 1818 the strip was thind more liberally and several gaps cut through it. It has been <since> [↑]in January 1819_↓ planted up with pretty large plants removed from the thicket & else where.

A considerable addition was made to the eastern side of this stripe which was planted in 1817.

In 1819 more of the old trees were taken out of the stripe for paling leaving the best standing. The stripe has now lost much of its formal appearance the young wood shewing itself through the gaps made across the line of firs and relieving its monotony In 1820 Another gap was cut through the stripe. The trees filld in do not thrive remarkably & must be beeted with <spr> larch &c during the winter. The hares have eat most of the spruces – in general Lord Meadowbanks plan seems to fail.

August 1821 I cut a good many more trees out of this Stripe

March 1822. In the late high gales of wind a few trees have been blown down in this stripe. The presence of these spindles is becoming every day less necessary.

Spring 1823 Cut some more of the old trees for paling grouping those which remain as well as I can. As these clusters of old firs fall into the line of the young planting which rises round them on every side the formal ugly old stripe is now so broken into parts and grouped with young wood as to be rather ornamental from the windows of the House. It is pity that as these firs are most of them mere tooth-picks or rather

shaving brushes they must all be removed sooner or later. At the bottom are some fine old firs which will grow large.

The plants set amongst the <young> ↑old↓ firs get on very indifferently where exposed to the drop and scarce luxuriantly even where the old trees are cleared away.

Kae-side
Terrace-plantation

Reaches from Mosses Stripe to the house at Kaeside & the clump of old firs calld Turnagain.

Planted upon contract by Mr Lambe nursery-man of Selkirk 1816-17.

This planting is threatend with risque from whins & broom which must be taken out this year. The situation is dry & exposed & chingly and the plants were selected short ones on these accounts. It does not at present make much promise, but I think it will come away in two or three years. The little plantation at the east end around Turnagain was done by ourselves & looks more thriving.

The whins & broom removed in winter 1818-19.

1819. The plantation looks better but will require no attention this year.

1820. The hard wood was cut over in the end of autumn The third year is quite early enough for this operation excepting where trees have died at top in which case the only chance to save them is the immediate use of the knife

1822 Spring. Here as every where the young fir plants were almost blown out of the earth by the violence of the wind. I had them all replaced and trod in

1822 Autumn. In the beginning of November the pruners went through to relieve the hard wood from the firs & larches reduce the shoots to single plants and so forth.

Towards the west end there is a great preponderance of Scots firs & larches the fruits of planting by contract. At the end next Turnagain planted by our selves the hard wood is much better. The south side too though the top of the hill has finer plants of hard wood than the lower & northern verge

1823 After the long snow storm this plantation with others was revised chiefly for the sake of cutting off branches broken

snow &c. very little mischief had been done

Autumn 1823. This plantation revised pruned and slightly thin'd

Autumn 1824. Notwithstanding what was done last year the plantation was found so luxuriant as to require a great deal of pruning & thinning of Scots firs reserving that of larches till summer

1825. The hard wood at the East end of the plantation greatly excels that at the western end in growth and quality.

Kaeside
Jar-stripe

Runs down from the Terrace plantation to the bottom of the park. Was planted in
<1817> 1816-17

Much the same state as the terrace plantation

November 1822 The trees at the lower end of this stripe are thriving extremely –

Revised and pruned in the same manner as the terrace plantation

Spring 1823 Revised after snow storm.

Kaeside
Turnagain stripe

Divides Turnagain park from that calld Castle Stands. This was planted by our own people in ↑1816-↓1817 and looks better considerably than the work executed by contract in that year probably because it was more carefully planted.

1820. The lower part of this stripe very thriving – the upper part next Turnagain rather failing and by no means preserving its superiority over the Terrace.

Spring 1822. Reviewd the plantation and trode in the wind swayd plants. A very old thorn was blown up at the Castle Stead by the violence of the gales.

November 1822 Revised and pruned with the Jar stripe and Turnagain plantation. The hard wood thriving well especially at the bottom

Spring 1823. Revised after snow storm – little harm sustaind

Kaeside
The Picts ditch

An old fosse of considerable depth and extent with a vallum or rampart running in front of Kaeside now planted up with alders oaks birches and other trees partial to a sub-aqueous soil – 1816.-17.

Memorandum. To put in aspens silver firs & spruces this season.
1822.

A promising plantation. But there are rather too many alders.

Kaeside
Broomy-bank

A dry shingly bank to the west of Kaeside planted under Mr Lambes contract <in 1817> From the nature of the soil it comes on slowly.

Planted in 1816-17.

<1826> 1820. Comes on very slowly owing to the hard shingly nature of the ground as well as to its facing the south.

November 1822 Broom and whins cut and plants relieved. Still the plantation shews but poorly; the broom has been suffered to grow too long and has rendered many of the fir plants tender and ill rooted so that they require being trodden down into the earth to keep them firm.

November 1823 This plantation still comes on but slowly

June 1824 This becomes rather a worse than a better planting especially at the west end where the trees [illegible] get away at all It must needs be beeted with birches & oaks. The Broomy bank is at present the worst planting upon Abbotsford.

Kaeside

Orch yard

Planted 1818-19 sheltered by the Broomy bank plantation and having a fine exposure.

Kaeside
Rutherfords Stripe

A March-stripe belonging one half to Kaeside one half to Sunnyside the property of Mr Rutherford. Planted by Mess^{rs}. Rutherford & Moss in 1811-12 with Scots firs & a few larches There is a remarkable difference betwixt Mr R's side of the stripe & mine the trees in the former being extremely inferior. I understand Mr R. planted his side with only the assistance of his ordinary labourer and that his neighbour employd a nursery-man. But besides in 1815 the season after I purchased Kaeside there fell a heavy snow storm where I employd labourers to relieve the firs from the snow & cut off the broken branches. No such precaution was used by my neighbour.

In 1815 I put in some oaks & hard wood plants (though but a few) into this stripe and pruned the firs which have thriven greatly since that operation.

February 1819. A very pretty walk leading to Huntly-Burn has been made through this stripe by Tom Purdie who has directed it with great skill.

October 1820. Tom Purdie the piper and I thin'd this stripe taking out the worst firs and making room for the hard wood planted in 1817. I observe that the beeches stand choking and crouding better than other hard wood trees probably because their smooth leaves do not retain the droppings. For the same reason they should thrive as underwood.

March. 1822. This stripe was again thind and afforded a quantity of stout paling – We also pruned the hard wood which is doing well – The firs are very handsome and form a strong contrast to my neighbours who with more than usual rigour has trim'd up their branches within three or four tires of the very summit.

Novem: 1822 Again revised this stripe Tom Purdie & I myself thind out about 100 firs to relieve the hard wood scarce one in ten has been properly planted

Novem 1823 The plants in the southern end of the stripe

have suffered by invasion of neighbour Rutherfords cows

Kaeside
East-shaw plantation

Skirts the East-Blue Bank & divides it from Rutherfords stripe.

Planted by Shillinglaw upon contract <in 1817> at £5,,10,, per acre. in 1816-17.

The ground is a strong tilly clay, wet & cold, but is drained I trust sufficiently & if so should bear fine oaks. The bank has been exhausted by repeated ploughings & is said to have born eight whole crops successively.

The low part is swamp & till but has been drained: the plants look but indifferently & the firs get yellow in the lower end of the planting.

November 1822 The plantation looks much better.

November 1823 Revised and pruned & slightly thind – the plants look much better.

June 185. The roots of the trees appear by their demand for moisture to have affected completely the drying up of the bog and they are now thriving very well.

Kaeside
The Laidlaw-Steel.

A planting on the brow of Robiesland betwixt the two Bluebanks

Executed in 1817 under Shillinglaws contract and looks well.

Spring 1822 Sufferd by the wind. The trees trode in.

Spring 1823 Revised after the snow storm – Has sufferd somewhat being exposed.

Kaeside
Marle-bank

Consists partly of a stripe of old Scotch firs planted about thirty years since by Mr Mercer of Abbotslee but now thind and in a great part cut down.

In 1817 The remnant of these old firs were planted up with hard wood and a curve was extended to the eastward

In 1818 The line of the new or additional plantation was again alterd & brought eastward so far as the new road which runs to the south.

In the same year more of the old firs were cut down & the line alterd on the westward raising the new plants which had been set last year.

Memorand. The lower part of this marle-bank requires more carefull draining.

1819. The above draining executed.

1820. All the old firs removed except about thirty on the ridge of the hill.

1821 The old firs cut up excepting about seven or eight. The young planting looks well even where the firs stood.

1822 This plantation looks excellently.

Kaeside
Mushroom Stripe

Divides the Mushroom-park from the Honey lees.

Planted 1817-18.

1819-20 This plantation was beeted up and better drained Looks well this year.

Abbotslea
Upper Carlines-wood.

Joins the under Carlines wood on the north & Mr Milnes planting on the East.
Planted in 1818-19: the finest season ever <remb> rememberd in Scotland the
weather remaining mild & temperate without either frost or snow or tempest of wind
or rain untill this first week of January.

The firs are not to be filld in till the spring.

April 1819 This spring the evergreens & firs filld in accordingly

Some spruces set by Tom Purdie in the winter likely to fail if the unusually favourable
spring does not assist them.

1820 Looks well but requires no touching.

Spring 1822. Revised – and wind waved trees trampd into the earth

Abbotslea
<Bauchland Bank
Divides Bauch land park from wester>
Abbots wood

Surrounds the heads of the Abbotsford parks & extends as far west as Wester

Abbotslea

The knoll calld Experiment Know is planted with larch alone in 1817-18 – Oaks from 20 to 20 feet; 100 in number.

The rest with mixd trees in the fine season of 1818-19

The firs felld in March and April 1819 in very favourable weather excepting some spruces injudiciously planted with the hard wood in winter the success of which seems doubtful

1820 This plantation does not come on fast. The Experiment Know makes good progress having got beyond the hares.

1822. The planting now shows very well – the wind waved firs were carefully trodden in.

Abbotslea

Abbots walk extends from the north east corner of the old fir-stripe at Abbotstown to the Roman planting.

Executed in 1818-19: the leavd wood before (and limns the firs in spring –
The walk commands a fine distant prospect.

1820 The <wo> planting looks indifferently owing to the long grass

Spring 1822. The young fir plants all trodden in – They had been dreadfully blown about the situation being much exposed.

Spring 1823. Again revised the plants have sufferd more by the snow than elsewhere particularly near the western end of the Abbots walk.

Abbotslea
Abbotstown planting

Abbots town-park was surrounded by an old fir plantation on the north east & west sides. The trees may be about thirty years old & almost all are going backward. On the east side the firs have been very much thinned, the breadth of the stripe doubled to the eastward & the whole planted up in 1818-19. On the north-side the stripe has been this season in a great measure cut down leaving however a few groups of firs that seem fit to keep their station. The west-side has been permitted to remain for shelter with the purpose of planting it up. The timber cut in these stripes as the trees grew high & exposed is of the best quality for paling.

1820 The trees get up very slowly where planted among the old firs – Some are quite gone – All must be pruned & many cut down

1821. Several firs cut to make room for the young planting.

1823 <Spring> Winter & spring A good many old trees cut down for paling.

[Pencil loose-leaf note in another hand.]

Abbotslea
Roman planting

A very fine plantation along the Roman road skirting Abbotsford Horse park on the north & Kaeside on the east.

Planted under Shillinglaws contract of £5., 10 per acre 1816-17.

The north eastern end of this plantation is swampy.

In 1818-19 it has been extended so as to skirt the new road to the southward & it is proposed to plant the additional ground thus taken in this spring

The plantation shews great promise excepting one or two brows which Shillinglaw is bound to fill up; particularly along the line of <1819> an old fir stripe cut down before I purchased the property.

1819. The ground taken into the plantation was planted.

1820. The hard wood was cut down.

1821. Same – Where the old stripe was cut down the failure of the young plants makes a visible difference. Here and on Mosses stripe I am led to observe that the leaves of the fir contribute nothing to enrich the ground (like those of deciduous trees) or repay the soil which the growth of the tree exhausts Ergo plantations of old fir are of all others most precarious when it is attempted to fill them up with new planting.

1823 November. This plantation revised pruned & thind – the whole very thriving. The difference observd above still visible.

Abbotslea
Abbotsknows

A hill to the south of Abbots-town inclosed and planted 1818-19.

I expect much from this plantation which was formed from lea. It will be seen from a great distance and has a very pleasing outline.

The firs were as usual filled in in March & April the hard wood being planted through the winter.

Abbotslea
The March stripe

This stripe was formed for the purpose of sheltering the ground to the eastward & the western fence is the march dike betwixt me & Faldenside. Good soil

Planted in 1818-19 – hard wood in winter – firs in spring – The hard-wood was of a considerable height

1819 The plantation looks very well & the oak plants particularly have made large shoots a thing uncommon in the first year.

1822 The progress has not answered my first hopes. The plants seem to have been something exhausted by their first exertions in sending forth branches ere they had roots to support the expenditure

Toftfield & Abbotslea
Saints-well- <hill Sain> Side

Comprehends a large plantation which screens the Mushroom park and extends almost as far as the South end of the March plantation

Planted in 1817-18

The soil is of different qualities, some tolerable some bare & shingly some marshy & stiff with clay.

February 1819. Some very useful drains made in this planting

It required to be beeted with larches – which has been done accordingly

Sept^r 1820 The plantation is much improved in appearance.

April 1822 The plantation has suffered terribly on the bare & shingly parts from the long continued drought of 1821 which was the driest season I ever knew. The hardwood is almost all dead but the larches have survived and are doing well enough to stock the whole ground without more beeting – Scots firs are also doing very well – This stern poor moorish shingly soil is fitter for larch than any thing else.

The plants grow with less luxuriance & therefore straiter than in richer soils.

Toftfeild

Hare-Hole planting

Runs south & north across the descent of the Rispy law chiefly for the sake of shelter & at the northern end joins somewhat awkwardly with an angle of the Saints-well-hill. Good sheep-ground – planted upon the lea - 1818-19.

Toftfield
Anne's hill

Formerly Rispylaw – Looks down on the lake.

The north end of the hill is barren dry & rocky, the south end deep & tolerably good soil – A marshy spot betwixt them.

Planted in 1817-18.

February 1819. The north end has been more completely drained this season. It is proposed to unite this Annes Hill to the western end of the Saints-well planting by filling up an opening which had been left for sheep. Mr Laidlaw disapproves of this. But I think it necessary to shelter the other plantations that this open space should be plant and very thickly planted too.

1819. The opening above – mention has been planted up as proposed.

1824 Notwithstanding the exposed situation and the dry season this plantation comes on very well: the southern end is rather the barest

Toftfield
Hazelly Holt.

Extends from the termination of Rutherfords stripe to Haxell cleugh and serves to balance the Saints-<hill> well-hill

The Hazelly hol<l>t is dry good ground – the stripe as it runs southward swampy & wet but well drained:

Planted 181<8>↑7↓---18.

The firs were put in rather too large & look poorly.

In 1821 (spring) these large firs have recovered and look very well.

Toftfield
Haxellcleugh

A deep ravine with a brook running through it The eastern & lower part of the glen is inclosed & expected to be planted this <year> season namely 1818.-1819.

February 1819. The hard-wood is all planted as far as the under division

April 19. The firs &c filld in.

This cleuch bears a name similar to that of the Haxell-gate <a r> an ancient path way mentiond by Milne leading from the singular entrenchment or Eildon Hills calld Bourjo to the westward. Bourjo has always been supposed to be a place of Druidical sacrifice. If so the derivation of the names given to the path and the glen will come from Haxa which was the name given by the Gothic tribes to the chief priestess (hence the German Hexe signifying a witch) & the meaning will be the path & cleugh of the Druidess.

Toftfield
Camp-Cleugh

A deep gully falling from the southward into Haxellcleugh & ascending as high as the old British camp.
Feb^y. 1819. Inclosed - & planted with hard wood & firs

Toftfield
Hounds-Cleugh

A ravine similar to Camp-Cleugh and lying to the west of it It runs from a spring called the Well of the Worlds End down to Haxell cleugh. We are still in hope to inclose & plant it this present spring 1819.

We accordingly succeeded in planting this ravine completely in the months of february & March 1819

Toftfield
The Stell

A square plantation of Scots firs now (1819) about thirty three years old. They grow in an exposed situation & were intended for a stell for sheep. In spite of neglect and ill usage they have thriven as well or better than a plantation of firs close by Melrose bridge & upon the rivers bank at a place call'd Kerrs-shot said to have been planted at the same time.

They have been thin'd out with some judgement and may probably remain for a long time testimonies how the natural qualities of the soil to support wood can counter balance many disadvantages. It is my intention to leave them to their natural fate.

1824 Nothwithstanding ↑g↓ this resolution I have cut a few of the trees & others have been broken by the wind.

1825. The young wood on Haxell hill being now beginning to shew borky on the hill side around these old firs they began to have on their side a sort of character to which they were fomery strangers. A few old trees always have a happy effect amongst young wood but are rarely or never beautiful when left as a single patch on an exclusive down or thick on a hill such like a Burgundy-patch-plaster.

Haxell-Hill Or Druid's Hill

In winter 1820-1 We formed a large plantation by drawing a line betwixt the hazley Holt on the east and the Hare hole plantation on the west including the Stell and the whole summit of the hill. The plantation is chiefly formed of larches placed at six feet asunder but on the verges and particular at the southern slope which joins the Haxell-Cleuch the dry ground is plentifully filled with oak & other hard-wood. It is my purpose to let the larches grow till they are beyond the reach of Cattle and then to restore the ground on which they are planted to the pasture. It is supposed their leaves greatly enrich the ground. When the hill is pasture the oaks &c <but> must be fenced off but for this the thinnings of Haxell-Cleuch &c will by that time afford plenty of materials. The old British camp called the Roundabout is planted off with firs that it may remain distinct.

Toftfield
Mar's-Lea.

This plantation runs ↑southward↓ from Haxell cleugh to the entrance of the Rhymer's Glen

The ground is indifferent soil – lies on a declivity sloping to the east and is well drained.

It is planted with a large proportion of larches which in one place are set about six feet apart without any hard wood to try the plan recommended by the Duke of Athole.

The upper part planted with oaks.

The plantation was made in 1817-1818.

In <189> 1819 it does not seem remarkably thriving: the hares have done much damage among the larches.

Toftfield
Rymers Gl<e>en.

A romantick glen with a rivulet wandering down amongst rocks with remains of natural wood and a quantity of underwood of different kinds. The timber-trees of the upper part were estimated to me at £14., on account of the difficulty in clearing them out of the ravine.

In 1817-18 many full-grown plants of from six to ten feet high were planted in this glen but without inclosing. They have suffered by the sheep as was to be expected but still live & may thrive when cut over.

The glen has been inclosed this season 1818-19 and it is proposed to plant it up but so as to preserve its wild & natural character.

It was accordingly planted up in spring 1819 and must succeed well.

Toftfield
Ushers Stripe

A small stripe running south east from the south side of the Rhymers glen & dividing the sheep-farm the Tile-house park.

Planted by M^r Usher 1816-17.

This stripe is too narrow and the trees choked by coarse grass and bent.

The wood is chiefly larches with a few ashes.

1820 Thriving – A few Sweet or Spanish chesnut put in by Tom begin to shew themselves and thrive better than elsewhere

Toftfield
Tofts-Stripe

Stretches across from the public road to the Rhymers glen running north & south & bounding the West Tofts & Ox park on the west – also runs along the north side of the West Tofts park forming the boundary betwixt that and the <high> publick road from Darnick

Planted by M^r. Usher 1816-17

Som hard wood felld in 1817-18

The plants here also are threatend by coarse grass.

This plantation also consists chiefly of larch.

1819. The larches on this plantation have been greatly injured the leading shoots being destroyd either by the browsing of cattle formerly or by the frost especially towards the bottom of the Rhymers Glen. They are now forming new <sh> leaders.

1824 The larches have been thin'd and now shew no signs of failing

Toftfield
Reservoir

There are some alders & natural wood growing along the verge of the reservoir for the mill-dam. It is proposed to inclose and plant up a patch around it.

The run of water is prettily borderd with natural wood down to Huntlyburn house and there is one remarkably beautiful thorn-tree.

1820 A Clump of pines silver firs &c was formd on the brook betwixt the parks calld Green-tongue and the Ox park. As it is a small patch it was dug over carefully. When it rises it will be thin'd away to a few trees which in the situation will form a fine object.

1821 Willow stakes & pins planted by the side of the brook.

Huntley-Burn
Home-planting

This surrounds the Paddock and was planted by M^r.Usher in 1816-17
Some hard wood filld in in 181<8>7-18. <on the>
In 1820 (winter) the hedge rows were revised and a good many hard wood trees taken
out at Huntley Burn.

Huntley Burn
Home planting

Two patches on the south side of the rivulet opposite the house were planted by M^r Usher about 1810-11.

As they were partly mixd with old trees and overshadowed of course, the plants grew slowly and make no very remarkable appearance even now.

1821 November These patches were thind and pruned. They contain some good young trees

Huntley Burn
The Glen.

A short glen running down from Huntly Burn to Chiefs wood is <?> full of natural wood which however has suffered much from carelessness and injudicious thinning. On the right side of the brook beneath the park called the Charge law Mr Usher formed a plantation chiefly of larches which though indifferently protected is looking well. It would alter the character of this glen to plant it up or preserve it more closely being at present a beautiful gladed spot. A few of the most tolerable trees I have <thi> had the good fortune to find on my purchases occur in this glen.

Huntley-Burn
The Old wood

Consists of old oak & other forest trees (the best of which have been felld) which run stragglng up one or two ravines falling into Huntly-Burn beneath the house. These remains of old wood have a beautiful and gladed effect but are in the progress of decay from neglect and the habitual pasturage of cattle – an evil to be amended –

A flat <par> dais at the head of the old wood is to be planted this season to connect it more completely with the Capper-cleugh and the projected Chiefs Wood.

This dais was planted in 1819 (March) with Silver firs Weymouth pines black and white Americans &c which have sufferd much by the Spring frost

1822 The silver firs & hoc genus omne begin to look well also some horse-chesnuts – I thought for a long time they had faild but I see they will remain a long time alive though without making progress.

Huntley Burn

The lower part of the Capper – or Black[↑]-cock[↓] cleugh rising up from the old wood to the south was planted 1811-12.

It makes a poor show for its age and has been shockingly abused with cattle & choked by long grass.

1821. Thind and clear'd. The firs & larches seem to have almost no roots – the hard wood is thriving rather well.

1822 Spring – more clearing out of larches & firs which are rather ill-rooted from the ground being wet – the hard wood takes biting hold of the ground

Huntley-Burn
Upper Capper – or Black-cock Cleugh.

A deep ravine admirably adapted for planting. Planted by M^r Usher about 1798. Thinned in 1818-19 and found in a lamentable condition the plants having been in some places cut without rule or method and in others left growing within six feet of each other so that they have run up like fishing rods to a great height but without solidity or thickness or branches. We cut out a great number of hardwood trees as well as many larches & Scots firs. They were all remarkably healthy well-grown plants in despite of the negligent treatment they had received but fit for no purpose save shepherds crooks or handles for pick-axes & the like.

With regular thinning this plantation in so favourable a situation ought at the end of twenty one or twenty two years to have been worth some money
We will see the effect of what has been done this year.

1820 Autumn. The Capper cleugh underwent another revision and a partial thinning. The plantation is improving very much by admission of the air

1822 Spring - Visited this plantation with view of taking out only larch but found the elms &c so close together that their heads had no room to form. Encouraged by the success of our last operations we went to work and thinned pretty sharply amongst the hard wood – A willow in this ravine is the fastest growing tree on the property.

Toftfield
Chiefs Wood

It being my intention to convert the Tile-house-head park and the upper part of the Stobs meadow lying above the Charge-law into a wood of twenty acres or thereabouts to be calld Chiefs-Wood in honour of my dear freind the present Duke of Buccleugh it was this year put in preparation being fallowd by oxen from the lea - 1818-19.

The name seems to be appropriate as the site of the projected wood over hangs the Charge-law on which Sir Walter Scott of Buccleugh arrayd his clan for battle before the Skirmish at Melrose.

1819-20 The Chiefs wood was planted and by the kind consent of Lord Montagu several acres of Melrose common belonging to the present Walter Duke of Buccleuch his ward were inclosed in the same fence divided from my property by a line of spruces & planted with great care. The whole formers a fine planting of [lacuna] acres

Shearers-Flats

1820 I purchased from M^r. Heiton a property of about 70 acres containing a large plantation of fine Scots firs from 30 to 40 years old besides a long stripe planted up with larches very thickly running towards Melrose common.

I cut some of the old firs which are very valuable good wood The plantation seems to have had a proportion of hardwood trees at first but excepting a few on the edges they have been totally choked & have disappeared.

There is also much valuable hedge-row timber on Shearers flats Altogether worth upwards of £400,, the firs included.

1822 In the course of winter 1821-2 I cut a number of hard wood trees in the hedges and elsewhere where <either from> it appeared such thinning would be of service.

Same year planted up the old road which formerly ran up from the burn to Melrose common thereby uniting the larch planting on the Shearers flats with the Chiefswood of which it now forms the eastern boundary.

Chiefs-grove

A small plantation beside the brook at the Cottage formerly calld Burnfoot now Chiefswood from its vicinity to the plantation of that name. It seems about 20 years old and is well thind and very thriving.

1821 This plantation was augmented to cover the cottage of my son in law which he has calld Chiefswood.

1822. Another little plantation formd on the east side of the Home park at Chiefswood with a view to ornament. In honour of the baby John Hugh Lockhart we call the one patch Mount S^t John & the other Hugomont.

Short-Acres

A field purchased by me from M^r Riddell of Camieston in the end of autumn 1820. It contains at the eastern end a good little plantation lying under the quarryhill. It had been very much neglected. My first operation was to thin it as far as I dared in one season. Another clump lying at the west end of Shortacres was subjected to the same operation. This western clump was designed to be larger but a part of it had totally failed for want of draining.

Spring 1822. Cut 30 goodish young larches in this Short acres bush which has been much amended by the operation of thinning. The hedge may be taken down without great risque of injury unless sheep should be put into the park.

[This is followed by 59 blank folios]

General Remarks on weather &c as applicable to the Plantations.

1819.

The planting season was this year uncommonly favourable mild moist and open in an unwonted degree. But about the end of May came a bitter and destructive frost of which the effects have been very severe. The very great promise of fruit was destroyed in most parts of Scotland. Of forest trees the larches suffered much but the spruce firs still more. They seem as if they had been singed with a burning iron: in many instances they were killed outright & in most much injured losing all the extremities of their branches. The birches and ashes being caught in the very act of budding were injured in the same degree: many did not again put out leaves instead of those which they had lost until July was far advanced. The season was afterwards unusually dry and the harvest fine and early. The drought was unfavourable doubtless to the plantations nevertheless the trees which had been so much hurt by the frost seemed to recover in the course of the autumn. I observe that the influence of the frost is far most visible on the plantations beneath the public road doubtless because the hoar-fog moved up the channel & trough of the Tweed leaving the high grounds more free.

1820. 1821. 1822.

These especially the two last were remarkably open seasons. In 1821 the Ice-house could not be at all filled in 1822 we only filled it by taking advantage of a passing snow-storm in January which did not lay above seven or eight hours on the ground ere the thaw commenced. The spring was remarkably stormy with heavy gusts of wind

Which did much damage both among old and young plantations. The necessary precaution of revising for the purpose of treading into the ground and securing the plants which were loosend was resorted to through all my woods and I have reason to think has been of consequence.

1823.

The winter was truly Siberian. The snow which began in the middle of January lasted till the beginning nay till the middle of March – And in this month of June patches are still to be seen on the Moorfoot hills: higher eminences of course being white enough. The weather has proved since the breaking up of the storm dark cold and misty and unhealthy in an uncommon degree. A general Influenza and many deaths especially amongst aged or infirm persons More people have died than in any one year since the great plague of London in 1666. Good weather for Substitutes in Tailzees.

The plantations having been coverd many feet in snow required much revision especially amongst the Scots firs spruces. &c where leaves supported such a weight that the branches were pulld down & broken. Also the hares whom the depth of the snow place'd on a level even with plants of six and seven feet high and which were pinchd for food did damage among the plantations to an unususal extent. Nevertheless we at Abbotsford have been more alarmd than hurt. The leaves have been late in spreading on all the hardwood and I observe several kinds the oak, the chesnut, the rowan-tree, the birch & others very much affected by an insect (a kind of beetle) which eats the buds – fortunately it seems to spare as yet the young shoots.

1824.

The last winter remarkably open – There was only one day when the Ice-house could be filld Most fortunately the people availd themselves of that solitary opportunity as the ice was of great advantage to my excellent freind John Scott of Gala to whom it was applied during the access of a very high fever in consequence of a severe injury on the head sustaind by an accidental fall while hunting. Another old and intimate freind Charles Erskine of Shielfield also received benefit from the ice-house during the fever which followd a stroke of an apopleptic or paralytic nature. In both cases the ice was applied to the head in bladders and reduced the pulse with wonderful celerity.

The woods show no mark whatsoever of the injury sustaind from the storm in 1823 but have experienced a visitation of another & yet more disagreeable kind. The winter as I have said was very open & mild and it was succeeded by a cold spring and two or three very frosty mornings in May & June after which the weather was extremely drouthy. The consequence of the drought following the frost has been the growth & increase of insects to a most disgusting and alarming <degree> increase of the insect tribes proper to trees. The larches have been much affected by the Aphis willknarn as peculiar to that tree and many of the young ones died at top The oaks also sufferd a little from a similar cause and the spruce firs underwent a similar visit many of them have lost all the old leaves & seem as if they were singed and witherd The new shoot of this year is not affected. But the visitation on the Scotch firs is something quite portentous A green caterpillar (not an aphis) has appeared on these trees in quantity as thick as the leaves which it devours & resembling them both in colour and in shape the <leaf> branch in its natural shape but on looking attentively you see that the tufts are composed of caterpillars instead of leaves The insect writhes & agitates itself in a very lively manner It may be about an inch in length and the thickness of a small crow quill in other respects resembling the common. Upon the whole the sight is equally disgusting and discouraging. They eat all leaves bare excepting the summer shoot which they do not seem to touch. The numbers on one tree were some thing quite frightful and their powers of destruction

seem to rival those of the locust. They do not attack the very young plants nor the old ones but are very numerous in those about eight or nine years old. The plantations above the road are quite alive with them and there is no hope but in heavy rains which as yet 28 July have been denied us – Mr Laidlaw says he observed the same insect last year & that the trees on which they appeared sustained no ultimate damage. The oldest foresters do not seem to remember any similar affliction. Some trees in the eastern end of the Home plantation are affected with the plague which will probably spread if among the others for the wretches are active & loco-motive. The lower part of the plantations are rather more free from their visitation than those which lie higher. I incline to think that the first having injured the trees just when getting into <1> new leaf rendered them proper food for the worm to whose immense multiplication the dry season was probably favourable. Many of the trees seem partially to wither under the infliction and it remains to be seen whether when strip'd of all their foliage excepting the new tufts at the ends of each branch they can ever recover their vigour sufficiently to carry up the sap. I anticipate great loss among them but the case is beyond remedy.

30 June 1824 A heavy rain which commenced yesterday with a good deal of wind has removed about nineteen in twenty of the disgusting vermin which I consider as otherwise would have destroyed many threes and firs. Those (which are far too many) that remain sticking in clusters to the branches have lost their abominable vivacity and seem torpid or dead. When struck from the branches they make no effort to save themselves or reascend the tree but lie where they fall. I am surprized the birds have not found out so <rate> rare a banquet. In many places I see that they have proceeded to the new foliage where the old is exhausted & thus strip'd the branch quite bare which becomes wither'd of course. This pest seems to have been very local.

A species of Aphis also infested the birch this season. It

is a very small beetle which pierces the leaves and the tender branches in every possible direction so that the sap of the tree issues like drops of dew from the puncture & this in such quantity that it was impossible to walk in the plantation without being covered by this viscous liquid. But the rain in the first week of June abated this nuisance

August 1824 The plague of caterpillars has altogether vanished and considering the height to which it had arisen has left few or no traces behind – Some Scotch firs are withered but in general the absence of leaves on the lower branches <&towards the e> excepting ↑on↓ the new shoots at the extremities is the only mark of the devastation. I conceive that the resinous matter prevented the insects from attacking these new shoots which have thus survived to draw up the sap and nourish the tree.

Christmas 1825 On Xday was the highest flood ever known in Tweed The water was two <&> feet & a half upon the corner-stone of the Coachman's house in Abbotsford haugh and covered the whole haugh. It caught to some lime laid up in a sheet set fire to it and with assistance of some straw very nearly exhibited the singular feat of an inundation producing a conflagration. A great part of my dam-dike at the head of the upper haugh constructed in 1811-12 was destroyed but little damage sustained besides.

The Spring of 1825 has been slow and sulky dry and with cold winds until the very end of April when it set in fine seasonable spring weather. The garden flourish looks very promising. There have latterly been slight frosts however by night.

5 July. 1825 The season has been thus far unusually favourable the crops look well and promise an early harvest. There has been a happy variety of rain and dry weather seldom raining a whole day. The fineness of the Season with the increase in the value of agricultural produce & farm stock give great spirits to the farmer – This day I stocked the little pond at Duck-field (late a marl-bog) with five or six dozen of perches I had previously put in a few dozen of trouts but without hope of their breeding as there is no run -

running stream. I fear there is too small a quantity of sand for even the perches to thrive.

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The Nursery

February 1819 Received a large hamper of acorns from the Duke of Buccleugh & a quantity from Lord Montagu. The former from the woods of Boughton in Northampton Shire – the latter from the vicinity of Windsor forest. They seem of excellent quality and are to be kept separate & carefully reared in the garden and at Kaeside.

Same date. Received from Lord Montagu about 100 seeds of the great lime-tree which grows in front of his house at Ditton. This are to be reared in a box in the green-house to preserve them from frost.

Same date. Received from Lord Fife a box of seeds said to be Norway larch but resembling much those of the Scots fir. They are uncommonly hard and will not be opened without difficulty & caution is given to George Waynes accordingly.

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