

tical knowledge," that science always occupies when compared to those branches of experience which it includes. A landowner in one of the midland counties, as Northamptonshire or Oxfordshire, where fuel is dear, is naturally anxious to "discover" coal, and being completely ignorant of geology, or blindly credulous in what is called "practical" knowledge, sends for a workman, or "borer," from some coal district, to "find" the coal. A workman from some distant establishment is often preferred, and great alarm is felt lest the opinion of this oracle should be unfairly biassed by the influence of the nearest coal proprietors. Such a workman might be able to give in his own country a right opinion as to the cheapest mode of working a bed of coal, the best mode of walling a pit, and, perhaps, even the proper position for a bore-hole. But when he is carried to the oolites and lias of Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire, he is expected to decide on a question of even national importance, and to influence a landowner, perhaps already impoverished, in the desperate venture of searching for coal at the cost of many thousand pounds, merely because the ditches yield blue clay (which the collier calls "metal") or a bit of jet! At the same time the youth of Oxford and Cambridge receive accurate and admirable instructions from the lips of gifted men; lectures are given in every philosophical institution; geological maps and books are offered in every window; and all these various modes of scientific caution are urged in vain: the pit is sunk, and the landowner is ruined, merely by the *honest error of* a workman set to a task beyond his experience. Is this a harsh picture? Let the recollection of old trials at Bruton in Somerset, and Bagley Wood near Oxford, the more recent folly at Northampton, and the failures of Kirkham and many other localities in the north of England, serve as a warning to inconsiderate persons in other districts. There may not always be found a geologist, willing to turn away from his delightful studies, to avert the ruin which can only fall on those who disregard the plainest truths of geology.