

## CHAPTER X.

**Speculations in the Old Red Sandstone, and their Character. — George, first Earl of Cromarty. — His Sagacity as a Naturalist at fault in one Instance. — Sets himself to dig for Coal in the Lower Old Red Sandstone. — Discovers a fine Artesian Well. — Value of Geological Knowledge in an economic View. — Scarce a Secondary Formation in the Kingdom in which Coal has not been sought for. — Mineral Springs of the Lower Old Red Sandstone. — Strathpeffer. — Its Peculiarities whence derived. — Chalybeate Springs of Easter Ross and the Black Isle. — Petrifying Springs. — Building Stone and Lime of the Old Red Sandstone. — Its various Soils.**

THERE has been much money lost, and a good deal won, in speculations connected with the Old Red Sandstone. The speculations in which money has been won have consorted, if I may so speak, with the character of the system, and those in which money has been lost have not. Instead, however, of producing a formal chapter on the economic uses to which its various deposits have been applied, or the unfortunate undertakings which an acquaintance with its geology would have prevented, I shall throw together, as they occur to me, a few simple facts illustrative of both.

George, first Earl of Cromarty, seems, like his namesake and contemporary, the too celebrated Sir George M'Kenzie, of Roseavoch, to have been a man of an eminently active and inquiring mind. He found leisure, in the course of a very busy life, to write several historical dissertations of great research, and a very elaborate *Synopsis Apocalypticæ*. He is the author, too, of an exceedingly curious letter on the "Second Sight," addressed to the philosophic Boyle, which con-