

carefully dried over the fire. Better, however, than these, for at least my purposes, he had a tolerably complete collection of the British essayists, from Addison to Mackenzie, with the "Essays" and "Citizen of the World" of Goldsmith; several interesting works of travels and voyages, translated from the French; and translations from the German, of Lavater, Zimmerman, and Klopstock. He had a good many of the minor poets too; and I was enabled to cultivate, mainly from his collection, a tolerably adequate acquaintance with the wits of the reign of Queen Anne. Poor Francie was at bottom a kindly and honest man; but the more intimately one knew him, the more did the weakness and brokenness of his intellect appear. His mind was a labyrinth without a clue, in whose recesses there lay stored up a vast amount of book-knowledge, that could never be found when wanted, and was of no sort of use to himself or any one else. I got sufficiently into his confidence to be informed, under the seal of strict secrecy, that he contemplated producing a great literary work, whose special character he had not quite determined, but which was to be begun a few years hence. And when death found him, at an age which did not fall short of the allotted three score and ten, the great unknown work was still an undefined idea, and had still to be begun.

There were several other branches of my education going on at this time, outside the pale of the school, in which, though I succeeded in amusing myself, I was no trifler. The shores of Cromarty are strewn over with water-rolled fragments of the primary rocks, derived chiefly from the west during the ages of the boulder clay; and I soon learned to take a deep interest in sauntering over the various pebble-beds when shaken up by recent storms, and in learning to distinguish their numerous components. But I was sadly in want of a vocabulary; and as, according to Cowper, "the growth of what is excellent is slow," it was not until long after that I bethought me of the obvious enough expedient of representing the various species of simple rocks by certain numerals, and the compound ones by the numerals representative of each separate component,