

which, more than a hundred years before, had tumbled down during a thunder-storm, when filled with a flock of sheep, and penned up the poor creatures forever. The space between these headlands forms an irregular crescent of great height, covered with wood a-top, and amid whose lichened crags, and on whose steep slopes, the hawthorn, and bramble, and wild-rasp, and rock-strawberry, take root, with many a scraggy shrub and sweet wild flower besides; while along its base lie huge blocks of green hornblend, on a rude pavement of granitic gneiss, traversed at one point, for many rods, by a broad vein of milk-white quartz. The quartz vein formed my central point of attraction in this wild paradise. The white stone, thickly traversed by threads of purple and red, is a beautiful though unworkable rock; and I soon ascertained that it is flanked by a vein of feldspar broader than itself, of a brick-red tint, and the red stone flanked, in turn, by a drab-colored vein of the same mineral, in which there occurs in great abundance masses of a homogeneous mica,—mica not existing in lamina, but, if I may use the term, as a sort of micaceous felt. It would almost seem as if some gigantic experimenter of the old world had set himself to separate into their simple mineral components the granitic rocks of the hill, and that the three parallel veins were the results of his labor. Such, however, was not the sort of idea which they at this time suggested to me. I had read in Sir Walter Raleigh's voyage to Guinea, the poetic description of that upper country in which the knight's exploration of the river Corale terminated, and where, amid lovely prospects of rich valleys, and wooded hills, and winding waters, almost every rock bore on its surface the yellow gleam of gold. True, according to the voyager, the precious metal was itself absent. But Sir Walter, on afterwards showing "some of the stones to a Spaniard of the Caraccas, was told by him they were *el madre del ora*, that is, the mother of gold, and that the mine itself was farther in the ground." And though the quartz vein of the Cromarty Hill contained no metal more precious than iron, and but little even of that, it was, I felt sure the "mother" of something