

oaks of enormous girth, into whose coal-black substance one could dig as easily with a pickaxe as one digs into a bank of clay; and at least one noble elm, which ran across the little stream that trickled, rather than flowed, along the bottom of the hollow, and which was in such a state of keeping, that I have scooped out of its trunk, with the unassisted hand, a way for the water. I have found in the ravine — which I learned very much to like as a scene of exploration, though I never failed to quit it sadly bemired — handfuls of hazelnuts, of the ordinary size, but black as jet, with the cups of acorns, and with twigs of birch that still retained almost unchanged their silvery outer crust of bark, but whose ligneous interior existed as a mere pulp. I have even laid open, in layers of a sort of unctuous clay, resembling fuller's earth, leaves of oak, birch, and hazel, that had fluttered in the wind thousands of years before; and there was one happy day in which I succeeded in digging from out the very bottom of the excavation a huge fragment of an extraordinary-looking deer's horn. It was a broad, massive, strange-looking piece of bone, evidently old-fashioned in its type; and so I brought it home in triumph to Uncle James, as the antiquary of the family, assured that he could tell me all about it. Uncle James paused in the middle of his work; and, taking the horn in his hand, surveyed it leisurely on every side. "That is the horn, boy," he at length said, "of no deer that now lives in this country. We have the red deer, and the fallow deer, and the roe; and none of them have horns at all like that. I never saw an elk; but I am pretty sure this broad, plank-like horn can be none other than the horn of an elk." My uncle set aside his work; and, taking the horn in his hand, went out to the shop of a cabinetmaker in the neighborhood, where there used to work from five to six journeymen. They all gathered round him to examine it, and agreed in the decision that it was an entirely different sort of horn from any borne by the existing deer of Scotland, and that his surmise regarding it was probably just. And, apparently to enhance the marvel, a neighbor, who was lounging in the shop at the time, remarked, in