

—when suddenly the figure of a man, formed as of heated metal,—the figure of what seemed to be a brazen man brought to a red heat in a furnace,—sprang up out of the darkness ; and, after stalking over the surface of the fog for a few brief seconds, during which, however, it had traversed the greater part of the valley. it as suddenly disappeared, leaving an evanescent trail of flame behind it. There could be little doubt that the old shepherd had merely seen one of those shooting lights that in mountain districts so frequently startle the night traveller ; but the apparition now filled his whole mind, as one vouchsafed from the spiritual world, and of strange and frightful portent ;—

“ A meteor of the night of distant years,  
That flashed unnoticed, save by wrinkled old,  
Musing at midnight upon prophecies.”

I spent the greater part of the following day with my cousin in the forest of Corrybhalgan, and saw two large herds of red deer on the hills. The forest was but a shred of its former self ; but the venerable trees still rose thick and tall in some of the more inaccessible hollows ; and it was interesting to mark, where they encroached furthest on the open waste, how thoroughly they lost the ordinary character of the Scotch fir, and how, sending out from their short gnarled boles immense branches, some two or three feet over the soil, they somewhat resembled, in their squat, dense proportions, and rounded contours, gigantic bee-hives. It was of itself worth while undertaking a journey to the Highlands, to witness these last remains of that arboreous condition of our country to which the youngest of our geological formations, the Peat Mosses, bear such significant witness ; and which still, largely existing as the condition of the northern countries of continental Europe, “remains to attest,” as Humboldt well remarks, “more than even the records of history, the youthfulness of our civilization.” I revisited at this time, before returning home, the Barony of Gruids ; but winter had not improved it : its humble features, divested of their summer complexion, had as-