

consequence, that there are some days we can scarce eat it at all. The dairy-maid bridled up, and, communicating the remark to her mistress, we were told next morning that we might go for our milk to the next dairy, if we pleased, but that we would get none from her. And so, for four months thereafter, we had to do penance for the joke, on that not very luxurious viand "dry porridge." The pleasures of the table had occupied but small space amid the very scanty enjoyments of our barrack even before, and they were now so considerably reduced, that I could have almost wished at meal-times that—like the inhabitants of the moon, as described by Baron Munchausen—I could open up a port-hole in my side, and lay in at once provisions enough for a fortnight; but the infliction told considerably more on our constitutions than on our appetites; and we all became subject to small but very painful boils in the muscular parts of the body,—a species of disease which seems to be scarce less certainly attendant on the exclusive use of oatmeal, than sea-scurvy on the exclusive use of salt meat. Old John, however, though in a certain sense the author of our calamity, escaped all censure, while a double portion fell to the share of the gentleman's wife.

I never met a man possessed of a more thoroughly mathematical head than this ancient mason. I know not that he ever saw a copy of Euclid; but the principles of the work seemed to lie as self-evident truths in his mind. In the ability, too, of drawing shrewd inferences from natural phenomena, old John Fraser excelled all the other untaught men I ever knew. Until my acquaintance with him commenced, I had been accustomed to hear the removal of what was widely known in the north of Scotland as "the travelled stone of Petty," attributed to supernatural agency. An enormous boulder had been carried in the night-time, by the fairies, it was said, from its resting-place on the sea-beach, into the middle of a little bay,—a journey of several hundred feet; but old John, though he had not been on the spot at the time, at once inferred that it had been carried, not by the fairies, but by a thick cake of ice, considerable enough, when firmly clasped