

of the "Vestiges" taken lessons for but a short time at the same form, he would scarce have thought of reviving in these latter ages the dream of Oken and Maillet. A knowledge of the facts would to a certainty have protected him against the reproduction of the hypothesis.

The lesson at Nigg was of a more curious kind, though, mayhap, less certainly conclusive in its bearings. The house of the proprietor of Nigg bordered on the burying-ground. I was engaged in cutting an inscription on the tombstone of his wife, recently dead; and a poor idiot, who found his living in the kitchen, and to whom the deceased had shown kindness, used to come every day to the churchyard, to sit beside me, and jabber in broken expressions his grief. I was struck with the extremeness of his idiocy: he manifested even more than the ordinary inability of his class to deal with figures, for he could scarce tell whether nature had furnished him with one head or with two; and no power of education could have taught him to count his fingers. He was equally defective, too, in the mechanical. Angus could not be got into trousers; and the contrivance of the button remained a mystery which he was never able to comprehend. And so he wore a large blue gown, like that of a beadsman, which slipped over his head, and was bound by a belt round his middle, with a stout woollen shirt underneath. But, though unacquainted with the mystery of the button, there were mysteries of another kind with which he seemed to have a most perfect acquaintance: Angus—always a faithful attendant at church—was a great critic in sermons; nor was it every preacher that satisfied him; and such was his imitative turn, that he himself could preach by the hour, in the manner—so far at least as voice and gesture went—of all the popular ministers of the district. There was, however, rather a paucity of idea in his discourses: in his more energetic passages, when he struck the book and stamped with his foot, he usually iterated, in sonorous Gaelic,—“The wicked, the wicked, O wretches the wicked!” while a passage of a less depreciatory character served him for setting off his middle tones and his pathos. But that for which