

the smithy." He stepped into the water. Jock followed in sheer desperation; and, after clearing the belt of reeds, both sank to the middle in the mingled water and mud. Angus had at length accomplished the object of his journey. Extricating himself in a moment,—for he was lithe and active,—he snatched the sheep's head and trotters from Jock, and, leaping ashore, left the poor man sticking fast. It was church-time ere he reached, on his way back, the old Abbey of Fearn, still employed as a Protestant place of worship; and as the sight of the gathering people awakened his church-going propensity, he went in. He was in high spirits,—seemed, by the mouths he made, very much to admire the sermon,—and paraded the sheep's head and trotters through the passages and gallery a score of times at least, like a monk of the order of St. Francis exhibiting the relics of some favorite saint. In the evening he found his way home, but learned, to his grief and astonishment, that "wicked Jock Gordon" had got there shortly before him in a cart. The poor man had remained sticking in the mud for three long hours after Angus had left him, until at length the very frogs began to cultivate his acquaintance, as they had done that of King Log of old; and in the mud he would have been sticking still, had he not been extricated by a farmer of Fearn, who, in coming to church, had taken the lake in his way. He left Nigg, however, for Cromarty on the following day, convinced that he was no match for his rival, and dubious how the next adventure might terminate.

Such was the story which I found current in Nigg, when working in its churchyard, with the hero of the adventure often beside me. It led me to take special note of his class, and to collect facts respecting it, on which I erected a sort of semi-metaphysical theory of human character, which, though it would not now be regarded as by any means a novel one, I had thought out for myself, and which possessed for me, in consequence, the charm of originality. In these poor creatures, I thus argued, we find, amid much general dilapidation and brokenness of mind, certain instincts and peculiarities remaining entire. Here, in Angus, for instance, there is that instinct-