

in a Calabrian convent, and subjoins the ingenious suggestion on the subject of Messrs. Darwin and Mallet. And here was there a Scotch example of the same sort of ingenious phenomena, not less curious than the Calabrian one and certainly unique in its character as *Scotch*, which, though the injured building had already stood twelve years in its displaced condition, and might stand for as many more as the hanging tower of Pisa, the magistrates were laboriously effacing at the expense of the burgh. They were completely successful, too ; and the jail-spire was duly restored to its state of original insignificance, as a fifth-rate piece of ornamental masonry. But how very absurd, save, mayhap, here and there to a geologist, must not these remarks appear !

But my criticisms on the magistracy, however foolish, were silent criticisms, and did harm to no one. About the time, however, in which I was indulging in them, I imprudently exposed myself, by one of those impulsive acts of which men repent at their leisure, to criticisms not silent, and of a kind that occasionally *do* harm. I had been piqued by the rejection of my verses on the Ness. True, I had no high opinion of their merit,—deeming them little more than equal to the average verses of provincial prints ; but then I had intimated my scheme of getting them printed to a few Cromarty friends, and was now weak enough to be annoyed at the thought that my town-folk would regard me as an incompetent blockhead, who could not write rhymes good enough for a newspaper. And so I rashly determined on appealing to the public in a small volume. Had I known as much as in an after-period about newspaper affairs, and the mode in which copies of verses are often dealt with by editors and their assistants,—fatigued with nonsense, and at once hopeless of finding grain in the enormous heaps of chaff submitted to them, and too much occupied to seek for it, even should they believe in its occurrence in the form of single seeds sparsely scattered,—I would have thought less of the matter. As the case was, however, I hastily collected from among my piles of manuscripts some fifteen or twenty pieces in verse, written chiefly during the preceding