

“honest desire of giving pleasure,” I shall briefly attempt a description of the scene in which I have felt it most strongly,—a scene to be visited in the gray of the evening, or by the light of the moon.

There is a soft pastoral valley, formed by the river Nairn, not much more than a mile to the south-west of the field of Culloden. Low swelling eminences rise on either hand. The view is terminated, as we look downwards, by a prominent rounded hill, on which there are the remains of one of those ancient earthen forts or duns,—combinations of green mounds and deep angular fosses,—which seem to have constituted in our own country, like the hill-forts of New Zealand in the present day, the very first efforts of ingenuity in defensive warfare,—the very first inventions of the weaker party in their attempts to withstand the stronger. As we look up the glen towards the west, we see the view shut in by another rounded hill, and it also bears its ancient stronghold,—one of those puzzles of the antiquary,—a vitrified fort. The low rude wall all around the top of the eminence has been fixed into one solid mass by the force of fire; and we marvel how the rude savage who applied the consolidating agent, all unacquainted as he was with mortar, and unfurnished with tools, should have been so expert a chemist. He was a glassmaker on a large scale, probably before the discovery of the Phœnician merchants. It is in the valley below, however, on a level meadow-plain beside the winding Nairn, known as the plain of Clava, that we find most to interest and to astonish. It is a city of the ancient dead, thickly mottled in its whole extent with sepulchral cairns, standing stones, and Druidical temples. Detached columns of undressed stone, shaggy with moss and spotted with lichens, rise at wide intervals apparently in lines, as if to unite the other structures in one general design. There are cairns beside cairns, and circles within circles; and there rose high over the rest only a few