

skirting of forest, which waved mile after mile on the lower declivities of the hills. I next passed on a half-obliterated path along the upper ridges, rising and descending alternately, —now shut out from the widening landscape in some brown moory hollow, roughened with huge fragments of rock,—now on a swelling eminence that, overtopping the previously surmounted height, blended in one vast prospect the region of moor, of forest, and of corn, and, far beyond, the widely extended sea. The last eminence was at length surmounted, and a broad tract of table-land, slightly depressed towards the middle, bounded on the opposite side by low craggy hills, with here and there an inky pool, and here and there a gloomy morass, spread out for miles before me in black and unvaried sterility. I toiled drearily across, and reached the opposite boundary of hill. It overlooked a deep pastoral valley of considerable extent. A wild Highland stream, skirted on either bank by a straggling row of alders, went winding through the midst. On either side there were patches of vivid green, encircled by the brown heath, like islands by the ocean, which had once been furrowed by the plough. As I advanced I saw the ruins of deserted cottages. All was solitary and desolate. Roof-trees were decaying within mouldering walls. A rank vegetation had covered the silent floors, and was waving over hearths, the fires of which had been for ever extinguished. A solitary lapwing was screaming over the ruins, rising and falling in sudden starts, darting off along the ground, now to the right, now to the left, and then turning abruptly round in mid air, and almost brushing me as she passed. She had built her nest within some deserted cottage, and was employing her every instinct to lure me away. A melancholy raven was croaking on a neighbouring eminence. There was the faint murmur of the stream, and the low moan of the breeze ; but every sound of man had long passed from the air ; and the bright sunshine seemed to fall