

It was along the same piece of road, some three years later, that Scott used to steal, when no longer a Socinian, but still wofully afraid of being deemed a Methodist, to hear Newton preach. There were several heaps of stones lying along the street, — the surplus materials of a recent repair, — that seemed to have been gathered from the neighboring fields, but had been derived, in the first instance, from some calcareous grit of the Oolite; and one of these lay opposite the windows of Cowper's mansion. The first fragment I picked up contained a well-marked *Plagiostoma*; the second, a characteristic fragment of a *Pecten*. I bethought me of Cowper's philippic on the earlier geologists, which, however, the earlier geologists too certainly deserved, for their science was not good, and their theology wretched; and I indulged in, I dare say, something approaching to a smile. Genius, when in earnest, can do a great deal; but it cannot put down scientific truth, save now and then for a very little time, and would do well never to try.

My old woman had now pretty nearly scattered over the neighborhood her basket of herrings; but she needed, she said, just to look in upon her grandchildren, to say she was going to the woodlands, lest the poor things should come to think they had lost her; and I accompanied her to the cottage. It was a humble low-roofed hut, with its earthen floor sunk, as in many of our Scottish cottages, a single step below the level of the lane. Her grandchildren, little girls of seven and nine years, were busily engaged with their lace bobbins: the younger was working a piece of narrow edging, for her breadth of attainment in the lace department extended as yet over only a few threads; whereas the elder was achieving a little belt of open-work, with a pattern in it. They were orphans, and lived with their poor grandmother, and she was a widow. We regained the street, and then, passing through a