

who prefer illustrations of higher and foreign name may read of; commonly with little useful understanding of the subjects, and, too often giving their faith to doubtful recorders and to makers of hypotheses. Any map of the great rivers of the world will show the extent and places of that system of connected and successive levels which conducts water from its several sources to the sea. There are such systems, whose perfection is owing to the action of the rivers which they now conduct in so smooth a manner: there are others which, interrupted by lakes and cataracts, indicate what nature did at first, and what the river has yet to do. These last are the instructive ones; and, in our own island, the Tay is an epitome of every thing: but he who desires to understand, must examine what I can but indicate in a small portion of its multifarious branches. The Dochart is fast filling its lake, and will in no long time hold its uninterrupted course through that valley: long yet however to fall into Loch Tay, through that succession of cataracts at Killin, which, did they retreat faster than the lake fills, would produce an example of the drainage of lakes. Contrasted with this, the Lochy has finished the working out of its bed, and now enters the lake, at the same place, a sluggish stream. That lake is the first great interruption in the Tay; and centuries must yet pass before it will here have formed its own bed. In the small streams that join the Lyon, we find every mode of the vertical torrent and fissure; and the ravine of the Keltnie demonstrates the depth to which water can act on the solid rocks. The cascades of Moness show what the original courses of all mountain waters must have been, as the great cataract of the Tumel will explain the proceedings of Niagara: while they who will pursue this branch to its source in Rannoch, will see