

full of the Kirkcable relations of Mr. Murdoch, who had been invited there by my mother to hear him, and it was not hard to obtain permission to sit with Archie and Tam Dyke in the cock-loft in the gallery. Word was sent to Tam, and so it happened that three abandoned lads duly passed the plate and took their seats in the cock-loft. But when the bell had done jowing, and we heard by the sounds of their feet that the elders had gone in to the kirk, we slipped down the stairs and out of the side door. We were through the churchyard in a twinkling, and hot-foot on the road to the Dyve Burn.

It was the fashion of the genteel in Kirkcable to put their boys into what were known as Eton suits—long trousers, cut-away jackets, and chimney-pot hats. I had been one of the earliest victims, and well I remember how I fled home from the Sabbath school with the snowballs of the town roughs rattling off my chimney-pot. Archie had followed, his family being in all things imitators of mine. We were now clothed in this wearisome garb, so our first care was to secrete safely our hats in a marked spot under some whin bushes on the links. Tam was free from the bondage of fashion,