

St. Andrew's I was for a time employed in private tuition ; but, having a mother and two sisters in a great degree dependent on my exertion, I applied for the parochial school of Kettle, in the county of Fife, and obtained it by public competition. And here, at the age of nineteen, I made my first essay in the field of educational labour, commencing my career with a deeply-rooted love for the cause, and with something of a foreknowledge of that success which has since crowned my efforts. It was my practice to study and note the character and capacity of my pupils as they entered the school, and to this discrimination, which gave correctness to my judgment, many owe the success which they ultimately achieved. Among my pupils at that time was Sir David Wilkie, since so well known as one of the first painters of the age. I very soon perceived Wilkie's great genius, and with much difficulty prevailed with his uncle to send him, still very young, to the celebrated Raeburn, then enjoying the highest reputation in Scotland. It is pleasing to remark that, after an interval of perhaps thirty years, the preceptor and scholar met in London, and renewed an intimacy so profitable to one and so honourable to both. They attended the meeting of the British Association at Birmingham together, and saw much of one another during my short stay in England. Often did Sir David Wilkie, at the height of his fame, declare that he owed everything to his reverend teacher, and that, but for his interference, he must have remained in obscurity. Commodore Robert Barclay, afterwards so unfortunate on Lake Erie, from causes over which he had no control, was another of my pupils. He was a youth of the brightest promise, and often have I said in my heart that he possessed qualities which fitted him to be another Nelson, had the way opened for such a consummation. While at St. Andrew's, the Reverend James Brown, one of the acting Professors of the University, a gentleman of vast scientific attainments, became so exceedingly attached to me as to take me under his kind protection. After some time he was advanced to the chair of Natural Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, to which place he removed. Still interested in my welfare, he proposed to me to become his attending assistant, to prepare and make the experiments necessary for the illustration of his lectures, and in his absence from infirm health, which was not unfrequent, to read his prelections, and discharge such of his duties in the lecture-room as I was qualified to undertake. But difficulties intervened to prevent this arrangement from being carried out when almost completed, and Dr. Brown was, as he intimated to me, reluctantly induced to retire on a pension. But our mutual attachment continued through life. This to me was a very bitter disappointment. A career of honourable usefulness had been opened in a way after my own heart, and it was in a moment destroyed. But I was not overwhelmed ; for God had in his goodness given me a cheerful spirit of endurance, and a sanguine disposition as to the future, which it was not easy to depress ; and a kind Providence, even before I had altogether recovered the shock, presented to me an opportunity of removing to another sphere of