

His father, the overseer of a granite quarry near Aberdeen, was killed by a sudden explosion in the quarry, when his son was only in his fifteenth year. He is said to have been a non-juror, and his native district is well known as one where the old non-juring Episcopalians have left many traces of their former predominance. It may be doubted, however, if this exercised any influence on the opinions of the boy. His mother was then, and remained through life, a Presbyterian. She was, moreover, a woman of much sagacity and decision of character; and from her he not only received his early training, but also inherited the energy and talent which distinguished him through his long and singularly active career. Dr. James Beattie, then Professor of Moral Philosophy in Marischal College, but better known as the author of "The Minstrel," took an interest in the orphan; found him a situation as tutor to a little boy and girl; and so enabled him ere long to carry home his little earnings—the first of many generous gifts of like kind to his widowed mother.

The bursaries and other educational endowments of Aberdeen schools and colleges are exceptionally abundant; and with their aid and his own tutorial labours, he scrambled through his preliminary studies with creditable diligence; took his degree, and soon after removed to St. Andrews, there to prosecute his theological studies with a view to the ministry of the Scottish Church. At St. Andrews he found himself in a congenial circle. In the debating society of St. Mary's College he had for fellow students, John Leyden, the poet, John Campbell, the future Lord Chancellor, and his own special friends, Thomas Duncan and Thomas Chalmers.

In an episcopal charge delivered in 1860, Dr. Strachan gave an interesting review of his own career; and of those early friends he remarks: "We were all three nearly of the same age, and our friendship only terminated with death, being kept alive by a constant correspondence during more than

sixty years." But like many another Scottish student, he had to find the means of present subsistence while prosecuting his studies; so he sought and obtained a parish school in the neighbourhood, worth about £30 per annum. Some needless sensitiveness has been displayed in reference to the early creed of the future bishop. Nothing is more certain than that an abjuration of prelacy, as well as of every other form of dissent from the Scottish Presbyterian Church, could alone secure him the mastership of a parish school. In reality we can discern in him not a few traces of the zeal of the convert; as where, in his first episcopal address, after he had been to England, and seen its Church with his own eyes, he pronounces it to be "a spotless model of the primitive Church; one august, incorruptible and glorious verity." He was still only nineteen when he learned that the more lucrative mastership of the neighbouring parish school of Kettle was vacant. He accordingly offered himself as a candidate, and we have heard him tell with lively humour of the verdict pronounced by Professor Hunter, who had undertaken to test his fitness for the post. After due examination in the prescribed requisites, the youthful candidate was encouraged to prosecute his application by this cautious verdict: "Well, you're no great things, John; but you'll be the best of the lot!" And so it proved. He was successful over much older candidates; and was forthwith placed in charge of a school numbering at times a hundred and twenty pupils,—some of them older, and many of them bigger than himself.

Among the nameless rustics who formed the pupils at Kettle Grammar School, one in whom the new master took a special interest, has since become known to all as the famed painter, Sir David Wilkie. Preceptor and scholar met in London after an interval of thirty years. They both attended the meeting of the British Association at Bir-