

to me, and I have been told by my parents that they had never any trouble in teaching me. From that early age I had a great delight in books, and I devoted much of my time to them. My reading has often been very ill-directed, but if it has not made me the scholar and the philosopher I might have been, it has supplied me with never-failing occupation, and has lent a charm to my existence in every stage of my progress.

When about seven I was sent with my brother to learn Latin at the grammar school of Cupar, then kept by a cruel pedagogue of the name of Gray. There was a tradition among the boys that the lady whom he knew as his wife had produced a child to him when a student of divinity, which, though born in wedlock, came into the world too soon after the nuptial benediction had been pronounced, and according to the strictness of Presbyterian discipline had for ever cut off the hope of his 'wagging his head in the pulpit.' In consequence there was a cantilena, which had probably been handed down through many generations of boys, and was occasionally repeated in a feigned voice behind his back, or written in a disguised hand over his desk:

Oh! my fate sinister. Oh! my fate sinister!
 Jeany's eyes so bright and bosom so white
 Have spoiled me for a minister!

From this disappointment, or some other cause, he applied the *ferula* or *tawse* with unmerciful severity, and although my brother was by no means slow or idle or mischievous, it was discovered that the right-hand cuff of his coat was actually worn away by the frequent application of the instrument of punishment.*

Et nos ergo manum ferulae subduximus, but I suppose on account of my tender years I escaped more easily. The old system of speaking Latin in school was here still kept up, and I well remember that when I wished to leave the school-house, I was obliged to go up to the master and say, '*Licetne mihi exire?*'

* My brother, who (and who alone) has seen this Memoir, observes, in mitigation of Gray's cruelty, that he himself was 'mischievous,' trying to make himself a little hero by defying the *tawse*.

Hartrigge, October, 1846.