

Autobiography of George Tait.

I, GEORGE TAIT, in accordance with the wishes of some of my friends, proceed to write a brief history of my past life; and my sincere desire is to make the book sufficiently interesting to awaken within the bosoms of any who may read it, an interest in the children of silence.

To begin my history where my life began, I shall invite my reader to travel in imagination far across the broad Atlantic, to the heathery hills of "Auld Scotland," "where the kilted lads are born," and visit the haunts of my early childhood.

I was born in Caithness Shire, Scotland, in the year 1828. My father was a farmer, and consequently a thatched cottage and broad green fields form the associations of my earliest remembrance. As there were no fences inclosing my father's farm, it was necessary that the cows and sheep should be herded, and as I was the eldest son and at that time the only one old enough to perform such a task, I was installed as herdsman; a position which I, however, looked upon with no very favourable eye. Ah! I can well remember the horror with which I looked upon those long wearisome hours of dreary watching and herding. How I used to long for the sun to go down, which was the welcome signal for me to return home with my charge. Had I been able to read and thus amuse myself and beguile those uncommonly long hours, herding cattle might not have grown such an inglorious occupation in my estimation. However as it was, I had to amuse myself by imagining things in my own untaught uncultivated mind without the aid of books whereon to meditate. For instance, I used to think the moon was a huge cheese, and as it decreased in size, I supposed without doubt that some invisible person was cutting pieces of this imaginary cheese, and slowly devouring it; while the Northern Lights I supposed to be creatures dancing in the heavens. Indeed the heavenly hosts used to furnish a source of unfailing amusement for me, for I was never tired of gazing at the myriads of twinkling sparkling stars, the great blazing sun, and the pale majestic moon. But it must not for one moment be supposed that it was in my wicked nature to quietly and uncomplainingly do my duty. No, on the contrary, I used to be continually devising all manner of plans to get clear of it. My favorite one was to run off to my grandfather's a distance of about two miles. And my grandfather, who was very fond of me, was always ready with a smile of welcome. I loved him dearly, and he and I were strongly attached.