

CHAPTER II.

Our native land, our native vale
A long, a last adieu !
Farewell to bonny Cheviot dale
And Cheviot's mountains blue !"—*Pringle.*

HIS INFANCY—THE EMIGRATION—AN EARLY EFFORT IN
ORATORY—NARROW ESCAPE FROM SHIPWRECK.

OF his infancy there is little that can be gathered at the present moment worthy of note. He had a brother William born some years before, and about a year or more before John Alexander came into the world, a little sister, Margaret, was born. The last named was destined to become the wife of Prof. Williamson, of Queen's University, Kingston. Later, another brother and sister were born ; but this brother, a beautiful little child, died also, at the age of six, shortly after the emigration to Canada, and little Johnny was left to be his mother's only boy. He was noted for having a bright eye, a lively manner, and a head of curly brown hair, which darkened into black as he grew up. His political, or at least his speech-making, career began in Glasgow, at the early age of four. One day while some relatives with their children were visiting the house, the little ones were locked up in a room to make a day of it. Among the performances of the day was a maiden speech by Johnny, which certainly made a sensation, but in an unexpected way. The child mounted a table, and began to make a speech. What he lacked in language he made up in vehemence of gesticulation ; but in the midst of the peroration he was performing with his arms and legs, a noise was heard outside, and in the alarm he whirled himself off the table, and struck his forehead upon a chair. The incident "brought down the house" in considerable alarm, and Johnny was