

liberty to work for himself, with all the anxiety of the voyager who fears that his meagre stock of provisions and water may wholly fail him ere he reaches port. I of course could not assist him. I was an apprentice, like himself, and had not the command of a sixpence; nor, had the case been otherwise, would he in all probability have consented to accept of my help; but he lacked spirits as much as money, and in that particular my society did him good. We used to beat over all manner of subjects together, especially poetry and the fine arts; and though we often differed, our differences served only to knit us the more. He, for instance, deemed the "Minstrel" of Beattie the most perfect of English poems; but though he liked Dryden's "Virgil" well enough, he could find no poetry whatever in the "Absalom and Ahithophel" of Dryden; whereas I liked both the "Minstrel" and the "Ahithophel," and, indeed, could hardly say, unlike as they were in complexion and character, which of the two I read oftenest or admired most. Again, among the prose writers, Addison was his especial favorite, and Swift he detested; whereas I liked Addison and Swift almost equally well, and passed without sense of incongruity, from the Vision of Mirza, or the paper on Westminster Abbey, to the true account of the death of Partridge, or the Tale of a Tub. If, however, he could wonder at the latitudinarian laxity of my taste, there was at least one special department in which I could marvel quite as much at the incomprehensible breadth of his. Nature had given me, in despite of the phrenologists, who find music indicated by two large protuberances on the corners of my forehead, a deplorably defective ear. My Uncle Sandy, who was profoundly skilled in psalmody, had done his best to make a singer of me; but he was at length content to stop short, after a world of effort, when he had, as he thought, brought me to distinguish St. George's from any other psalm-tune. On the introduction, however, of a second tune into the parish church that repeated the line at the end of the stanza, even this poor fragment of ability deserted me; and to this day,—though I rather like the strains of the bagpipe in general, and have no objection to