

ites. I could once reckon among my dearest and most familiar friends, Robert Burns and Robert Ferguson.

It is now rather more than sixty years since I studied for a few weeks at the University of St. Andrews. I was the son of very poor parents, who resided in a seaport town on the west coast of Scotland. My father was a house-carpenter, — a quiet, serious man, of industrious habits and great simplicity of character, but miserably depressed in his circumstances through a sickly habit of body. My mother was a warm-hearted, excellent woman, endowed with no ordinary share of shrewd good sense and sound feeling, and indefatigable in her exertions for my father and the family. I was taught to read, at a very early age, by an old woman in the neighborhood, — such a person as Shenstone describes in his “Schoolmistress,” — and, being naturally of a reflective turn, I had begun, long ere I had attained my tenth year, to derive almost my sole amusement from books. I read incessantly; and, after exhausting the shelves of all the neighbors, and reading every variety of work that fell in my way, — from the “Pilgrim’s Progress” of Bunyan, and the “Gospel Sonnets” of Erskine, to a “Treatise on Fortification” by Vauban, and the “History of the Heavens” by the Abbé Pluche, — I would have pined away for lack of my accustomed exercise, had not a benevolent baronet in the neighborhood, for whom my father occasionally wrought, taken a fancy to me, and thrown open to my perusal a large and well-selected library. Nor did his kindness terminate until, after having secured to me all of learning that the parish afforded, he had settled me, now in my seventeenth year, at the University.

Youth is the season of warm friendships and romantic wishes and hopes. We say of the child in its first at-