

incident; but it may at least show you that I am not unfitted to be your friend. It is now nearly two years since I lost my father. He was no common man,—common neither in intellect nor in sentiment,—but, though he once fondly hoped it should be otherwise,—for in early youth he indulged in all the dreams of the poet,—he now fills a grave as nameless as the one before us. He was a native of Aberdeenshire, but held lately an inferior situation in the office of the British Linen Company in Edinburgh, where I was born. Ever since I remember him, he had awakened too fully to the realities of life, and they pressed too hard on his spirits to leave him space for the indulgence of his earlier fancies; but he could dream for his children, though not for himself; or, as I should perhaps rather say, his children fell heir to all his more juvenile hopes of fortune and influence and space in the world's eye; and, for himself, he indulged in hopes of a later growth and firmer texture, which pointed from the present scene of things to the future. I have an only brother, my senior by several years, a lad of much energy, both physical and mental; in brief, one of those mixtures of reflection and activity which seemed best formed for rising in the world. My father deemed him most fitted for commerce, and had influence enough to get him introduced into the counting-house of a respectable Edinburgh merchant. I was always of a graver turn,—in part, perhaps, the effect of less robust health,—and me he intended for the church. I have been a dreamer, Mr. Lindsay, from my earliest years,—prone to melancholy, and fond of books and of solitude; and the peculiarities of this temperament the sanguine old man, though no mean judge of character, had mistaken for a serious and reflective disposition. You are acquainted