

## CHAPTER V.

Corbies an' clergy are a shot right kittle.

BRIGS OF AYR.

THE years passed, and I was again a dweller on the sea; but the ill-fortune which had hitherto tracked me like a bloodhound, seemed at length as if tired in the pursuit, and I was now the master of a West India trader, and had begun to lay the foundation of that competency which has secured to my declining years the quiet and comfort which, for the latter part of my life, it has been my happiness to enjoy. My vessel had arrived at Liverpool in the latter part of the year 1784; and I had taken coach for Irvine, to visit my mother, whom I had not seen for several years. There was a change of passengers at every stage; but I saw little in any of them to interest me till within about a score of miles of my destination, when I met with an old respectable townsman, a friend of my father's. There was but another passenger in the coach, a north-country gentleman from the West Indies. I had many questions to ask my townsman, and many to answer, and the time passed lightly away.

“Can you tell me aught of the Burnses of Lochlea?” I inquired, after learning that my mother and my other relatives were well. “I met with the young man Robert about five years ago, and have often since asked myself what special end Providence could have in view in making such a man.”