

mercenaries in the armies of the Continent, were learning to employ themselves as merchants at home. . . . And almost every small town had its shopkeeper, who, after passing the early part of his life as a farmer or mechanic, had set himself, in the altered state of the country, to acquire the habits of his new profession, and employed his former savings in trade.

Among these last was James Forsyth, a native of the province of Moray. He had spent the first thirty years of his life as a mason and builder. His profession was a wandering one, and he had received from nature the ability of profiting by the opportunities of observation which it afforded. . . . He had marked the gradual introduction among the people of new tastes for the various articles of foreign produce and manufacture which were beginning to flow into the kingdom, and had seen how large a proportion the profits of the trader bore — as they always do in the infancy of trade — to the amount of capital employed. Resigning, therefore, his old profession, he opened a small shop in the town of Cromarty, whose lucrative herring-fishery rendered it at this period one of the busiest little places in the north of Scotland. And as he was at once steady and enterprising, rigidly just in his dealings, and possessed of shrewd good sense, he had acquired, ere the year 1722, when his eldest son, William, the subject of the following memoir, was born to him, what at that period was deemed considerable wealth. His marriage had taken place, somewhat late in life, little more than a twelvemonth before.

William received from nature, what nature only can bestow, great force of character, and great kindness of heart. The town of Cromarty at the time was singularly fortunate in its schoolmaster, Mr. David M'Culloch, a gen-