

districts through which he passed. At last, about the end of the summer of 1754, he settled down on his own paternal acres in Berwickshire, which he cultivated after the most approved methods. For fourteen years he remained immersed in rural pursuits, coming occasionally to Edinburgh and making, from time to time, an excursion to some more distant part of the kingdom. His neighbours in the country probably looked upon him only as a good farmer, with more intelligence, enterprise, culture and knowledge of the world than were usual in their society, and displaying a playful humour and liveliness of manner which must have made his companionship extremely pleasant. Probably not one of the lairds and farmers in the South of Scotland, who met him at kirk and market, had the least suspicion that this agreeable neighbour of theirs was a man of surpassing genius, who at that very time, amidst all the rural pursuits in which he seemed to be absorbed, was meditating on some of the profoundest problems in the history of the earth, and was gathering materials for such a solution of these problems as had never before been attempted.

The sal ammoniac manufacture had proved successful, and from 1765 Hutton became a regular co-partner in it. His farm, now brought into excellent order, no longer afforded him the same interest and occupation, and eventually he availed himself of an opportunity of letting it to advantage. He determined about the year 1768 to give up a country life and establish himself in Edinburgh, in order that, with uninterrupted leisure, he might devote himself entirely to scientific pursuits.