

why the shipmasters who, when my father was alive, used to stroke my head, and slip halfpence into my pockets, never now took any notice of me, or gave me anything? She well knew that the shipmasters—not an ungenerous class of men—had simply failed to recognize their old comrade's child; but the question was only too suggestive, notwithstanding, of both her own loss and mine. I used, too, to climb, day after day, a grassy protuberance of the old coast-line immediately behind my mother's house, that commands a wide reach of the Moray Frith, and to look wistfully out, long after every one else had ceased to hope, for the sloop with the two stripes of white and the two square topsails. But months and years passed by, and the white stripes and the square topsails I never saw.

The antecedents of my father's life impressed me more powerfully during my boyhood than at least aught I acquired at school; and I have submitted them to the reader at considerable length, as not only curious in themselves, but as forming a first chapter in the story of my education. And the following stanzas, written at a time when, in opening manhood, I was sowing my wild oats in verse, may at least serve to show that they continued to stand out in bold relief on my memory, even after I had grown up.

“Round Albyn's western shores, a lonely skiff  
Is coasting slow;—the adverse winds detain;  
And now she rounds secure the dreaded cliff,\*  
Whose horrid ridge beats back the northern main;  
And now the whirling Pentland roars in vain  
Her stern beneath, for favoring breezes rise;  
The green isles fade, whitens the watery plain,  
O'er the vexed waves with meteor speed she flies,  
Till Moray's distant hills o'er the blue waves arise.

Who guides that vessel's wanderings o'er the wave?  
A patient, hardy man, of thoughtful brow;  
Serene and warm of heart, and wisely brave,  
And sagely skill'd, when burly breezes blow,  
To press through angry waves the adventurous prow.

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\* Cape Wrath.