

His father, after serving on shipboard, had passed the latter part of his life as one of the armed boatmen that, during the last century, guarded the coasts in behalf of the revenue; and his only brother, the boatman's son, an adventurous young sailor, had engaged in Admiral Vernon's unfortunate expedition, and left his bones under the walls of Carthage; but he himself pursued the peaceful occupation of a shoemaker, and in carrying on his trade, usually employed a few journeymen, and kept a few apprentices. In course of time, the elder daughters of the family married and got households of their own; but the two sons, my uncles, remained under the roof of their parents, and at the time when my father perished they were both in middle life; and, deeming themselves called on to take his place in the work of instruction and discipline, I owed to them much more of my real education than to any of the teachers whose schools I afterwards attended. They both bore a marked individuality of character, and were much the reverse of common-place or vulgar men.

My elder uncle, James, added to a clear head and much native sagacity, a singularly retentive memory, and great thirst of information. He was a harness-maker, and wrought for the farmers of an extensive district of country; and as he never engaged either journeymen or apprentice, but executed all his work with his own hands, his hours of labor, save that he indulged in a brief pause as the twilight came on, and took a mile's walk or so, were usually protracted from six o'clock in the morning till ten at night. Such incessant occupation, of course, left him little time for reading; but he often found some one to read beside him during the day; and in the winter evenings, his portable bench used to be brought from his shop at the other end of the dwelling, into the family sitting-room, and placed beside the circle round the hearth, where his brother Alexander, my younger uncle, whose occupation left his evenings free, would read aloud from some interesting volume for the general benefit,—placing himself always at the opposite side of the bench, so as to share in the light of the worker. Occasionally the family circle would be