

gil's own "Virgil," lay beside me, sealed up in the fine old tongue, which I was thus throwing away my only chance of acquiring.

One morning, having the master's English rendering of the day's task well fixed in my memory, and no book of amusement to read, I began gossiping with my nearest class-fellow, a very tall boy, who ultimately shot up into a lad of six feet four, and who on most occasions sat beside me, as lowest in the form save one. I told him about the tall Wallace and his exploits; and so effectually succeeded in awakening his curiosity, that I had to communicate to him, from beginning to end, every adventure recorded by the blind minstrel. My story-telling vocation once fairly ascertained, there was, I found, no stopping in my course. I had to tell all the stories I had ever heard or read;—all my father's adventures, so far as I knew them, and all my Uncle Sandy's,—with the story of Gulliver, and Philip Quarll, and Robinson Crusoe,—of Sinbad, and Ulysses, and Mrs. Ratcliffe's heroine Emily, with, of course, the love-passages left out; and at length, after weeks and months of narrative, I found my available stock of acquired fact and fiction fairly exhausted. The demand on the part of my class-fellows was, however, as great and urgent as ever; and, setting myself, in the extremity of the case, to try my ability of original production, I began to dole out to them by the hour and the dict, long extempore biographies, which proved wonderfully popular and successful. My heroes were usually warriors like Wallace, and voyagers like Gulliver, and dwellers in desolate islands like Robinson Crusoe; and they had not unfrequently to seek shelter in huge deserted castles, abounding in trap-doors and secret passages, like that of Udolpho. And finally, after much destruction of giants and wild beasts, and frightful encounters with magicians and savages, they almost invariably succeeded in disintombing hidden treasures to an enormous amount, or in laying open gold mines, and then passed a luxurious old age, like that of Sinbad the Sailor, at peace with all mankind, in the midst of confectionary and fruits. The master had a tolerably correct notion of what was