

sumed an expression of blank wretchedness; and hundreds of its people, appalled at the time by a summons of ejection looked quite as depressed and miserable as its scenery.

Finlay and my friend of the Doocot Cave were no longer within reach; but during this winter I was much in the company of a young man about five years my senior, who was of the true stuff of which friends are made, and to whom I became much attached. I had formed some acquaintance with him about five years before, on his coming to the place from the neighboring parish of Nigg, to be apprenticed to a house-painter, who lived a few doors from my mother's. But there was at first too great a disparity between us for friendship: he was a tall lad, and I a wild boy; and, though occasionally admitted into his sanctum,—a damp little room in an outhouse in which he slept, and in his leisure hours made water-color drawings and verses,—it was but as an occasional visitor, who, having a rude taste for literature and the fine arts, was just worthy of being encouraged in this way. My year of toil had, however, wrought wonders for me: it had converted me into a sober young man; and William Ross now seemed to find scarce less pleasure in my company than I did in his. Poor William! his name must be wholly unfamiliar to the reader; and yet he had that in him which ought to have made it a known one. He was a lad of genius,—drew truthfully, had a nice sense of the beautiful, and possessed the true poetic faculty; but he lacked health and spirits, and was naturally of a melancholy temperament, and diffident of himself. He was at this time a thin, pale lad, fair-haired, with a clear waxen complexion, flat chest, and stooping figure; and though he lasted considerably longer than could have been anticipated from his appearance, in seven years after he was in his grave. He was unfortunate in his parents: his mother, though of a devout family of the old Scottish type, was an aberrant specimen;—she had fallen in early youth, and had subsequently married an ignorant, half-imbecile laborer, with whom she passed a life of poverty and unhappiness; and of this unpromising marriage William was the eldest child. It was cer-