

tainly not from either parent he derived his genius. His maternal grandmother and aunt were, however, excellent Christian women, of superior intelligence, who supported themselves by keeping a girls' school in the parish; and William, who had been brought at an early age to live with them, and was naturally a gentle-spirited, docile boy, had the advantage, in consequence, of having that most important lesson of any education,—the lesson of a good example at home,—set well before him. His boyhood had been that of the poet: he had loved to indulge in his day-dreams in the solitude of a deep wood beside his grandmother's cottage; and had learned to write verses and draw landscapes in a rural locality in which no one had ever written verses or drawn landscapes before. And finally, as, in the north of Scotland, in those primitive times, the nearest approach to an artist was a house-painter, William was despatched to Cromarty, when he had grown tall enough for the work, to cultivate his natural taste for the fine arts, in papering rooms and lobbies, and in painting railings and wheel-barrows. There are, I believe, a few instances on record of house-painters rising to be artists: the history of the late Mr. William Bonnar, of the Royal Academy of Edinburgh, furnishes one of these; but the fact that the cases are not more numerous serves, I fear, to show how much oftener a turn for drawing is a merely imitative, than an original, self-derived faculty. Almost all the apprentices of our neighbor the house-painter had their turn for drawing, decided enough to influence their choice of a profession; and what was so repeatedly the case in Cromarty must, I should think, have been the case in many similar places; but of how few of these embryo limners have the works appeared in even a provincial exhibition-room!

At the time my intimacy with William became most close, both his grandmother and aunt were dead, and he was struggling with great difficulty through the last year of his apprenticeship. As his master supplied him with but food and lodging, his linen was becoming scant, and his Sabbath suit shabby; and he was looking forward to the time when he should be at