

pack," as he used to say, but sometimes got into prison to boot. There were, however, some kind relations in the south, who always set him up again ; and Jack from Dover, after a fortnight of misery, used to appear with the ordinary bulk of merchandize at his back, and continue thriving until he again got drunk. He had a turn for buying and reading curious books, which, after mastering their contents, he always sold again ; and he learned to bring them, when of a kind which no one else would purchase, to my mother, and recommend them as suitable for me. Poor Jack was always conscientious in his recommendations. I know not how he contrived to take the exact measure of my tastes in the matter, but suitable for me they invariably were ; and as his price rarely exceeded a shilling per volume, and sometimes fell below a sixpence, my mother always purchased, when she could, upon his judgment. I owed to his discrimination my first copy of " Bacon's Wisdom of the Ancients," " done into English by Sir Arthur Gorges," and a book to which I had long after occasion to refer in my geological writings,—Maillet's " Telliamed,"—one of the earlier treatises on the development hypothesis ; and he had now procured for me a selection, in one volume, of the Poems of Gawin Douglas and Will Dunbar, and another collection in a larger volume, of " Ancient Scottish Poems," from the MS. of George Bannatyne. I had been previously almost wholly unacquainted with the elder Scottish poets. My Uncle James had introduced me, at a very early age, to Burns and Ramsay, and I had found out Fergusson and Tannahill for myself ; but that school of Scottish literature which flourished between the reigns of David the Second and James the Sixth had remained to me, until now, well-nigh a *terra incognita* ; and I found no little pleasure in exploring the antique recesses which it opened up. Shortly after, I read Ramsay's " Evergreen," the " King's Quair," and the true " Actes and Deidis of ye illuster and vailyeand campioun Shyr Wilham Wallace," not modernized, as in my first copy, but in the tongue in which they had been recited of old by Henry the Minstrel : I had previously gloated over Barbour's Bruce ; and thus my ac-