

out dark in the cloud ; then, as if suspended over the earth, the rugged summit of Arthur's Seat came strongly out, while its base still remained invisible in the wreath ; and anon I caught a glimpse of the distant Pentlands, enveloped by a clear blue sky, and lighted up by the sun. Leith, with its thicket of masts, and its tall round Tower, lay deep in shade in the foreground,—a cold, dingy, ragged town, but so strongly relieved against the pale smoky gray of the background, that it seemed another little city of Zoar, entire in front of the burning. And such was the strangely picturesque countenance with which I was favored by the Scottish capital, when forming my earliest acquaintance with it, twenty-nine years ago.

It was evening ere I reached it. The fog of the early part of the day had rolled off, and every object stood out in clear light and shade under a bright sunshiny sky. The workmen of the place,—their labors just closed for the day,—were passing in groupes along the streets to their respective homes ; but I was too much engaged in looking at the buildings and shops, to look very discriminately at them ; and it was not without some surprise that I found myself suddenly laid hold of by one of their number, a slim lad, in pale moleskin a good deal bespattered with paint. My friend William Ross stood before me ; and his welcome on the occasion was a very hearty one. I had previously taken a hasty survey of my unlucky house in Leith, accompanied by a sharp, keen-looking, one-handed man of middle age, who kept the key, and acted, under the town-clerk, as general manager ; and who, as I afterwards ascertained, was the immortal Peter M'Craw. But I had seen nothing suited to put me greatly in conceit with my patrimony. It formed the lowermost floor of an old black building, four stories in height, flanked by a damp narrow court along one of its sides, and that turned to the street its sharp-peaked, many-windowed gable. The lower windows were covered up by dilapidated, weather-bleached shutters ; in the upper, the comparatively fresh appearance of the rags that stuffed up holes where panes ought to have been, and a few very pale-colored petticoats and very dark-colored shirts