

trait among the cities of the empire ; though, of course, during the twenty-nine years that have elapsed since I first saw it, the more ancient of its two cities,—greatly modernized in many parts,—has become less uniformly and consistently antique in its aspect. Regarded simply as matters of taste, I have found little to admire in the improvements that have so materially changed its aspect. Of its older portions I used never to tire : I found I could walk among them as purely for the pleasure which accrued, as among the wild and picturesque of Nature itself ; whereas one visit to the elegant streets and ample squares of the new city always proved sufficient to satisfy ; and I certainly never felt the desire to return to any of them, to saunter in quest of pleasure along the smooth, well-kept pavements. I of course except Prince's Street. There the two cities stand ranged side by side, as if for comparison ; and the eye falls on the features of a natural scenery that would of itself be singularly pleasing even were both the cities away. Next day I waited on the town-clerk, Mr. Veitch, to see whether he could not suggest to me some way in which I might shake myself loose from my unfortunate property on the Coal-hill. He received me civilly,—told me that the property was not quite so desperate an investment as I seemed to think it, as at least the site, in which I had an interest with the other proprietors, was worth something, and as the little court-yard was exclusively my own ; and that he thought he could get the whole disposed of for me, if I was prepared to accept of a small price. And I was of course, as I told him, prepared to accept of a very small one. Further, on learning that I was a stone-cutter, and unemployed, he kindly introduced me to one of his friends, a master-builder, by whom I was engaged to work at a manor-house a few miles to the south of Edinburgh. And procuring "lodgings" in a small cottage of but a single apartment, near the village of Niddry Mill, I commenced my labors as a hewer under the shade of the Niddry woods.

There was a party of sixteen masons employed at Niddry, besides apprentices and laborers. They were accomplished