

dowments taken away,—a view which our foreman also entertained; whereas both Uncles Sandy and James were as little averse as the old divines themselves to a State-paid ministry, and desiderated only that it should be a good one. There were two other Seceders engaged as masons at the work,—more of the polemical and less of the devout type than the foreman or my new comrade the laborer; and they also used occasionally to speak, not merely of the doubtful usefulness, but as they were stronger in their language than their more self-denying and more consistent co-religionists—of the positive worthlessness, of Establishments. The Voluntary controversy did not break out until about nine years after this time, when the Reform Bill gave vent to many a pent-up opinion and humor among that class to which it extended the franchise; but the materials of the war were evidently already accumulating among the intelligent Dissenters of Scotland; and from what I now saw, its after appearance in a somewhat formidable aspect failed to take me by surprise. I must in justice add, that all the religion of our party was to be found among its Seceders. Our other workmen were really wild fellows, most of whom never entered a church. A decided reaction had already commenced within the Establishment, on the cold, elegant, unpopular Moderatism of the previous period,—that Moderatism which had been so adequately represented in the Scottish capital by the theology of Blair and the ecclesiastical policy of Robertson; but it was chiefly among the middle and upper classes that the re-action had begun; and scarce any portion of the humbler people, lost to the Church during the course of the two preceding generations, had yet been recovered. And so the working men of Edinburgh and its neighborhood, at this time, were in large part either non-religious, or included within the Independent or Secession pale.

John Wilson—for such was the name of my new comrade—was a truly good man,—devout, conscientious, friendly,—not highly intellectual, but a person of plain good sense, and by no means devoid of general information. There was another