

walked in every night to the city to attend the playhouse; and it quite astonished him, he used to say, that I, who really knew something of the drama, and had four shillings a-day, did not nightly devote at least one of the four to purchase perfect happiness and a seat in the shilling gallery. On some two, or at most three occasions, I did attend the playhouse, accompanied by Cha and a few of the other workmen; but though I had been greatly delighted, when a boy, by the acting of a company of strollers that had visited Cromarty, and converted the Council House Hall into a theatre, the greatly better acting of the Edinburgh company failed to satisfy me now. The few plays, however, which I saw enacted chanced to be of a rather mediocre character, and gave no scope for the exhibition of nice histrionic talent; nor were any of the great actors of the south on the Edinburgh boards at the time. The stage scenery, too, though quite fine enough of its kind, had, I found, altogether a different effect upon me from the one which it had been elaborated to produce. In perusing our fine old dramas, it was the truth of nature that the vividly-drawn scenes and figures, and the happily portrayed characters, always suggested; whereas the painted canvas, and the respectable but yet too palpable acting, served but to unrealize what I saw, and to remind me that I was merely in a theatre. Farther, I deemed it too large a price to devote a whole evening to see some play acted which, mayhap, as a composition I would not have deemed worth the reading; and so the temptation of play-going failed to tempt me; and latterly, when my comrades set out for the playhouse, I staid at home. Whatever the nature of the process through which they have gone, a considerable proportion of the more intelligent mechanics of the present generation seem to have landed in conclusions similar to the one at which I at this time arrived. At least, for every dozen of the class that frequented the theatre thirty years ago, there is scarce one that frequents it now. I have said that the scenery of the stage made no very favorable impression upon me. Some parts of it must, however, have made a considerably stronger one than I could