

the poet's corner of the *Inverness Courier* or *Journal*, and thus show that I have literature enough to be trusted with the cutting of an epitaph on a gravestone? I had a letter of introduction from a friend in Cromarty to one of the ministers of the place, himself an author, and a person of influence with the proprietors of the *Courier*; and, calculating on some amount of literary sympathy from a person accustomed to court the public through the medium of the press, I thought I might just venture on stating the case to him. I first, however wrote a brief address, in octo-syllabic quatrains, to the river which flows through the town, and gives to it its name;—a composition which has, I find, more of the advertisement in it than is quite seemly, but which would have perhaps expressed less confidence had it been written less under the influence of a shrinking timidity, that tried to re-assure itself by words of comfort and encouragement.

I was informed that the minister's hour for receiving visitors of the humbler class was between eleven and twelve at noon; and, with the letter of introduction and my copy of verses in my pocket, I called at the manse, and was shown into a little narrow ante-room, furnished with two seats of deal that ran along the opposite walls. I found the place occupied by some six or seven individuals,—more than half that number old withered women, in very shabby habiliments, who, as I soon learned from a conversation which they kept up in a grave under-tone, about weekly allowances, and the partialities of the session, were paupers. The others were young men, who had apparently serious requests to prefer anent marriage and baptism; for I saw that one of them was ever and anon drawing from his breast-pocket a tattered copy of the Shorter Catechism, and running over the questions; and I overheard another asking his neighbor, "Who drew up the contract lines for him?" and "Where he had got the whisky?" The minister entered; and as he passed into the inner room, we all rose. He stood for a moment in the doorway, and, beckoning on one of the young men,—he of the Catechism,—they went in together, and the door closed. They remain closeted to-