

There was, I suspect, a waste of effort in all this planning; but some men seem destined to do things clumsily and ill, at many times the expense which serves to secure success to the more adroit. I despatched my Ode to the newspaper, accompanied by a letter of explanation; but it fared as ill as my Address to the Institution; and a single line in italics in the next number intimated that it was not to appear. And thus both my schemes were, as they ought to be, knocked on the head. I have not schemed any since. Strategy is, I fear, not my forte; and it is idle to attempt doing in spite of nature what one has not been born to do well. Besides, I began to be seriously dissatisfied with myself: there seemed to be nothing absolutely wrong in a man who wanted honest employment taking this way of showing he was capable of it; but I felt the spirit within rise against it; and so I resolved to ask no more favors of any one, even should poets' corners remain shut against me forever, or however little Institutions, literary or scientific, might favor me with their notice. I strode along the streets, half an inch taller on the strength of the resolution; and straightway, as if to reward me for my magnanimity, an offer of employment came my way unsolicited. I was addressed by a recruiting serjeant of a Highland regiment, who asked me if I did not belong to the Aird? "No, not to the Aird; to Cromarty," I replied. "Ah, to Cromarty,—very fine place! But would you not better bid adieu to Cromarty, and come along with me? We have a capital grenadier company; and in our regiment a stout steady man is always sure to get on." I thanked him, but declined his invitation; and, with an apology on his part, which was not in the least needed or expected, we parted.

Though verse and old English failed me, the simple statement made by my Cromarty friend to my townsman located in Inverness, that I was a good workman, and wanted work, procured me at once the cutting of an inscription, and two little jobs in Cromarty besides, which I was to execute on my return home. The Inverness job was soon completed; but I had the near prospect of another; and as the little bit of the public that came my way approved of my cutting, I trusted