

six years, and put them into the hands of the printer of the *Inverness Courier*. It would have been a greatly wiser act, as I soon came to see, had I put them into the fire instead; but my choice of a printing office secured to me at least one advantage,—it brought me acquainted with one of the ablest and most accomplished of Scottish editors,—the gentleman who now owns and still conducts the *Courier*; and, besides, having once crossed the Rubicon, I felt all my native obstinacy stirred up to make good a position for myself, despite of failure and reverses on the further side. It is an advantage in some cases to be committed. The clear large type of the *Courier* office did, however, show me many a blemish in my verse that had escaped me before, and broke off associations which—curiously linked with the manuscripts—had given to the stanzas and passages which they contained charms of tone and color not their own. I began to find, too, that my humble accomplishment of verse was too narrow to contain my thinking;—the thinking ability had been growing, but not the ability of poetic expression; nay, much of the thinking seemed to be of a kind not suited for poetic purposes at all;—and though it was of course far better that I should come to know this in time, than that, like some, even superior men, I should persist in wasting, in inefficient verse, the hours in which vigorous prose might be produced, it was at least quite mortifying enough to make the discovery with half a volume of metre committed to type, and in the hands of the printer. Resolving, however, that my humble name should not appear in the title page, I went on with my volume. My new friend the editor kindly inserted, from time to time, copies of its verses in the columns of his paper, and strove to excite some degree of interest and expectation regarding it; but my recent discovery had thoroughly sobered me, and I awaited the publication of my volume not much elated by the honor done me, and as little sanguine respecting its ultimate success as well might be. And ere I quitted Inverness, a sad bereavement, which greatly narrowed the circle of my best-loved friends, threw very much into the back-ground all my thoughts regarding it.