

stance that there was no Grub Street in that part of the world to employ itself about. It was, in at least all its better aspects, a fresh subject; and I deemed myself more thoroughly acquainted with it than at least most of the men who were skilful enough, as *litterateurs*, to communicate their knowledge in writing. I knew the peculiarities of fishermen as a class, and the effects of this special branch of their profession on their character: I had seen them pursuing their employments amid the sublime of nature, and had occasionally taken a share in their work; and, further, I was acquainted with not a few antique traditions of the fishermen of other ages, in which, as in the narratives of most seafaring men, there mingled with a certain amount of real incident, curious snatches of the supernatural. In short, the subject was one on which, as I knew a good deal regarding it that was not generally known, I was in some degree qualified to write; and so I occupied my leisure in casting my facts respecting it into a series of letters, of which the first appeared in the *Courier* a fortnight after my volume of verse was laid on the tables of the north-country booksellers.

I had first gone out to sea to assist in catching herrings about ten years before; and I now described, in one of my letters, as truthfully as I could, those features of the scene to which I had been introduced on that occasion, which had struck me as novel and peculiar. And what had been strange to me proved equally so, I found, to the readers of the *Courier*. My letters attracted attention, and were republished in my behalf by the proprietors of the paper, "in consequence," said my friend the editor, in a note which he kindly attached to the pamphlet which they formed "of the interest they had excited in the northern counties." Their modicum of success, lowly as was their subject, compared with that of some of my more ambitious verses, taught me my proper course. Let it be my business, I said, to know what is not generally known;—let me qualify myself to stand as an interpreter between nature and the