

my fund, gleaned from original observation, and in walks not previously trodden.

The venerable Principal set me upon a piece of literary task-work, of which, save for his advice, I would never have thought, and of which these autobiographic chapters are the late but legitimate offspring. "Literary men," he said, "are sometimes spoken of as consisting of two classes,—the educated and the uneducated ; but they must all alike have an education before they can become literary men ; and the less ordinary the mode in which the education has been acquired, the more interesting always is the story of it. I wish you to write for me an account of yours." I accordingly wrote an autobiographic sketch for the Principal, which brought up my story till my return, in 1825, from the south country to my home in the north, and which, though greatly overladen with reflection and remark, has preserved for me both the thoughts and incidents of an early time more freshly than if they had been suffered to exist till now as mere recollections in the memory. I next set myself to record, in a somewhat elaborate form, the traditions of my native place and the surrounding district ; and, taking the work very leisurely, not as labor, but as amusement,—for my labors, as at an earlier period, continued to be those of the stone-cutter,—a bulky volume grew up under my hands. I had laid down for myself two rules. There is no more fatal error into which a working man of a literary turn can fall, than the mistake of deeming himself too good for his humble employments ; and yet it is a mistake as common as it is fatal. I had already seen several poor wrecked mechanics, who, believing themselves to be poets, and regarding the manual occupation by which they could alone live in independence as beneath them, had become in consequence little better than mendicants ; too good to work for their bread, but not too good virtually to beg it ; and, looking upon them as beacons of warning, I determined that, with God's help, I should give their error a wide offing, and never associate the idea of meanness with an honest calling, or deem myself too good to be independent. And, in the second place,