

CHAPTER XXII.

“They lay aside their private cares,
To mend the Kirk and State affairs ;
They’ll talk o’ patronage and priests,
Wi’ kindling fury in their breasts ;
Or tell what new taxation ’s comin’,
An’ ferlie at the folk in *Lon’on*.”

BURNS.

WE had, as I have already stated, no Dissenters in the parish of Cromarty. What were known as the Haldane’s People had tried to effect a lodgment among us in the town, but without success: in the course of several years they failed to acquire more than six or eight members; and these were not of the more solid people, but marked as an eccentric class, fond of argument, and possessed by a rage for the novel and the extreme. The leading teachers of the party were a retired English merchant and an ex-blacksmith, who, quitting the forge in middle life, had pursued the ordinary studies to no very great effect, and become a preacher. And both were, I believe, good men, but by no means prudent missionaries. They said very strong things against the Church of Scotland, in a place where the Church of Scotland was much respected; and it was observed, that while they did not do a great deal to convert the irreligious to Christianity, they were exceedingly zealous in their endeavors to make the religious Baptists. Much to my annoyance in my younger days, they used to