

tion, virtually to the effect that the parish might be either cut in two, and the half of it given to their minister, or that he might be at least made second minister to every man in it. The minister, however, finding at the General Assembly that the ecclesiastical party on whose support he had relied were opposed *in toto* to the erecting of chapels of ease into regular charges, and that the peculiarities of the case were such as to cut off all chance of his being supported by their opponents, fell from his appeal, and the case was never called in Court. Some of our Cromarty fisher-folk, who were staunch on the English side, though they could not quite see the merits, had rather a different version of the business. "The Gaelic man had no sooner entered the Kirk o' the General Assembly," they said, "than the maister of the Assembly rose, and, speaking very rough, said, 'Ye contrarious rascal, what tak's you here? What are ye aye troubling that decent lad Mr. Stewart for? I'm sure he's no meddlin' wi' you! Get about your business, ye contrarious rascal!'"

I took an active part in this controversy; wrote petitions and statements for my brother parishioners, with paragraphs for the local newspapers, and a long letter for the *Caledonian Mercury*, in reply to a tissue of misrepresentation which appeared in that print, from the pen of one of the Gaelic minister's legal agents; and, finally, I replied to a pamphlet by the same hand, which, though miserable as a piece of writing,—for it resembled no other composition ever produced, save, mayhap, a very badly-written law paper,—contained statements which I deemed it necessary to meet. And such were my first attempts in the rough field of ecclesiastical controversy,—a field into which inclination would never have led me, but which has certainly lain very much in my way, and in which I have spent many a laborious hour. My first pieces were rather stiffly written, somewhat on the perilous model of Junius; but as it was hardly possible to write so ill as my opponent, I could appeal to even his friends whether it was quite right in him to call me illiterate and untaught, in prose so much worse than my own. Chiefly by getting the laughs now and then on