

my side, I succeeded in making him angry ; and he replied to my jokes by *calling names*,—a phrase, by the way, which, forgetting his Watts' Hymns, and failing to consult his Johnson, he characterized as not English. I was, he said, a "shallow, pretending ninny ;" an "impudent illiterate lad ;" "a fanatic," and a "frantic person ;" the "low underling of a faction," and "Peter the Hermit ;" and finally, as the sum total of the whole, he assured me that I stood in *his* "estimation as the most ignoble and despised in the whole range of the human species." This was frightful ! but I not only outlived it all, but learned, I fear, after in this way first tasting blood, to experience a rather too keen delight in the anger of an antagonist. I may add, that when, some two or three years after the period of this controversy, the General Assembly admitted what were known as the Parliamentary ministers, and the ministers of chapels of ease, to a seat in the church courts, neither my townsmen nor myself saw aught to challenge in the arrangement. It contained none of the elements which had provoked our hostility in the Cromarty chapel case : it did not make over the people of one minister to the charge of another, whom they would never have chosen for themselves ; but, without encroaching on popular rights, equalized, on the Presbyterian scheme, the standing of ministers and the claims of congregations.

The next matter which engaged my townfolk was a considerably more serious one. When, in 1831, cholera first threatened the shores of Britain, the Bay of Cromarty was appointed by Government one of the quarantine ports ; and we became familiar with the sight, at first deemed sufficiently startling, of fleets of vessels lying in the upper roadstead, with the yellow flag waving from their mast-tops. The disease, however, failed to find its way ashore ; and when, in the summer of the following year, it was introduced into the north of Scotland, it went stalking around the town and parish for several months, without visiting either. It greatly more than decimated the villages of Portmahomack and Inver, and visited the parishes of Nigg and Urquhart, with the towns of Inverness, Nairn, Avoch, Dingwall, and Rosemarkie ; and, in