

of temporal advantage; and her only brother having been admitted through the interest of her friends, as a pupil into Christ's Hospital, she preferred returning to her widowed mother, left solitary in consequence, though with the prospect of being obliged to add to her resources by taking a few of the children of the town as day-pupils.

Her claim to take her place in the intellectual circle of the burgh was soon recognized. I found that, misled by the extreme youthfulness of her appearance, and a marked juvenility of manner, I had greatly mistaken the young lady. That she should be accomplished in the ordinary sense of the term,—that she should draw, play, and sing well,—would be what I should have expected; but as I was not prepared to find that, mere girl as she seemed, she should have a decided turn, not for the lighter, but for the severer walks of literature, and should have already acquired the ability of giving expression to her thoughts in a style formed on the best English models, and not in the least like that of a young lady. The original shyness wore away, and we became great friends. I was nearly ten years her senior, and had read a great many more books than she, and, finding me a sort of dictionary of fact, ready of access, and with explanatory notes attached, that became long or short just as she pleased to draw them out by her queries, she had, in the course of her amateur studies, frequent occasion to consult me. There were, she saw, several ladies of her acquaintance, who used occasionally to converse with me in the churchyard; but in order to make assurance doubly sure respecting the perfect propriety of such a proceeding on her part, she took the laudable precaution of stating the case to her mother's landlord, a thoroughly sensible man, one of the magistrates of the burgh, and an elder of the kirk; and he at once certified that there was no lady of the place who might not converse, without remark, as often and as long as she pleased, with me. And so, fully justified, both by the example of her friends—all very judicious women, some of them only a few years older than herself—and by the deliberate judg-