

of any frugal Scotch mechanic. During this laborious period of his life he formed an intimate and extensive acquaintance with the best English and Scotch literature, embracing not only the departments of fiction, history, and poetry, but the philosophical works of Locke, Kames, Hume, Reid, Adam Smith, and Dugald Stewart. He seized upon every work of natural science that fell in his way, and moreover wrote a great variety of verses, rhapsodies, and reflections. His various scenes of labor made him familiar with the scenery, antiquities, and

social peculiarities of different parts of Scotland. But his greatest progress was in geology. Starting with hardly more than an empirical knowledge of the mineral characters of rocks, he soon detected the wonders of the fossil world in quarries remarkably rich in organisms. Wherever he went, from the shores of the Moray frith to those of the frith of Forth, the hammer was in his pocket, and his eye was searching for fossil specimens. Combining what he saw with what he read, he became, while yet hardly aware of it, not only a self-taught geologist, but a geologist capable of teaching others. To this period belong his discoveries in the old red sandstone, which only required to be known to insure him distinction in the scientific world. In 1825, work failing in the north, he sailed for the south of Scotland, and went from Leith to the capital. There he was occupied for two years, till his health began to fail, and he learned that few Edinburgh stonecutters pass their 40th year, and not one in 50 reaches his 45th. He therefore returned to Cromarty, accustomed to contemplate with rather pensive than sad feelings an early death, and soon after became seriously interested in the personal bearing of religious concerns. Until this time he describes himself as wavering between two extremes, now a believer and anon a skeptic, the belief being instinctive, the skepticism arising from some intellectual process. The result of his thoughts and conversations was that he found rest in the fundamental principles of Scottish evangelicism. His attainments soon made him a local celebrity; geologists in other towns corresponded with him; Cromarty ladies began to walk up to where he was at work to have the pleasure of conversing with him, one of whom was the young lady who afterward became his wife; and he was elected town councillor. He published a volume of "Poems written in the Leisure Hours of a Journeyman Mason" (1829); contributed a series of letters to the "Inverness Courier" on the herring fishery, which were collected in a volume; discovered deposits of ichthyic remains belonging to the second age of vertebrate existence, sufficient to prove not only the existence but the structure and varieties of fishes at that