

## CHAPTER IV.

At first I thought the swankie didna ill, —  
Again I glowr'd, to hear him better still;  
Bauld, slce, an' sweet, his lines more glorious grew,  
Glowed round the heart, an' glanced the soul out through.

ALEXANDER WILSON.

I HAD seen both the Indies and traversed the wide Pacific ere I again set foot on the eastern coast of Scotland. My uncle, the shipmaster, was dead, and I was still a common sailor; but I was light-hearted and skilful in my profession, and as much inclined to hope as ever. Besides, I had begun to doubt — and there cannot be a more consoling doubt when one is unfortunate — whether a man may not enjoy as much happiness in the lower walks of life as in the upper. In one of my later voyages, the vessel in which I sailed had lain for several weeks in Boston in North America, then a scene of those fierce and angry contentions which eventually separated the colonies from the mother country; and when in this place, I had become acquainted, by the merest accident in the world, with the brother of my friend the poet. I was passing through one of the meaner lanes, when I saw my old friend, as I thought, looking out at me from the window of a crazy-looking building, — a sort of fencing academy, much frequented, I was told, by the Federalists of Boston. I crossed the lane in two huge strides.

“Mr. Ferguson,” I said, — “Mr. Ferguson,” — for he was withdrawing his head, — “do you not remember me?”