

and condition of the inmates; and now and then looking in through open windows and doors at the nailers, male and female, engaged amid their intermittent hammerings and fitful showers of sparks. As might be anticipated of a profession fixed very much down to the corner of a country, and so domestic in its nature, nail-making is hereditary in the families that pursue it. The nailers of Hales Owen in the present day are the descendants of the nailers who, as Shenstone tells us, were so intelligent in the cause of Hanover during the outburst of 1745. "The rebellion," he says, in writing a friend just two months after the battle of Prestonpans, "is, as you may guess, the subject of all conversation. Every individual nailer here takes in a newspaper, and talks as familiarly of kings and princes as ever Master Shallow did of John of Gaunt." Scarcely a century had gone by, and I now found, from snatches of conversation caught in the passing, that the nailers of Hales Owen were interested in the five points of the Charter and the success of the League, and thought much more of what they deemed their own rights, than of the rights of either monarchs *de facto* or monarchs *de jure*. There was a nail-manufactory established about seventy years ago at Cromarty, in the north of Scotland, which reared not a few Scotch nailers; but they seemed to compete on unequal terms with those of England; and after a protracted struggle of rather more than half a century, the weaker went to the wall, and the Cromarty nail-works ceased. There is now only a single nail-forge in the town; and this last of the forges is used for other purposes than the originally intended one. I found in Hales Owen the true key to the failure of the Cromarty manufactory, and saw how it had come to be undersold in its own northern field by the nail-merchants of Birmingham. The Cromarty nailer wrought alone, or, if a family man, assisted but by his sons;