

Shortly after, in the hope of securing her son from what seemed to be the hereditary fate, his mother had committed the boy to the charge of a sister, married to a farmer of the parish, and now the mistress of the farm-house of Ardavell; but the family death was not to be so avoided; and the arrangement terminated, as has been seen, in the transaction beside the pond.

In course of time the sailor boy, despite of hardship and rough usage, grew up into a singularly robust and active man; not above the middle size,—for his height never exceeded five feet eight inches,—but broad-shouldered, deep-chested, strong-limbed, and so compact of bone and muscle, that in a ship of the line, in which he afterwards sailed, there was not, among five hundred able-bodied seamen, a man who could lift so great a weight, or grapple with him on equal terms. His education had been but indifferently cared for at home; he had, however, been taught to read by a female cousin, a niece of his mother's, who, like her too, was both the daughter and the widow of a sailor; and for his cousin's only child, a girl somewhat younger than himself, he had contracted a boyish affection, which in a stronger form continued to retain possession of him after he grew up. In the leisure thrown on his hands in long Indian and Chinese voyages, he learned to write; and profited so much by the instruction of a comrade, an intelligent and warm-hearted though reckless Irishman, that he became skilful enough to keep a log-book, and to take a reckoning with the necessary correctness,—accomplishments far from common at the time among ordinary sailors. He formed, too, a taste for reading. The recollection of his cousin's daughter may have influenced him, but he commenced life with a determination to rise in it,—made his first money by storing up instead of drinking his grog,—and, as was common in those times, drove a little trade with the natives of foreign parts, in articles of curiosity and vertu, for which, I suspect, the custom-house dues were not always paid. With all his Scotch prudence, however, and with much kindliness of heart and placidity of temper, there was some wild blood in his