

reaches of Cromarty Frith, as seen, when we sat down to our mid-day meal, from the gorge of the quarry, with their numerous rippling currents, that in the calm resembled streamlets winding through a meadow, and their distant gray promontories tipped with villages that brightened in the sunshine; while, pale in the background, the mighty hills, still streaked with snow, rose high over bay and promontory, and gave dignity and power to the scene.

Still, however, with all my enjoyments, I had to suffer some of the evils of excessive toil. Though now seventeen, I was still seven inches short of my ultimate stature; and my frame, cast more at the time in the mould of my mother than in that of the robust sailor, whose "back," according to the description of one of his comrades, "no one had ever put to the ground," was slim and loosely knit; and I used to suffer much from wandering pains in the joints, and an oppressive feeling about the chest, as if crushed by some great weight. I became subject, too, to frequent fits of extreme depression of spirits, which took almost the form of a walking sleep,—results, I believe, of excessive fatigue,—and during which my absence of mind was so extreme, that I lacked the ability of protecting myself against accident, in cases the most simple and ordinary. Besides other injuries, I lost at different times during the first few months of my apprenticeship, when in these fits of partial somnambulism, no fewer than seven of my finger-nails. But as I gathered strength, my spirits became more equable; and not until many years after, when my health failed for a time under over-exertion of another kind, had I any renewed experience of the fits of walking sleep.

My master, an elderly man at the time,—for, as he used not unfrequently to tell his apprentices, he had been born on the same day and year as George the Fourth, and so we could celebrate, if we pleased, both holidays together,—was a person of plodding, persevering industry, who wrought rather longer hours than was quite agreeable to one who wished to have some time to himself; but he was, in the main, a good master. As a builder, he made conscience of every stone he