

man's apprentice seemed rather an anomalous one, I could not see my way. And so, as work turned up for both master and apprentice at a place about twenty miles distant from Cromarty, I set out with him, to make trial, for the first time, of the sort of life that is spent in bothies and barracks. Our work was to consist, I was informed, of building and hewing at an extensive farm-steading on the banks of the river Conon, which one of the wealthier proprietors of the district was getting built for himself, not on contract, but by the old mode of employing operatives on days' wages; and my master was to be permitted to rate as a full journeyman, though now considerably in his decline as a workman, on condition that the services of his apprentice should be rated so much lower than their actual value as to render master and man regarded as one lot,—a fair bargain to the employer, and somewhat more. The arrangement was not quite a flattering one for me; but I acquiesced in it without remark, and set out with my master for Conon-side.

The evening sun was gleaming delightfully, as we neared the scene of our labors, on the broad reaches of the Conon, and lighting up the fine woods and noble hills beyond. It would, I know, be happiness to toil for some ten hours or so per day in so sweet a district, and then to find the evening all my own; but on reaching the work, we were told that we would require to set out in the morning for a place about four miles farther to the west, where there were a few workmen engaged in building a jointure-house for the lady of a Ross-shire proprietor lately dead, and which lay off the river in a rather unpromising direction. And so, a little after sunrise, we had to take the road with our tools slung across our backs, and before six o'clock we reached the rising jointure-house, and set to work. The country around was somewhat bare and dreary;—a scene of bogs and moors, overlooked by a range of tame heathy hills; but in our immediate neighborhood there was a picturesque little scene,—rather a vignette than a picture,—that in some degree redeemed the general deformity. Two meal-mills—the one small and old, the other larger and more