

hews demands the exercise of a certain amount of judgment for itself; and so he cannot wholly suffer his mind to fall asleep over his work. When engaged, too, in erecting some fine building, he always experiences a degree of interest in marking the effect of the design developing itself piecemeal, and growing up under his hands; and so he rarely wearies of what he is doing. Further, his profession has this advantage, that it educates his sense of sight. Accustomed to ascertain the straightness of lines at a glance, and to cast his eye along plane walls, or the mouldings of entablatures or architraves, in order to determine the rectitude of the masonry, he acquires a sort of mathematical precision in determining the true bearings and position of objects, and is usually found, when admitted into a rifle-club, to equal, without previous practice, its second-rate shots. He only falls short of its first-rate ones, because uninitiated by the experience of his profession in the mystery of the parabolic curve, he fails, in taking aim, to make the proper allowance for it. The mason is almost always a silent man: the strain on his respiration is too great, when he is actively employed, to leave the necessary freedom to the organs of speech; and so at least the provincial builder or stone-cutter rarely or never becomes a democratic orator. I have met with exceptional cases in the larger towns; but they were the result of individual idiosyncrasies, developed in clubs and taverns, and were not professional.

It is, however, with the character of our north-country masons that I have at present chiefly to do. Living in small villages, or in cottages in the country, they can very rarely procure employment in the neighborhood of their dwellings, and so they are usually content to regard these as simply their homes for the winter and earlier spring months, when they have nothing to do, and to remove for work to other parts of the country, where bridges, or harbors, or farm-steadings, are in the course of building,—to be subjected there to the influences of what is known as the barrack, or rather bothy life. These barracks or bothies are almost always of the most miserable description. I have lived in hovels that were invariably