

pended on a natural faculty. John's strength had never been above the average of that of Scotchmen, and it was now considerably reduced; nor did his mallet deal more or heavier blows than that of the common workman. He had, however, an extraordinary power of conceiving of the finished piece of work, as lying within the rude stone from which it was his business to disinter it; and while ordinary stone-cutters had to repeat and re-repeat their lines and draughts, and had in this way virtually to give to their work several surfaces in detail ere they reached the true one, old John cut upon the true figure at once, and made one surface serve for all. In building, too, he exercised a similar power: he hammer-dressed his stones with fewer strokes than other workmen, and in fitting the interspaces between stones already laid, always picked from out the heap at his feet the stone that exactly fitted the place; while other operatives busied themselves in picking up stones that were too small or too large; or, if they set themselves to reduce the too large ones, reduced them too little or too much, and had to fit and fit again. Whether building or hewing, John never seemed in a hurry. He has been seen, when far advanced in life, working very leisurely, as became his years, on the one side of a wall, and two stout young fellows building against him on the other side,—toiling, apparently, twice harder than he, but the old man always contriving to keep a little ahead of them both.

David Fraser I never saw; but as a hewer he was said considerably to excel even his brother John. On hearing that it had been remarked among a party of Edinburgh masons, that, though regarded as the first of Glasgow stone-cutters, he would find in the eastern capital at least his equals, he attired himself most uncouthly in a long-tailed coat of tartan, and, looking to the life the untamed, untaught, conceited little Celt, he presented himself one Monday morning, armed with a letter of introduction from a Glasgow builder, before the foreman of an Edinburgh squad of masons engaged upon one of the finer buildings at that time in the course of erection. The letter specified neither his qualifications nor his name: it