

CHAPTER XVIII

“For such is the flaw or the depth of the plan
In the make of that wonderful creature call’d man,
No two virtues, whatever relation they claim,
Nor even two different shades of the same,
Though like as was ever twin-brother to brother,
Possessing the one shall imply you’ve the other.”

BURNS

DURING my period of convalescence, I amused myself in hewing for my uncles, from an original design, an ornate dial-stone ; and the dial-stone still exists, to show that my skill as a stone-cutter rose somewhat above the average of the profession in those parts of the country in which it ranks highest. Gradually as I recovered health and strength, little jobs came dropping in. I executed sculptured tablets in a style not common in the north of Scotland ; introduced into the churchyards of the locality a better type of tombstone than had obtained in them before, save, mayhap, at a very early period ; distanced all my competitors in the art of inscription-cutting ; and at length found that, without exposing my weakened lungs to the rough tear and wear to which the ordinary stone-cutter must subject himself, I could live. I deemed it an advantage, too, rather than the reverse, that my new branch of employment brought me not unfrequently for a few days into country districts sufficiently distant from home to present me with new fields of observation, and to open up new tracts of