

tellectual, in the higher sense of the term, in recording the bank's transactions, or in summing up columns of figures, or in doing business over the counter ; and yet the fatigue induced was a fatigue, not of sinew and muscle, but of nerve and brain, which, if it did not quite disqualify me for my former intellectual amusements, at least greatly disinclined me towards them, and rendered me a considerably more indolent sort of person than either before or since. It is asserted by artists of discriminating eye, that the human hand bears an expression stamped upon it by the general character, as surely as the human face ; and I certainly used to be struck, during this transition period, by the relaxed and idle expression that had on the sudden been assumed by mine. And the slackened hands represented, I too surely felt, a slackened mind. The un-intellectual toils of the laboring man have been occasionally represented as less favorable to mental cultivation than the semi-intellectual employments of that class immediately above him, to which our clerks, shopmen, and humbler accountants belong ; but it will be found that exactly the reverse is the case, and that, though a certain conventional gentility of manner and appearance on the side of the somewhat higher class may serve to conceal the fact, it is on the part of the laboring man that the real advantage lies. The mercantile accountant or law-clerk, bent over his desk, his faculties concentrated on his columns of figures, or on the pages which he has been carefully engrossing, and unable to proceed one step in his work without devoting to it all his attention, is in greatly less favorable circumstances than the ploughman or operative mechanic, whose mind is free though his body labors, and who thus finds, in the very rudeness of his employments, a compensation for their humble and laborious character. And it will be found that the humbler of the two classes is much more largely represented in our literature than the class by one degree less humble. Ranged against the poor clerk of Nottingham, Henry Kirke White, and the still more hapless Edinburgh engrossing clerk, Robert Ferguson, with a very few others, we find in our literature a numerous and vigorous phalanx, composed