

inquiring regarding it at the door, we were informed that it was the work of the cottager's son, a lad who, though he had scarcely ever seen the sea, had taken a strange fancy to the life of a sailor, and who had left his father only a few weeks before to serve aboard a man-of-war.

Kenneth's first employment was the tending of a flock of sheep, the property of his father; and wretchedly did he acquit himself of the charge. The farm is bounded on the eastern side by a deep, bosky ravine, through the bottom of which a scanty runnel rather trickles than flows; and when it was discovered on any occasion that Kenneth's flock had been left to take care of themselves, and of his father's corn to boot, — and such occasions were wofully frequent, — Kenneth himself was almost invariably to be found in this ravine. He would sit for hours among the bushes, engaged with his knife in carving uncouth faces on the heads of walking-sticks, or in constructing little water-mills, or in making Lilliputian pumps of the dried stalks of the larger hemlock, and in raising the waters of the runnel to basins dug in the sides of the hollow. Sometimes he quitted his charge altogether, and set out for a meal-mill about a quarter of a mile from the farm, where he would linger for half a day at a time watching the motion of the wheels. His father complained that he could make nothing of him; "the boy," he said, "seemed to have nearly as much sense as other boys of his years, and yet for any one useful purpose he was nothing better than an idiot." His mother, as is common with mothers, and who was naturally an easy, kind-hearted woman, had better hopes of him. Kenneth, she affirmed, was only a little peculiar, and would turn out well after all. He was growing up, however, without improving in the slightest; and when he became tall enough for the plough, he made a