

dead stand. He would go and be a tradesman, he said, a mason or smith or house-carpenter, — anything his friends chose to make him, — but a farmer he would not be. His father, after a fruitless struggle to overcome his obstinacy, carried him with him to an acquaintance in Cromarty, an ingenious cabinet-maker, named Donald Sandison; and, after candidly confessing that he was of no manner of use at home, and would, he was afraid, be of little use anywhere, he bound him by indenture to the mechanic for four years.

Kenneth's new master — a shrewd, sagacious man, who had been actively engaged, it was said, in the Porteous mob about twenty years before — was one of the best workmen in his profession in the north of Scotland. His scrutoires and wardrobes were in repute up to the close of the last century; and in the ancient art of wainscot carving he had no equal in the country. He was an intelligent man, too, as well as a superior mechanic. He was a general reader, as a little old-fashioned library in the possession of his grandson still remains to testify; and he had studied Paladio, in the antique translation of Godfrey Richards, and knew a little of Euclid. With all his general intelligence, however, and all his skill, he failed to discover the latent capabilities of his apprentice. Kenneth was dull and absent, and had no heart to his work; and though he seemed to understand the principles on which his master's various tools were used, and the articles of his trade constructed, as well at least as any workman in the shop, there were none among them who used the tools so awkwardly, or constructed the articles so ill. An old botching carpenter who wrought in a little shop at the other end of the town was known to the boys of the place by the humorous appellation of "Spull [*i. e.* spoil] the Wood," and a lean-