

weather ever sweating salt-water,—a hanging partition of mats, that somewhat resembled the curtain of a barn-theatre; and, making our beds within, we began pulling down piecemeal, as the materials were required, that part of the erection which lay outside. We had very nearly unhoused ourselves ere our work was finished; and the chill blasts of October, especially when they blew in at the open end of our dwelling, rendered it as uncomfortable as a shallow cave in an exposed rock-front. My boyish experiences, however, among the rocks of Cromarty, constituted no bad preparation for such a life, and I roughed it out at least as well as any of my comrades. The day had so contracted, that night always fell upon our unfinished labors, and I had no evening walks; but there was a delightful gneiss island, of about thirty acres in extent, and nearly two miles away, to which I used to be occasionally despatched to quarry lintels and corner stones, and where work had all the charms of play; and the quiet Sabbaths were all my own. So long as the laird and his family were at the mansion-house at Flowerdale,—at least four months of every year,—there was an English service in the parish church; but I had come to the place this season before the laird, and now remained in it after he had gone away, and there was no English service for me. And so I usually spent my Sabbaths all alone in the noble Flowerdale woods, now bright, under their dark hill-sides, in the autumnal tints, and remarkable for the great height and bulk of their ash trees, and of a few detached firs, that spoke, in their venerable massiveness, of former centuries. The clear, calm mornings, when the gossamer went sailing in long gray films along the retired glades of the wood, and the straggling sunlight fell on the crimson and orange mushroom, as it sprang up amid the dank grass, and under thickly-leaved boughs of scarlet and gold, I deemed peculiarly delightful. For one who had neither home nor church, the autumnal woods formed by much a preferable Sabbath haunt to a shallow cave, dropping brine, unprovided with chair or table, and whose only furniture consisted of two rude bedsteads of undressed slabs, that bore atop two blankets a-piece and a heap