

and when frosts were keen and prolonged, and the snow lay long on the ground, there was no employment for even the more fortunate. It was essentially necessary, therefore, in the busier seasons, to make provision for the season in which business failed. For our own part, we were desirous, we remember, to have the *winter* all to ourselves; and when Hallow-day came round, and employment failed, we found ourselves in the possession of twelve pounds, which we had laid by just as its price, if we may so speak. Twelve pounds released us from the necessity of labouring for twice twelve weeks. Twelve pounds were sufficient to purchase for us leisure and independence,—two very excellent things,—from the end of October to the beginning of May; and we were desirous to employ the time thus fairly earned in cultivating a little inheritance which, in lesser or larger measure, descends to all, and of which no law of appropriation can rob even working-men, but which, unless resolutely broken in, and sedulously improved, must lie fallow and unproductive,—of no benefit to the possessor, and useless to the community. Jock Laidlie had not laid by a single farthing: we, on a very small scale, were a capitalist determined on making an investment. Jock was a pauper; and here, in a state of great simplicity, in comes the question at issue,—Had Jock Laidlie any right to our twelve pounds?

To not one copper farthing of it, say we. It was all our own,—all honestly earned by the sweat of our brow. We had never claimed any right to share with Jock in a single gill; we had never tasted his whisky; we had never enjoyed one whiff of his tobacco; we had never meddled with *his* earnings; he had no right to intermeddle with ours. But Jock Laidlie had an aged mother, who, without any fault on her part, was miserably poor, just because Jock had failed in his duty to her. Had Jock Laidlie's mother any right to our twelve pounds? No—no right. It might doubtless be a duty