

and twisted branches, that rose out of the garden-wall. Fancy gives an interest to all her pictures, — yes, even when the subject is but an humble cottage; and when we think of human enjoyment, of the pride of strength and the light of beauty, in connection with a few mouldering and nameless bones hidden deep from the sun, there is a sad poetry in the contrast which rarely fails to affect the heart. It is now two thousand years since Horace sung of the security of the lowly, and the unfluctuating nature of their enjoyments; and every year of the two thousand has been adding proof to proof that the poet, when he chose his theme, must have thrown aside his philosophy. But the inmates of the farm-house thought little this evening of coming misfortune. Nor would it have been well if they had; their sorrow was neither heightened nor hastened by their joy.

Old William Stewart, the farmer, was one of a class well-nigh worn out in the southern Lowlands, even at this period, but which still comprised, in the northern districts, no inconsiderable portion of the people, and which must always obtain in countries only partially civilized and little amenable to the laws. Man is a fighting animal from very instinct; and his second nature, custom, mightily improves the propensity. A person naturally courageous, who has defended himself successfully in half a dozen different frays, will very probably begin the seventh himself; and there are few who have fought often and well for safety and the right who have not at length learned to love fighting for its own sake. The old farmer had been a man of war from his youth. He had fought at fairs and trysts and weddings and funerals; and, without one ill-natured or malignant element in his composition, had broken more heads than any two men in the country-side. His late