

inaccessible cliffs; and a gentleman of Moray, a sportsman of the old school, having applied to a friend in this part of the country to procure for him a pair of young hawks, of a species prized by the falconer, Tam Polson, an unsettled, eccentric being, remarkable chiefly for his practical jokes, and his constant companion Jock Watson, a person of nearly similar character, were entrusted with the commission, and a promise of five pounds Scots, no inconsiderable sum in those days, held out to them as the reward of their success in the execution of it. They soon discovered a nest, but it was perched near the top of a lofty cliff, inaccessible to the climber; and there was a serious objection against descending to it by means of a rope, seeing that the rope could not be held securely by fewer than three or four persons, who would naturally claim a share of the reward. It was suggested, however, by Tam, that by fastening the rope to a stake, even one person might prove sufficient to manage it when the other warped himself down; and so, providing themselves with the stay-rope of one of their boats, and the tether-stake of one of their cattle, — for, like most of the townspeople, they were both boatmen and croft-renters, — they set out for the cliff early on a Monday morning, ere the other members of the kelp party with whom they wrought were astir. The stake was driven into the stiff diluvial clay on the summit of the cliff; and Tam's companion, who was the lighter man of the two, cautiously creeping to the edge, swung himself over, and began to descend; but, on reaching the end of the stay-rope, he found he was still a few feet short of the nest; and, anxious only to secure the birds, he called on his companion to raise the stake, and fix it a little nearer the brink. The stake was accordingly raised; but the strength of one man being insufficient to hold it on such broken ground,