

that there were few days in which his time was not occupied from twelve till two in his honored capacity of peace-maker for the place. The evening was more his own. Sometimes he superintended the lading or unlading of his vessels; sometimes he walked out into the country to visit his humble friends in the landward part of the parish, and see how they were getting on with their spinning. There was not a good old man or woman within six miles of Cromarty, however depressed by poverty, that Mr. Forsyth did not reckon among the number of his acquaintance.

Of all his humble friends, however, one of the most respected, and most frequently visited by him, was a pious, though somewhat eccentric, old woman, who lived all alone in a little solitary cottage beside the sea, rather more than two miles to the west of the town, and who was known to the people of the place as Meggie o' the Shore. Meggie was one of the truly excellent, — a person in whom the Durhams and Rutherfords of a former age would have delighted. There was no doubt somewhat of harshness in her opinions, and of credulity in her beliefs; but never were there opinions or beliefs more conscientiously held; and the general benevolence of her disposition served wonderfully to soften in practice all her theoretical asperities. She was ailing and poor; and as she was advancing in years, and her health became more broken, her little earnings — for she was one of Mr. Forsyth's spinners — were still growing less. Meggie, however, had "come of decent people," though their heads had all been laid low in the churchyard long ere now; and though she was by far too orthodox to believe, with the son of Sirach, that it "is better to die than to beg," it was not a thing to be thought of that she should do dishonor to the memory of the departed by owing a single meal to the charity of the