

north of Scotland in at least the earlier part of Mr. Forsyth's career. Cromarty was, in consequence, a merry little place, though the merriment was much on the one side, and of a wofully selfish character. The young, like those hunting parties of Norway that band together for the purpose of ridding their forests of the bears, used in the long winter evenings to go prowling about the streets in quest of something that might be teased and laughed at; the old, though less active in the pursuit, — for they kept to their houses, — resembled the huntsmen of the same country who lie in wait for the passing animal on the tops of trees. Their passion for the ludicrous more than rivalled the Athenian rage for the new; and while each one laughed at his neighbor, he took all care to avoid being laughed at in turn.

The poor fishermen of the place, from circumstances connected with their profession, were several degrees lower in the scale of civilization than most of their neighbors. The herring-fishery had not yet taught them to speculate, nor were there Sabbath schools to impart to them the elements of learning and good manners; and though there might be, perhaps, one of fifty among them possessed of a smattering of Latin, it was well if a tithe of the remaining forty-nine had learned to read. They were, however, a simple, inoffensive race of people, whose quarrels, like their marriages — for they quarrelled often, though at a small expense — were restricted to their own class, and who, though perhaps little acquainted with the higher standards of right, had a code of foolish superstitions, which, strange as it may seem, served almost the same end. They respected an oath, in the belief that no one had ever perjured himself and thriven; regarded the murderer as exposed to the terrible visitations of his victim, and the thief as a person doomed to a *down look*; revered the Bible