

foot of which run the clear waters of the Cluden, where they hasten to join the sweeping Nith,

Whose distant roaring swells and fa's.

As my kitchen and parlour were not very far distant, I one day went in to purchase some chickens from a person I heard offering them for sale. It was a little, rather stout-looking woman, who seemed to be between seventy and eighty years of age; she was almost covered with a tartan plaid, and her cap had over it a black silk hood, tied under the chin, a piece of dress still much in use among elderly women of that rank of life in Scotland; her eyes were dark, and remarkably lively and intelligent. I entered into conversation with her, and began by asking how she maintained herself, etc.

'She said that in winter she footed stockings, that is, knit feet to country people's stockings, which bears about the same relation to stocking-knitting that cobbling does to shoemaking, and is of course both less profitable and less dignified; she likewise taught a few children to read, and in summer she whiles reared a few chickens.

'I said I could venture to guess from her face she had never been married. She laughed heartily at this, and said, "I maun hae the queeriest face that ever was seen, that ye could guess that. Now, do tell me, madam, how ye cam to think sae?" I told her it was from her cheerful disengaged countenance. She said, "Mem, have ye na far mair reason to be happy than me, wi' a gude husband and a fine family o' bairns, and plenty o' everything? For me, I'm the puirest o' a' puir bodies, and can hardly contrive to keep mysell alive in a' thae wee bits o' ways I hae tell't ye." After some more conversation, during which I was more and more pleased with the old woman's sensible conversation and the *naïveté* of her remarks, she rose to go away, when I asked her name. Her countenance suddenly clouded, and she said gravely, rather colouring, "My name is Helen Walker; but your husband kens weel about me."

'In the evening I related how much I had been pleased, and inquired what was extraordinary in the history of the poor woman. Mr. — said, there were perhaps few more remarkable people than Helen Walker. She had been left an orphan, with the charge of a sister considerably younger than herself, and who was educated and maintained by her exertions. Attached to her by so many ties, therefore, it will not be easy to conceive her feelings when she found that this only sister must be tried