

olm and Tweedmouth Moor, was a great resort for the Faa or gipsy gangs in former times. Now I understand that thae folk were a sort o' bastard Egyptians—and though I am nae scholar, it strikes me forcibly that the meaning o' the word, *gipsies*, is just *Egyptis*, or *Gypties*, a contraction and corruption o' *Gyptian*!"

"Gipsies," said he who spoke of Rùmney and Brown, and abused the practice of cock-fighting, "still do in some degree, and formerly did in great numbers infest this county, and I will tell you a story concerning them."

"Do so," said the thorough Northumbrian, "I like a story when it's well put thegither. The gipsies were queer folk. I've heard my faither tell many a funny thing about them when he used to whistle "Felton Loanin'," which was made by awd Piper Allan,—Jemie's faither." And here the speaker struck up a lively air, which, to the stranger by the fire, seemed a sort of parody on the well-known tune of "Johnny Cope."

The other then proceeded with his tale, thus—

You have all heard of the celebrated Johnnie Faa, the Lord and Earl of little Egypt, who penetrated into Scotland in the reign of James IV., and with whom that gallant monarch was glad to conclude a treaty. Johnnie was not only the king, but the first of the Faa gang of whom we have mentioned. I am not aware that gipsies get the name of Faas anywhere but upon the Borders, and though it is difficult to account for the name satisfactorily, it is said to have had its origin from a family of the name of *Fall* or *Fa'*, who resided here (in Rothbury,) and that their superiority in their cunning and desperate profession, gave the same cognomen to all and sundry who followed the same mode of life upon the Borders. One thing is certain, that the name *Faa* not only was given to individuals whose surname might be *Fall*, but to the *Winters* and *Clarkes*,—*et id genus omne*,—gipsy families well known on the Borders. Since waste lands, which were their hiding-places and resorts, began to be cultivated, and especially since the sun of knowledge snuffed out the taper of superstition and credulity, most of them are beginning to form a part of society, to learn trades of industry, and live with men. Those who still prefer their fathers' vagabond mode of

life, finding that in the northern counties the old trade of fortune-telling is at a discount and that thieving has thinned their tribe, are dangerous, now follow the more useful and respectable callings of muggers, besom-makers, and tinkers. I do not know whether etiquette I ought to give precedence to 't besom-maker or tinker, though as compared with them, I should certainly suppose that the "muggers" of the present day belong to the Faa aristocracy; if it be not, that they like others, derive their nobility from descent of blood rather than weight of pocket—and that, after all, the mugger with his encampment, his caravans, horses, crystal and crockery, is but a mere wealthy plebian or *bourgeois* in the vagrant community.—But to my tale.

On a dark and tempestuous night in the December of 1618, a Faa gang requested shelter in the out-houses of the laird of Clennel. The laird himself had retired to rest and his domestics being fewer in number than the Faas, they feared to refuse their request.

"Ye shall have up-putting for the night good neighbours," said Andrew Smith, who was a sort of Major-domo in the laird's household, and he spoke in a mingled authority and terror. "But sir," added he, addressing the chief of the tribe, "I will trust to your honour that ye will allow none o' your folk to be making free with the kye, or the sheep or the poultry—that is, that ye will not allow them to mistake ony o' them for your own lest' it bring me into trouble. For the laird has been in a fearful rage at some o' your people lately, and if ony thing were to be amissing in the morning, or he kenned that ye had been here, it might be as meikle my life is worth."

"Tush man!" said Willie Faa, the king of the tribe, "ye dree the death ye'll never die. Willie Faa and his folk maun live as well as the laird o' Clennel. But there's my thumb not a four-footed thing nor the feather o' bird shall be touched by me or mine. But see the light is out in the laird's chamber window, he is asleep and high up among the turrets, and wherefore should ye set your bodies in byres and stables in a night like this, when your Ha' fire is bleezing bonnie and there is room enough around it for us. Gie us a seat by the cheek o' your hearth and ye shall be nae loser, and I promise that we shall be off, bag and baggage."