

a sight to see some of these overloaded toppers mounting their horses in the small hours of the morning. I have seen such an one roll over in the saddle and fall to the ground on the other side like a sack of corn. But let it not be inferred that those men were inebriates. Such scenes as I have described, were quite exceptional, and some allowance must be made for the prevalent laxity of public opinion in regard to the social customs of the time. I never saw one of these gentlemen under the table!

Our farm, as I have said, was of moderate size. The dwelling-house was an old-fashioned building in close proximity to the barns and the abodes of the horses, cows, and pigs. In front of the house was the mill-pond which gave motion to a large over-shot wheel, and by it to the thrashing machine. Near by were the work-people's dwellings—a long row of hewn stone cottages with thatched roofs, each divided into a but and a ben with box beds fitted with panelled doors or concealed with showy curtains; the sanded stone floors were kept scrupulously clean and the fire place jams white with pipe-clay. Over the little grate was the inevitable "swee"—i.e. swing, from which could be suspended the gridle for firing the oatmeal cakes: a deal table, a few chairs, an open press in which was displayed the crockery, and a 'wag at the wa' clock completed the plenishings, and at the back of each cottage was a small kail-yard. The *toute ensemble* of the establishment went by the name of the "toon." The working staff consisted of six plough-men, or "hinds" as they were called, an 'ory man' to do the chores and about a dozen of women 'outworkers' who did all the weeding and hoeing at a wage of 9d or 10d a day. Those women were a quiet, inoffensive and industrious lot, who paid great deference to their leaders two old sisters named May and Peggy Houlison—the embodiment of staid propriety who kept a matronly eye on their juniors. They were born on the farm and lived on it threescore years and ten, neither of them had ever seen Edinburgh, they had never been ten miles from their home, nor scarcely had a day's sickness—living as all the other inhabitants of the toon did on the homeliest fare—porridge, pease brose and sowens—a very old favourite dish among the peasantry, but now