

lady seated in her arm-chair at the fireside, working away at her knitting, according to her usual custom, when she had nothing else to do. She had swept the hearth, and made a bright blazing fire for our reception; the servant had just brought in the tea-tray; and Rose was producing the sugar-basin and tea-caddy, from the cupboard in the black, oak sideboard, that shone like polished ebony, in the cheerful parlour twilight.

"Well! here they both are," cried my mother, looking round upon us without retarding the motion of her nimble fingers, and glittering needles. "Now shut the door, and come to the fire, while Rose gets the tea ready; I'm sure you must be starved;—and tell me what you've been about all day;—I like to know what my children have been about."

"I've been breaking in the grey colt—no easy business that—directing the ploughing of the last wheat stubble—for the ploughboy has not the sense to direct himself—and carrying out a plan for the extensive and efficient draining of the low meadow-lands."

"That's my brave boy!—and Fergus—what have you been doing?"

"Badger-baiting."

And here he proceeded to give a particular account of his sport, and the respective traits of prowess evinced by the badger and the dogs; my mother pretending to listen with deep attention, and watching his animated countenance with a degree of maternal admiration I thought highly disproportioned to its object.

"It's time you should be doing something else, Fergus," said I, as soon as a momentary pause in his narration allowed me to get in a word.

"What can I do?" replied he; "my mother won't let me go to sea or enter the army; and I'm determined to do nothing else—except make myself such a nuisance to you all, that you will be thankful to get rid of me on any terms."

Our parent soothingly stroked his stiff, short curls. He growled, and tried to look sulky, and then we all