

cheerful fire, that made all bright and easy within.

"Well! how are you Mr. S——?" cried the farmer, shaking my brother heartily by the hand.

"Toiling in the bush still, eh?"

"Just in the same place."

"And the wife and children?"

"Hearty. Some half dozen have been added to the flock since you were in our parts, Woodruff."

"So much the better. The more the merrier, Mr. S——. Children are riches in this country."

"I know not how that may be. I find it dueced hard to clothe and feed mine."

"Wait until they grow up. They will be brave helps to you then. The price of labor—the price of labor, Mr. S——, is the destruction of the farmer."

"It does not seem to trouble you much," said my brother, glancing round the well furnished, comfortable apartment.

"My son and I do it all," cried the old man. "Of course the girls help in busy times, and take care of the dairy, and we hire occasionally. But small as the sum is which is expended in hiring during seed time and harvest, I feel it, I can tell you."

"You are not married again, Woodruff?"

"No Sir," said the old man with a peculiar smile, which did not entirely preclude the probability of such an event. "That tall girl with the fair hair, is my eldest daughter. She manages the house, and an excellent house-keeper she is. But I cannot keep her forever," continued he with a knowing wink. "Girls will think of getting married, and seldom consult the wishes of their parents on the subject. But it is natural, Mr. S——; it is natural."

My brother looked laughingly towards the fine handsome young woman, as she placed upon the table, hot water, whisky, and a huge plate of plum cake, which did not lack a companion stored with the finest specimens which the orchard could produce.

The young girl looked down and blushed.

"Ah! I see how it is, Woodruff—you will soon lose your daughter. I wonder that you have kept her so long. But who are these young ladies?" said my brother, as three fine girls very demurely entered the room.

"The two shortest are my galls, by my last wife," replied Woodruff, "who I fear, mean soon to follow the bad example of their sister. The other lady," said the old man, with a reverential air, "is a particular friend of my eldest daughter."

My brother laughed sllily, and the old man's

cheek took a deeper glow, as he stooped forward to mix the punch.

"You said, these two ladies were by your last wife, Woodruff. How many wives have you had?"

"Only three, Mr. S——. It is impossible, they say in my country, to have too much of a good thing."

"So I suppose you think," said my brother, again glancing towards the comely Miss Smith. "Three wives! You have been a fortunate man to survive them all."

"Aye! have I not? But I have been both lucky and unlucky in the wife way, Mr. S——. I was quite a youngster when I married my first woman. My father died when I was quite a child, and I was brought up by an uncle who rented one of those small snug farms in the North Riding, which are now so rarely to be met with in the Old Country. He had saved a little money, and his whole family consisted of one gall and me. She was not very pretty, but she was good and industrious; and would have at his death all the old man had to bestow. She was fond of me, and I thought I could not do better than make her my wife. It is all very well to marry for love, Mr. S——, if a fellow can afford it; but a little money is not to be despised; it goes a great way towards making the home comfortable. Uncle had no great objections, and so we were married. She managed the dairy and I helped upon the farm. We lived very happily together until my poor Betsy died in her confinement with that gall. Yes, Miss—you cost me a good wife, and should not be so anxious to run away and leave me in the lurch."

"Dear father," commenced the young woman.

"There, hold your tongue, Miss. The least said the soonest mended," continued the old man, smiling good humouredly—for it was not only evident, that he was extremely proud of his eldest daughter, but proud of her being the affianced wife of a gentleman in the neighbourhood.

"Well, Mr. S——, I felt very lonely after Betsy died; and I had been so comfortable as a married man, that I thought the best compliment I could pay to her memory was to take another wife."

"Perhaps she would not have thought it one," said I.

"Why, to be sure, women are often a leetle unreasonable," returned Woodruff. "But as she was not there to consult upon the subject, I took the liberty to please myself. Well, Mr. S——, I was always a great admirer of beauty, and so I thought I would try my luck this time with a handsome wife. There was a develish fine gall