

ferent thing from what it was a century ago. It is not yet ninety years since lykewakes in the neighboring Highlands used to be celebrated with music and dancing; and even here, on the borders of the low country, they used invariably, like the funerals, to be the scenes of wild games and amusements never introduced on any other occasion. You remember how Sir Walter describes the funeral of Athelstane? The Saxon ideas of condolence were the most natural imaginable. If grief was hungry, they supplied it with food; if thirsty, they gave it drink. Our simple ancestors here seem to have reasoned by a similar process. They made their seasons of deepest grief their times of greatest merriment; and the more they regretted the deceased, the gayer were they at his wake and his funeral. A friend of mine, now dead, a very old man, has told me that he once danced at a lykewake in the Highlands of Sutherland. It was that of an active and a very robust man, taken away from his wife and family in the prime of life; and the poor widow, for the greater part of the evening, sat disconsolate beside the fire, refusing every invitation to join the dancers. She was at length, however, brought out by the father of the deceased. 'Little, little did he think,' he said, 'that we should be the last to dance at poor Rory's lykewake.'"

We reached the cottage and went in. The apartment in which the dead lay was occupied by two men and three women. Every little piece of furniture it contained was hung in white, and the floor had recently been swept and sanded; but it was on the bed where the body lay, and on the body itself, that the greatest care had been lavished. The curtains had been taken down, and their places supplied by linen white as snow; and on the sheet that served as a counterpane the body was laid out in a dress of white,