

parish. She toiled on, therefore, as she best could, content with the merest pittance, and complained to no one. Mr. Forsyth, who thoroughly understood the character, and appreciated its value, and who knew, withal, how wretchedly inadequate Meggie's earnings were to her support, contrived on one occasion to visit her early, and to stay late, in the hope of being invited to eat with her; for in her more prosperous days there were few of her visitors suffered to leave her cottage until, as she herself used to express it, they had first broken bread. At this time, however, there was no sign of the expected invitation; and it was not until Mr. Forsyth had at length risen to come away that Meggie asked him hesitatingly whether he would "no tak' some refreshment afore he went?"

"I have just been waiting to say yes," said the merchant, sitting down again. Meggie placed before him a half-cake of barley-bread and a jug of water.

"It was the feast of the promise," she said; "'thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure.'"

The merchant saw that, in her effort to be hospitable, she had exhausted her larder; and, without remarking that the portion was rather a scanty one, partook with apparent relish of his share of the half-cake. But he took especial care from that time forward till the death of Meggie, which did not take place till about eight years after, that her feasts should not be so barely and literally feasts of the promise.

Mr. Forsyth, in the midst of his numerous engagements, found leisure for a few days every year to visit his relatives in Moray. The family of his paternal grandfather, a farmer of Elginshire, had been a numerous one; and he had an uncle settled in Elgin as a merchant and general dealer who was not a great many years older than him-