

ing got porridge with salt in it. One marked effect of the annual change which the north-country mason had to undergo, from a life of domestic comfort to a life of hardship in the bothy, if he has not passed middle life, is a great apparent increase in his animal spirits. At home he is in all probability a quiet, rather dull-looking personage, not much given to laugh or joke; whereas in the bothy, if the squad be a large one, he becomes wild and a humorist,—laughs much, and becomes ingenious in playing off pranks on his fellows. As in all other communities, there are certain laws recognized in the barrack, as useful for controlling at least its younger members the apprentices; but in the general tone of merriment, even these lose their character, and ceasing to be a terror to evil-doers, become in the execution mere occasions of mirth. I never in all my experience, saw a serious punishment inflicted. Shortly after our arrival at Conon-side, my master chancing to remark that he had not wrought as a journeyman for twenty-five years before, was voted a “ramming,” for taking, as was said, such high ground with his brother workmen; but, though sentence was immediately executed, they dealt gently with the old man, who had good sense enough to acquiesce in the whole as a joke. And yet, amid all this wild merriment and license, there was not a workman who did not regret the comforts of his quiet home, and long for the happiness which was, he felt, to be enjoyed only there. It has been long known that gaiety is not solid enjoyment; but that the gaiety should indicate little else than the want of solid enjoyment, is a circumstance not always suspected. My experience of barrack-life has enabled me to receive without hesitation what has been said of the occasional merriment of slaves in America and elsewhere, and fully to credit the often-repeated statement that the abject serfs of despotic Governments laugh more than the subjects of a free country. Poor fellows! If the British people were as unhappy as slaves or serfs, they would, I dare say, learn in time to be quite as merry. There are, however, two circumstances that serve to prevent the bothy life of the north-country mason