

oatmeal by a rope, from one of the naked rafters, at rather more than a man's height over the floor. And, having both pot and pitcher, our household economy was complete. Though resolved not to forego my evening walks, I had determined to conform also to every practice of the barrack; and as the workmen drafted from various parts of the country, gradually increased around us, and the place became crowded, I soon found myself engaged in the rollicking barrack-life of the north-country mason. The rats were somewhat troublesome. A comrade who slept in the bed immediately beside ours had one of his ears bitten through one night as he lay asleep, and remarked that he supposed it would be his weasand they would attack next time; and on rising one morning, I found that the four brightly plated jack-buttons to which my braces had been fastened, had been fairly cut from off my trousers, and carried away, to form, I doubt not, a portion of some miser hoard in the wall. But even the rats themselves became a source of amusement to us, and imparted to our rude domicile, in some little degree, the dignity of danger. It was not likely that they would succeed in eating us all up, as they had done wicked Bishop Hatto, of old; but it was at least something that they had begun to try.

The dwellers in the hay-loft had not been admitted in the previous season to the full privileges of the barrack, nor had they been required to share in all its toils and duties. They had to provide their quota of wood for the fire, and of water for general household purposes; but they had not to take their turn of cooking and baking for the entire mess, but were permitted, as convenience served, to cook and bake for themselves. And so, till now, I had made cakes and porridge, with at times an occasional mess of brose or *brochan*, for only my master and myself,—a happy arrangement, which, I dare say, saved me a few *rammings*; seeing that, in at least my earlier efforts, I had been rather unlucky as a cook, and not very fortunate as a baker. My experience in the Cromarty caves had rendered me skilful in both boiling and roasting potatoes, and in preparing shell-fish for the table, whether