

ye like master," I replied; "but there are two kinds in the pot, and it will go hard if none of them please you." I then dished him a piece of the cake, somewhat resembling in size and consistency a small brown dumpling, which he of course found wholly inedible, and became angry. But this bad earth of ours "is filled," according to Cowper, "with wrong and outrage;" and the barrack laughed and took part with the defaulter. Experience, however, that does so much for all, did a little for me. I at length became a tolerably fair plain cook, and a not very bad baker; and now, when the exigencies required that I should take my full share in the duties of the barrack, I was found adequate to their proper fulfilment. I made cakes and porridge of fully the average excellence; and my brose and *brochan* enjoyed at least the negative happiness of escaping animadversion and comment.

Some of the inmates, however, who were exceedingly nice in their eating, were great connoisseurs in porridge; and it was no easy matter to please them. There existed unsettled differences—the results of a diversity of tastes—regarding the time that should be given to the boiling of the mess, respecting the proportion of salt that should be allotted to each individual, and as to whether the process of "mealing," as it was termed, should be a slow or a hasty one; and, of course, as in all controversies of all kinds, the more the matters in dispute were discussed, the more did they grow in importance. Occasionally the disputants had their porridge made at the same time in the same pot; there were, in especial, two of the workmen who differed upon the degree-of-salt question, whose bickers were supplied from the same general preparation; and as these had usually opposite complaints to urge against the cooking, their objections served so completely to neutralize each other, that they in no degree told against the cook. One morning the cook,—a wag and a favorite,—in making porridge for both the controversialists, made it so exceedingly fresh as to be but little removed from a poultice; and, filling with the preparation in this state the bicker of the salt-loving connoisseur, he then took a handful of salt, and mixing it with