

—at least between the fourteenth and eighteenth year ; and its effect we find happily indicated by Wordsworth,—who seems to have met with a characteristic specimen,—in his lines to a Highland girl. He describes her as possessing as her “dower,” “a very *shower* of beauty.” Further, however, he describes her as very young.

“Twice seven consenting years had shed
Their utmost bounty on her head.”

I was, besides, struck at this time by finding, that while almost all the young lads under twenty, with whom I came in contact, had at least a smattering of English, I found only a single Highlander turned of forty with whom I could exchange a word. The exceptional Highlander was, however, a curiosity in his way. He seemed to have a natural turn for acquiring languages, and had derived his English, not from conversation, but, in the midst of a Gaelic-speaking people, from the study of the Scriptures in our common English version. His application of Bible language to ordinary subjects told at times with rather ludicrous effect. Upon enquiring of him, on one occasion, regarding a young man whom he wished to employ as an extra laborer, he described him in exactly the words in which David is described in the chapter that records the combat with Goliath, as “but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance ;” and on asking where he thought we could get a few loads of water-rolled pebbles for causewaying a floor, he directed us to the bed of a neighboring rivulet, where we might “choose us,” he said, “smooth stones out of the brook.” He spoke with great deliberation, translating evidently his Gaelic-thinking, as he went on, into Scriptural English.