

his character was chiefly remarkable was an instinctive, fox-like cunning, that seemed to lie at its very basis,—a cunning which co-existed, however, with perfect honesty, and a devoted attachment to his patron the proprietor.

The town of Cromarty had its poor imbecile man of quite a different stamp. Jock Gordon had been, it was said, “like other people” till his fourteenth year, when a severe attack of illness left him bankrupt in both mind and body. He rose from his bed lame of a foot and hand, his one side shrunken and nerveless, the one lobe of his brain apparently inoperative, and with less than half his former energy and intellect; not at all an idiot, however, though somewhat more helpless,—the poor mutilated fragment of a reasoning man. Among his other failings, he stuttered lamentably. He became an inmate of the kitchen of Cromarty House; and learned to run, or, I should rather say, to *limp*, errands—for he had risen from the fever that ruined him to run no more—with great fidelity and success. He was fond of church-going, of reading good little books, and, notwithstanding his sad stutter, of singing. During the day, he might be heard, as he hobbled along the streets on business, “*singing in into himself*,” as the children used to say, in a low unvaried undertone, somewhat resembling the humming of a bee; but when night fell, the whole town heard him. He was no patronizer of modern poets or composers. “There was a ship, and a ship of fame,” and “Death and the Fair Lady,” were his especial favorites; and he could repeat the “Gosport Tragedy,” and the “Babes in the Wood,” from beginning to end. Sometimes he stuttered in the notes, and then they lengthened on and on into a never-ending quaver that our first-rate singers might have envied. Sometimes there was a sudden break;—Jock had been consulting the pocket in which he stored his bread;—but no sooner was his mouth half-cleared, than he began again. In middle-life, however, a great calamity overtook Jock. His patron, the occupant of Cromarty House, quitted the country for France: Jock was left without occupation or aliment; and the streets heard no more of his songs. He grew lank