

moral stigma attached, and so men brave the penalty every day. And such is the principle, when the law, equally dissociated from the promptings of the moral sense, is not a law of accident, but of the statute-book. Men brave the danger of the penalty, as they do the peril of the fowling-piece. But there is this ultimate difference: without being in any degree a felon tried by his own conscience, the traverser of the statutory enactment becomes legally a felon: he may be dealt with, like the red-haired or six-feet-high felon of our illustration, as decidedly criminal. He is ferociously attacked with lethal weapons as a felon; and, defending himself in hot blood with the resembling weapons, without which his amusements cannot be carried on, he becomes a murderer; or he is apprehended, manacled, tried, condemned, imprisoned, transported, as a felon, and, in passing through so degrading a process, becomes at length the actual criminal which he had been in the eye of the law all along. Few of our readers can have any adequate conception of the immense mass of criminality created yearly in the empire by this singularly deteriorating process. In the year 1843 there were in England and Wales alone no fewer than four thousand five hundred and twenty-nine convictions under the game-laws. Forty of that number were deemed cases of so serious a nature, that the culprits were transported. In all the other cases they were either fined or imprisoned,—the fines taken in the aggregate averaging two pounds sterling,—the imprisonments seven weeks. And it is out of this system of formidable penalties that the numerous murders have arisen, and that the game-laws of the country have, like those of Draco, come to be written in blood.

The character of the ordinary Scotch poacher must be familiar to all our readers. "E'en in our ashes," says the poet, "live our wonted fires." There are few things more truly natural to man than a love of field-sports. Voyagers