

Saturday to gie us, 'Fie, let us a' to the Bridal,' an' ye see the ale an' the nicht's baith wearin' dune."

"The song, Rob, the song!" exclaimed half-a-dozen voices at once; and John's story was lost in the clamor.

"Nay, now," said the good-natured poet, "that's less than kind; the auld man's stories are aye worth the hearing, an' he can relish the auld-warld fisher song wi' the best o' ye. But we maun hae the story yet."

He struck up the old Scotch ditty, "Fie, let us a' to the Bridal," which he sung with great power and brilliancy; for his voice was a richly-modulated one, and there was a fulness of meaning imparted to the words which wonderfully heightened the effect. "How strange it is," he remarked to me when he had finished, "that our English neighbors deny us humor! The songs of no country equal our Scotch ones in that quality. Are you acquainted with 'The Gudewife of Auchtermuchty?'"

"Well," I replied; "but so are not the English. It strikes me that, with the exception of Smollett's novels, all our Scotch humor is locked up in our native tongue. No man can employ in works of humor any language of which he is not a thorough master; and few of our Scotch writers, with all their elegance, have attained the necessary command of that colloquial English which Addison and Swift employed when they were merry."

"A braw redd delivery," said John, addressing me.

"Are ye gaun to be a minister too?"

"Not quite sure yet," I replied.

"Ah," rejoined the old man, "'twas better for the Kirk when the minister just made himsel' ready for it, an' then waitèd till he kent whether it wanted him. There's young Rob Ferguson beside you," —

"Setting oot for the Kirk," said the young poet, inter-