

man to man. Thomson, whose residence in England had taught him very different notions of fair play and the ring, was on the eve of forgetting his caution and interfering, but the interference proved unnecessary. Ere he had stepped up to the combatants, the old man, with a vigor little lessened by age, had shaken off both his opponents; and, though they stood glaring at him like tiger-cats, neither of them seemed in the least inclined to renew the attack.

"Twa mean, pitiful kerns," exclaimed the old man, "to tak odds against ane auld enough to be their faither; and that, too, after burning my loof wi' the het airn! But I hae noited their twa heads thegither! Sic a trick! — to bid me stir up the fire after they had heated the wrang end o' the poker! Dēil, but I hae a guid mind to gie them baith mair o't yet!"

Ere he could make good his threat, however, his daughter, a delicate-looking girl of nineteen, came rushing up to him through the crowd. "Father!" she exclaimed, "dearest father! let us away. For my sake, if not your own, let these wild men alone. They always carry knives; and, besides, you will bring all of their clan upon you that are at the tryst, and you will be murdered."

"No muckle danger frae that, Lillias," said the old man. "I hae little fear frae ony ane o' them; an' if they come by twasome, I hae my friends here too. The ill-deedy wratches, to blister a' my loof wi' the poker! But come awa, lassie; your advice is, I dare say, best after a'."

The old man quitted the place with his daughter, and for the time Thomson saw no more of him. As the night approached, the Highlanders became more noisy and turbulent; they drank, and disputed, and drove their very bargains at the dirk's point; and as the salmon-fisher