

TELL ME
ANOTHER

LORD
ABERDEEN

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TELL ME ANOTHER

BY THE MOST HON.
THE MARQUESS OF ABERDEEN
AND TEMAIR, K.T.

“A laugh is just like sunshine
For cheering folks along.”

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DEDICATED
TO MY FRIEND

SIR JAMES TAGGART, K.B.E., LL.D.
EX-LORD PROVOST OF ABERDEEN

A MAN OF WIT AND GOODWILL

PREFACE

The aim and hope with which this book emerges, is, that anyone taking a look at its contents, even in a random way, may find at least something to amuse or interest.

When Mr Edward Arnold (of Messrs Edward Arnold & Company) was good enough to suggest that I should try my prentice hand at a publication of this kind, he alluded to Dean Ramsay's celebrated book as a sort of type and model. An attempt to follow that example would be ambitious indeed: but my ambition in relation to that work, in addition to various quotations therefrom, has mainly consisted in recording some incidents and utterances which, judging by analogy, the Dean would presumably have used if they had occurred during his lifetime.

There is one feature of the jottings contained in these pages, which may perhaps be regarded as too prominent, namely, the local element, which is frequently introduced. On the other hand, it may be claimed that when an item is of the reminiscent character, the local colouring is a natural and indeed a desirable accompaniment.

And, of course, if this unpretentious venture were a work of fiction, local surroundings, real or imaginary, would necessarily have been introduced.

It should be added that I have never kept a diary, and, therefore, in recording various episodes and sayings, I have depended mainly on memory, and this, of course, involves the liability to err; but I must put in a *caveat* regarding the allusion—by way of illustration—to certain current tales, different versions of which have been evolved; for in such cases I have taken care to obtain as nearly as possible, the original form of the story.

There are some other lines of procedure and method which I have endeavoured to follow in this composition; but these need not be here specified; and indeed they will perhaps be observed by any who find themselves disposed to read the book throughout, and to whom I offer, in advance, my respectful thanks.

ABERDEEN AND TEMAIR.

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Tell Me Another

CHAPTER I

THE USE OF THE PUN

To the question—Should Punning be regarded as a rational, or even tolerable, form of jocularitas?—the answer would probably be that, like certain articles of diet, its use depends on quality and quantity. When the quality is good, it can properly be used; but the quantity should be limited.

In any case, the “play on words” is quite a venerable institution; and as to antiquity, examples of its use certainly occur in Holy Scripture.

And “every schoolboy knows”—and if that is the case, every schoolgirl knows—that one of the early Popes, observing in one of the streets of Rome, a group of youths, who had evidently been brought from some distant land, and, having been informed that they were “Angli,” exclaimed “non Angli sed Angeli.”

And there is another easily remembered tale belonging to mediæval times, namely, concerning the renowned scholar and philosopher John Scotus Erigena, namely, that when Charles I of France, received him at dinner, the King, wishing to crack a joke at the expense of his guest, who was seated opposite to him, asked “What separates Scot from sot?” To which the philosopher instantly replied, “Only the table.”^[1] Historical candour prompts the admission that some authorities say that Erigena was of Irish extraction; and of course the original Scots are supposed to have migrated from the Sister Isle.

Coming now to modern times, punning is not so much in vogue at the present time as it was during some earlier periods, and I think it must have been very prevalent in the days of my youth. Thus, while at Cheam School, I remember that one of the masters (Mr Osborne) to whom I was displaying my

new watch and chain, observing that the latter was somewhat tangled, remarked that it had apparently got into a “Gordian” knot. This master must have been a good-tempered man, on the whole, because the boys could quite freely address him by his nickname “Poll,” derived from his somewhat aquiline nose; but he could also be a disciplinarian. Thus, on one occasion when he was about to administer some sort of punishment to a boy, several of us, seated at the other end of the room, called out, in a merely conventional way, “O! Poll, let him off.” In thunderous voice, Mr Osborne exclaimed, “Who said, ‘Let him off’?” One or two of us, including myself, pleaded guilty. Mr Osborne advanced, and with a wide swoop of his arm, inflicted a terrific box on one of my ears. I can well remember how that ear tingled during the rest of the day. Of course such an incident would not be tolerated in a School of to-day. It would be regarded as dangerous, as I have no doubt it was. However, though I am now a little deaf in the left ear, I cannot lay the blame on Mr Osborne, partly because the tendency is recent, and also because it only affects my left ear, whereas the buffet was inflicted on the right.

After leaving Cheam I heard a good many puns during a most enjoyable time as one of the pupils of a bachelor clergyman in Surrey. Before my arrival, he informed an elderly lady friend of his that he had got “*Gordon coming* as a pupil.” At that time Major Gordon Cumming, of the well-known Morayshire family, had acquired much celebrity as a lion-killer in Africa; and my tutor’s friend was naturally puzzled as to how a middle-aged, big-game sportsman could be expected as a pupil at the Parsonage.

Another specimen of this parson’s proficiency in punning was given when a cartoon appeared in *Punch*, illustrating the inconvenience caused by the large number of unwieldy vans which obstructed traffic in London streets. The title of the picture in *Punch* was “The Van Demon.” This led my tutor to remark that it was a pity they could not be all sent to Van Diemen’s Land; but a junior reader may naturally ask—Where is that? Well, it no longer exists—at least, not on the map. And—but I think we had better change the subject.

I shall only quote one more tutorial joke of this description, namely, when someone remarked that a man whose business consisted in selling dead horses, seemed to be doing well, my tutor remarked that probably he had “a knack o’ collecting them,” which, of course, sounded like “Knacker,” the technical name of that business.

But I turn from what may be regarded as rather flimsy specimens, to an utterance of the punning sort by no less a personage than the late Sir William Vernon Harcourt, which was related to me by that most genial and resourceful of companions—the late Sir Francis Mowatt.

The joke was evoked thus. The late Sir Rainald Knightley (who was created a baron in 1897), belonged to a family of very ancient lineage, for their names appear in Domesday Book as owners of land at the time of William of Normandy. Sir Rainald was naturally proud of his pedigree, and one evening during a visit to a country house, he was narrating some of the facts of his genealogy; but before he had finished, it was time to join the ladies. Next evening, however, he resumed the subject; but Sir William Harcourt soon intervened by remarking, "Ah yes, most interesting; and one cannot help recalling a passage in that fine poem by Addison, in which occur some lines which might be adapted thus:

‘And Nightly, to the listening earth,
Repeats the story of his birth.’ ”

Of course, the drawback about a *shaft* of that sort is that it often may, or must, in some degree wound; but I shall now quote a witticism in the punning line, which could leave no sting, but rather the reverse, uttered by another celebrity, namely, Mark Twain.

Some years before he passed from this world, Mark Twain was laid up by a very serious illness; and it happened that at the same time Rudyard Kipling also suffered in a similar manner; consequently many sympathetic messages were flashed by cable across the Atlantic from America with inquiries concerning Rudyard Kipling, and from England for Mark Twain. After both the distinguished invalids had happily recovered, Mark Twain was entertained at a complimentary banquet by the Savage Club in London. And in replying to the toast of his health, he opened by stating that he had for some weeks past been engaged in the concoction of a pun, which he would now give to the company, namely this: "England and America which have been brought nigh to each other in Kipling, will not be divided in Twain."

It may be allowable to quote something in the shape of a pun, attributed in *Punch* to another very eminent personage, namely, the illustrious philanthropist—Lord Shaftesbury.

In the year 1864, the Earl of Derby published a translation of Homer, which was received with much favour by scholars in general. His successor in the Premiership was Lord Palmerston, who had occasion to make a good many Episcopal appointments; and in this matter it was understood that he was often guided by the advice of Lord Shaftesbury, who was his son-in-law. Several of these appointments, however, took the shape of "Translations" from one See to another; and these had attracted a good deal of attention. A cartoon in *Punch* represented a corridor in a country house, during the recess. Lord Derby happens to meet Lords Palmerston and Shaftesbury. (A bust of Homer is seen

near):

Lord Derby, loq. "By the way, have you seen my Homer? and have either of you been translating?"

Shaftesbury, loq. (stiffly). "No, we translate only Bishops."

Derby, loq. "Ruat Coelum! Shaftesbury has joked!"

Of course this reflected a prevalent notion; but as a matter of fact Lord Shaftesbury was quite alive to the humorous aspect of things—in fact, he formed one of the numerous examples of persons, who, while deeply imbued with religious principle, are also fully equipped with "the saving sense of humour."

Sometimes a pun is perpetrated unintentionally, and in that case the result is not always satisfactory. I once had a distressing experience of this liability. At the Ladies' Empire Club, in London, one of the desirable rules of that very desirable establishment is that married members are permitted to introduce their husbands to the privileges of the Club (within due limits). It happened that on one occasion many years ago, in the exercise of this privilege I was partaking of a meal in the dining-room, alone, Lady Aberdeen having been called away by some engagement in another part of the house. Soon a very attractive young lady entered the room and took a seat at one of the small tables. I cast a furtive glance in that direction, hoping that I might find that I could claim acquaintance, but I came to the conclusion that such was not the case; however, a moment later, to my great satisfaction, the lady said, "How-do-you-do, Lord Aberdeen?"; I, of course, responded with alacrity, and conversation ensued, in the course of which my fair acquaintance remarked that she had just come back to town from spending some time in Hampshire on a fishing expedition; I inquired what kind of fish had been mostly in quest, and I added, through the mischievous, unfortunate prompting, perhaps, of some ill-disposed sprite, "Was it roach?" "No," said the lady rather coldly, "it wasn't."

After that, conversation flagged; and there seemed to be a sort of invisible veil which hindered any further pleasant interchange; and very soon my companion, having finished her repast, moved away from the room with a very slight indication of farewell. A waitress then appeared, and I immediately said, "Could you tell me the name of that young lady who was here just now?"

The waitress seemed rather surprised, but immediately replied, "That is the Hon. Miss Roche" (pronounced exactly in the same manner as the ill-omened creature which I had mentioned), and I inwardly groaned. Never, during all the succeeding years have I had an opportunity of again meeting Miss Roche, and

I have never quite got over that unfortunate lapse.

Some reader may say, “How stupid not to recognise who it was”; well, at any rate the incident shows that a deficiency in that respect is not a matter of “senile decay”; and as to stupidity, let there not be too much of a halloo as to a lack of the faculty of recognition being necessarily due to density; for, much to the consolation of ordinary folk, who have suffered from that difficulty, it is known that one of the most able and distinguished statesmen of our time, for many years Prime Minister of Great Britain, did not always succeed in identifying those with whom he was acquainted.

This was illustrated on various occasions, one of which is well known amongst the older members of official circles. It was narrated to me by the late Mr R. W. Hanbury—whose early death was so much deplored—while we were driving together to a great Agricultural Show at Aberdeen in the year 1902 (he was Minister of Agriculture at the time). He told me that not long previously the late Viscount Long, who had recently become a member of the Cabinet, was walking along Pall Mall with the Chief Government Whip, when the Prime Minister was observed coming out of the Athenæum Club.

“Oh,” said the Whip, “there is the Chief. I want to speak to him. Would you mind waiting for a bit, while I go across to him?”

“All right,” said his friend, “but I hope you won’t be long.”

However, when a Prime Minister is engaged in conversation with his Chief Whip, brevity is not always to be expected; and at last Mr Long, becoming somewhat impatient, passed near the spot where the two were standing, and gave a vigorous nod to his friend in order to indicate that he was waiting. Very soon afterwards he was rejoined by his companion, who seemed to be decidedly amused.

“What are you laughing at?” said his friend, who was not feeling particularly jovial.

“Oh,” said the other, “I couldn’t help laughing, because when you passed just now, the Prime Minister said to me as soon as you had gone a little distance, ‘And who is your fresh-coloured young friend?’ ”

[1] Of course in order to get the actual effect of the utterance, it should be given in the original Latin, “Quid distat inter Scotum et solum?” Reply, “Mensa tantum.”

CHAPTER II

SCOTTISH HUMOUR

If any reader of the foregoing Chapter feels somewhat fatigued by the supply of “Puns” contained therein, there need not be any apprehension of a further dose of the same ingredient in this Chapter, because it is intended to deal mostly with traces of humour and quaintness which are of Scottish origin, in which punning is rarely found. And indeed, the exemption from this form of the humoresque in Scotland, as compared with England, is quite remarkable. Thus, in that treasury of Scottish Characteristics contained in Dean Ramsay’s celebrated book, amidst countless examples of amusing incident and quotation, there will scarcely be found anything in the punning line.

And, by the way, as that work has attained to fourteen editions, it seems strange that it should not have given the *quietus* to the tradition—which the Dean recognised, quite seriously, as worth refutation—about the obtuseness of the normal Scot, in regard to joke appreciation; but there is no need, at any rate there will be no attempt, to follow the Dean’s line of defence regarding that rather well-worn notion, except in the indirect manner of drawing from the Scottish reservoir of originality in wit and humour.

The people of Scotland have the reputation of being mostly of a serious and religious turn of mind and habit; and doubtless this reputation is deserved; at least, it has been so in the past. It may, therefore, seem somewhat singular that so many of the amusing sayings and incidents which have passed into currency, should, in so many instances, have been associated with religious observances and experiences. An example, taken almost at random, may be found in the description (contained in Dean Ramsay’s book) of an occurrence in a pastoral district of the Highlands.

At one of the Churches, where the congregation was drawn from a wide district, it was always the custom for the shepherds to bring their dogs with them to the service; and the dogs, of course, thoroughly trained, remained perfectly quiet throughout the service, until towards the end, namely when the last Psalm was given out. Then, perceiving, through experience or instinct, that the time of release was at hand, there was much stretching and yawning, and also those quaint sounds by which dogs are apt to indicate enjoyment and satisfaction; and when the pronouncement of the benediction began, the feelings of the canine portion of the assemblage were apt to break out into actual barks of joy.

These manifestations became so much a matter of course, that they had no disturbing effect upon either minister or congregation; but when it became known that on a certain Sunday the service would be conducted by a stranger, it was felt that the usual demonstration by the dogs would seem indecorous, and indeed embarrassing to the minister; and therefore, to prevent this, an arrangement was agreed upon. In Presbyterian Churches, the congregation always rise when the concluding benediction is about to be pronounced, but on this occasion, when the minister raised his hands as usual, the congregation remained seated; the minister paused, somewhat puzzled, but an old shepherd, looking up to the pulpit, said, "Say awa', sir, we're a' sittin' to cheat the dows." "

Of course the above would apply only to a district of exceptional kind in regard to the prevalent occupation of the inhabitants, though the presence of dogs in church, admirably well behaved, was quite a common thing in many parts of the country in former times. Indeed, I may admit (tell it not in Gath!), that Lady Aberdeen used to be regularly accompanied to church by her favourite Skye terrier "Monarch," who always behaved in an exemplary manner, not even showing undue elation when the service ended, his only stipulation being that he should be allowed to keep near to his mistress. (Of course he did not think it necessary to set an example of wakefulness.)

But it must be allowed that in connection with the termination of the church services, at least in country districts, there was a custom of a not edifying character, namely, that the instant the Amen of the benediction was pronounced, the egress of the congregation took place with a suddenness that might be compared to the rush of water from a milldam when the sluice is raised. This custom was alluded to by Lord Sands in the course of some very interesting reminiscences of his early days, and I myself, distinctly remember its prevalence in my boyish days, in the old Parish Church of Methlick. This may sound like irreverence, but it was in reality simply a matter of custom. Not a word was spoken, in contrast, by the way, to what may have been observed in many places of worship in England in past times, and perhaps to some extent at the present day, namely, the prevalence of a certain amount of exchange of greetings (in a quiet way) and also of conversation within the building, after the conclusion of the service; and after all, this need not be an indication of any lack of devout feeling.

I may doubtless be told, and with truth, that such a thing would not occur in any church belonging to the Church of England. Quite so; but in that respect also, there has been a change. I remember, with absolute distinctness, that the late Bishop Wilkinson, soon after he became Vicar of St Peter's Church, Eaton

Square, where he was the means of effecting a veritable transformation, uttered words to the following effect, from the pulpit: "Before beginning my discourse, I wish to say something about the Godless habit of *talking in Church*;" and he went on to say that he had noticed that members of the congregation, after taking their seats, would occasionally exchange indications of greeting with friends and acquaintances, either in the gallery or in the body of the Church. And he then exhorted his hearers that there should be no continuance of this practice. It is not surprising that one can vividly call to mind this utterance, because it was delivered with that intensity of earnestness and conviction so characteristic of the man, whose apostolic zeal and spiritual fervour became, to so many, the cause of lasting benefit and thankfulness.

Reverting to the old habit in Scotland, as to the mode of exit from Church, this is now quite a thing of the past, and indeed it is credibly reported that at a quite early period a minister of the old school and style, namely, a former pastor of the now United Free Church at Craigdam, Aberdeenshire, namely, the Rev. Patrick Robertson, took steps long ago to check the impetuous departure of his flock at the end of the service, in the following quaint manner. Having raised his hands as the usual sign that he was about to pronounce the benediction, he dropped them, and addressed the congregation, who had risen, in the following manner: "Ma freens, ye mind me on the nowt in Frosterhill's byre—nae seener does the bailie pit's han' til a seill than ilka heid's turned to the door." Instead of adding a foot-note with a glossary for the benefit of any English readers, or, indeed, perhaps for some of Scottish nationality who are young, it may be convenient simply to repeat the above in an English version: "My friends, you remind me of the cattle in Mr Frosterhill's cowhouse. No sooner does the cattle-man place his hand on the collar-fastening of one of the animals, than every head is turned towards the door." One can quite well understand that the above vivid metaphorical address would come home to the hearers with permanent effect.

There can be little doubt that if the above utterance had been made known to Dean Ramsay, he would have inserted it in his book, if only for the sake of illustrating what is certainly one of his favourite themes, namely, the advantage possessed by the old Scottish vernacular as a medium of terse and vigorous communication; and I confess that in attempting to give a reasonably correct English equivalent to the above exhortation, I was not without hope that, with due Scottish (so-called) modesty, the advantage as to force and impressiveness might be with the original form. Moreover, it contains a distinctive Scottish element, namely, in the allusion to Frosterhill's byre; for this combines the indication of both a person and a place, which would make the illustration, of course, all the more familiar and effective to the hearers.

The real name of the farm referred to is Foresterhill, but is always pronounced Frosterhill; but the use of the name indicated also the farmer, doubtless a much esteemed member of the congregation.

The old Scottish custom of designating lairds by the name of their estate has always been largely adopted in the case of the occupiers of the farms, and the more naturally, owing to the prevalence of leaseholds for nineteen years, but often renewed again and again, so that in many instances successive generations have occupied the same place. Of course the rule is not universal, but it may be taken as a sign of popularity when a farmer is always designated by the name of his home; and a further sign of popularity and goodwill is indicated by the use of a diminutive, which is also, of course, a Scottish tendency.

I remember once in my early days, which were also the early days of steam traction-engines, these being certainly the precursors of the modern motor car, that I happened to be in the congenial position of standing on the footplate of one of those same cumbrous machines. We were approaching the village of Methlick in fine style, but soon after crossing the bridge over the Ythan, the young man who was driving the engine slackened speed. I asked him why? He replied: "I didna wish to skeir Wardie's powney." I then looked ahead and observed that my esteemed friend, Mr Simpson, the excellent tenant of the substantial farm of Wardford, was driving through the village in his gig with a smart trotting pony. The engine-driver was not in the slightest degree showing any undue assumption of familiarity, he was simply using the nomenclature which, owing to Mr Simpson's position and reputation, had become his invariable designation by all sections of the community in which he lived; and I am sure our valued friends, his daughters, Miss Elsie Simpson, of Aberdeen, and her married sisters, will endorse these observations, and they will also be able mentally to picture the little scene which I have indicated.

This kind of *sobriquet*, as distinguished from a mere nickname, has, of course, to some extent, its counterpart outside Scotland, and is nearly always a sign of a large measure of popularity; thus, in the case of the late Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, the designation "Bobs" became a sort of pet name amongst the soldiery. Again, in another arena, "Dizzy," although no doubt used by opponents as well as friends, was more essentially the habitual designation by the latter; and so with Mr Gladstone, the "G.O.M."; in his case, I think this was almost exclusively used by friends and well-wishers; so also with "C.B."

All this is certainly in the nature of a digression, but, after all, this book will admittedly be largely of a conversational character, and, therefore, a

certain amount of elasticity will, it is hoped, be tolerated; but it is high time to revert to the topic from which there has been a divergence, namely, certain phases of church usage in Scotland.

Although, as indicated, there is now in Scottish Churches, universally, a moment or two of appropriate stillness after the benediction, there is not yet in Presbyterian Churches, at any rate in the country districts, a general observance of what has always been a recognised usage in England, namely, the indication of at least a moment or two of silent devotion before the commencement of a service. Strangely enough, there used to be a distinction between the mode of this observance, in the case of men and women respectively; for it was usual for a man not to kneel, but while standing, to raise his hat in front of his face for a moment or two, and then to take his seat.

This custom was alluded to many years ago in one of the pictures in *Punch*. The scene was the interior of a Church, just before the commencement of a service, when a little girl, seated beside her mother whispers: "Mummy, is Mr Brown a naughty man?"

Mother: "Hush, dear, no. Why?"

Child: "Because he doesn't smell his hat before sitting down."

There is just an indication in the distance of a gentleman who is duly observing the custom.

I have not got the past volumes of *Punch* conveniently at hand, nor is there any need for such, but if anyone wishes to verify the above, this, of course, can easily be done, though I cannot assist by giving any indication of the date, except that obviously it is somewhat remote.

During a considerable period, Scottish humorous and anecdotal contributions have been largely based on two prominent tendencies supposed to be specially characteristic of Scotland, namely, first, a tendency to an undue fondness for alcoholic beverages, especially whisky, and secondly, the practice of an extreme degree of thrift. The former of these two groups seems to be falling somewhat into disuse; and this is scarcely to be regretted. After all, the tendency, so far as it exists, is nothing to be proud of, and, moreover, jokes based thereon are apt to be somewhat thin in quality. However, in a book professing to deal with, *inter alia*, Scottish jocularities, it would seem almost like affectation to ignore this section of the subject. A few specimens, therefore, will be quoted.

One such, which may be regarded as typical, was, I remember, recited with considerable relish by my late brother-in-law, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, whose

exceptional business talents both in Parliamentary procedure and in business, were none the less valued because of the manner in which he could enliven the luncheon interval of a Parliamentary Committee, or a commercial board meeting, by the introduction of a racy anecdote from time to time. A specimen which occurs to my mind was that of a man who was found on a roadway in a somewhat collapsed condition; and being asked by some passer-by where he had been, he replied: "I dinna richtly recollect whither it was a wedding or a funeral; but onyway it was a gran' success."

I may as well add another little tale which I think was a favourite with "B. of B." An inhabitant of a Scottish village was describing a visit which he had made to the newly installed schoolmaster. "After a bit of a crack he asked if I would take anything, and I said I wadna object, and so he fetched the bottle and commenced to pour into a glass. Of course I soon said, 'Oh, stop, stop,' and—he *did* stop. Na, I dinna think he'll suit this Parish."

As to the thrift basis one may anticipate that this will continue to flourish, partly because there appears to be a fairly continuous reinforcement of the stock, and it is in this department of anecdote that there is the most frequent illustration of the fact that the typical Scot can appreciate jokes at the expense of his own nationality. Indeed there is plenty of foundation for the rumour that stories relating especially to the supposed extreme frugality of the people of Aberdeen and surrounding districts are invented by persons belonging to that region, and the supply seems to be almost unlimited. Amongst the latest which I have met with, is the following:

Three Aberdonians while taking a holiday, found themselves in a town where they were strangers. By and by they observed a notice outside a building, intimating the holding of a social gathering, with Music, Tea, etc., and *No Charge for Admission*. The strangers said one to another, "That's the very place for us; let's go in," and they did so, and enjoyed the music, and especially the tea; but after a while, the Chairman rose suddenly and announced a collection would then and there be taken up. On hearing this, one of the Aberdonians fainted; and of course his comrades had to carry him out of the building in order that consciousness might be restored. But none of the party returned in time for the collection.

Another tale, which I heard in Dundee, described how a certain visitor arrived at a seaport and, wishing to obtain information about the shipping in the harbour, asked an inhabitant for some information on the subject, which was readily given, and various vessels were pointed out as belonging to this or that port in various parts of the world.

"But," said the visitor, "how do you know?"

“Oh, partly by the style of build, rigging, and so forth.”

“Well, but,” said the visitor, “you surely cannot always tell, especially when a vessel is some distance away. There is a steamer passing now, and you could not tell what port she belongs to?”

The inhabitant surveyed the steamer for a moment: “That must be an Aberdeen boat.”

“Why do you say that?”

“Because there are no sea-gulls following her.”

CHAPTER III

WIT AMONGST THE CLERGY

To the question: "Which calling or profession has contributed most to the general stock of wit and humour?" the answer would, as a rule, probably be that to the Legal profession—Bench and Bar combined—we owe most in that line.

Well, conceding this, or taking it for granted, it may be held that a good *second*—to say the least—is to be found in the supply furnished from Clerical sources, using the expression in the comprehensive sense. And the present chapter will be devoted to the justification of this claim.

A beginning may safely be made with one of the best known of the Victorian Prelates, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, for many years Bishop of Oxford, and later of Winchester. He was a man of much distinction and most attractive personality, and, therefore, before quoting any of his witticisms, to insert a few words of personal reminiscence regarding him may not be out of place.

I saw him for the first time when he paid a visit to my grandfather, at Haddo House, in the year 1856. The visit included a Sunday. In regard to church attendance, Lord Aberdeen always followed the practice invariably adopted by Queen Victoria, King Edward, and their present Majesties, namely, that of attending the services of the Church of England while in England, and those of the Church of Scotland when residing in that country. And it need scarcely be said that my grandfather's numerous tenants, who were nearly all Presbyterians, and who regarded him with peculiar respect and affection, immensely appreciated the fact that their laird worshipped with them in the Church of their fathers and of their native land.

It is quite probable that the Bishop would have been prepared to accompany his host to the Parish Church of Methlick—two miles from Haddo House—but my uncle—the late Lord Stanmore—who held decidedly High Church views, proposed that the Bishop, who was also his most intimate friend, should drive with him to the small and picturesque Scottish Episcopal Church, All Saints, about eight miles away, at Woodhead, near Fyvie. This was, of course, a natural arrangement, and indeed one which it might have been difficult for the Bishop to decline. I am alluding to this, partly in order to bring in a little episode which greatly tickled the Bishop, and which was

narrated to me by the then Incumbent of the Chapel, namely, the late Dean Wilson—a lovable old man—father of the highly esteemed ex-Dean of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, as to whom there is evidently a very prevalent feeling, throughout the membership of the Episcopal Church in Scotland, regarding the lasting benefit to the Church accruing from the manner in which he filled his late official position.

After the service, the Dean asked the Bishop to oblige him by coming, for a few minutes, to the Parsonage, as he was anxious to introduce a leading member of the congregation—an elderly lady—the occupant of a small farm near by, and “a Mother in Israel.” Gladly the Bishop consented, and on entering the room, at once expressed his greeting thus: “Well, Ma'am, it is very refreshing to find a Church here in the wilderness.”

To this the old lady instantly replied: “But indeed, my lord, we consider this one of the most fertile districts in Scotland.”

Of course, the Bishop greatly relished this literal interpretation of his figurative allusion to the isolated station of Episcopacy, amidst the surrounding Presbyterianism; but “I have my doubts” as to whether the old lady was in reality so slow at the “up tak” as she chose to appear; for she may not have quite appreciated the suggested inference as to her numerous Presbyterian friends and neighbours being ecclesiastically on a lower plane than the members of her own Church. For it should be noted that the little Church at Woodhead was one of those (more common in Aberdeenshire than in many other parts of Scotland) which might be described of the indigenous sort, the congregation consisting entirely of members of the farming or peasant community of the district. At the time now referred to, some of the older women members of the congregation could be seen wearing the picturesque and becoming “Mutch,” *i.e.*, the old-fashioned white cap with crimped front—now almost quite extinct. Also, unlike the case of most Episcopal Churches in Scotland, there were no lairds amongst the members of the congregation at the time spoken of.

This remark recalls a little incident which was told to me by a former Parish Minister of Methlick, the late Dr James Whyte, who occupied that position for nearly half a century, namely, that when my great-uncle—Admiral William Gordon—who was for many years Member of Parliament for Aberdeenshire, happened to be staying with a certain laird on the east side of the county, his host observed on Sunday morning that the Admiral was preparing to go out, wearing his high hat.

“Hullo, Admiral,” he said, “where are you going?”

“I am going to Church.”

“Oh, but,” said the laird, “our Church is fully eight miles from here.”

“But” replied the Admiral, “I am going to the Parish Church.”

“O!” said the laird, adding, “Well, somehow, I never feel as if Presbyterianism is quite the sort of religion for a gentleman!”

In reply to this the Admiral remarked dryly, “Well, my brother, the Prime Minister always attends the Parish Church.”

My old minister friend assured me that this little tale—real or imaginary—was fully circulated amongst the people in his district, and was much relished.

The allusion, too, to that old-fashioned Admiral tempts a further digression, with a small story, which I heard told by the Earl of Selborne, while he was First Lord of the Admiralty.

A retired naval officer had a son, a smart boy, who joined the Navy. While the lad was with his ship at one of the British Naval Stations, it occurred to his father that as an old friend of his—a retired Admiral of some note—was living in the neighbourhood, he would send to his boy a note of introduction which he might present personally to the veteran Admiral, and this was done. The note was opened while the midshipman deferentially waited. The old Admiral, though kind-hearted, was somewhat gruff, outwardly, in manner. After reading the note he said: “So you have joined the Navy; fool of the family, I suppose—eh?”

“Oh no, sir,” was the respectfully uttered reply, “they’ve changed all that since your time, sir.”

And now, to come back to the Bishop of Oxford.

On the occasion many years ago, of one of the Royal Academy Banquets, when there is always a most interesting assemblage of notable persons, I happened to be present as a quite junior guest; and while chatting before dinner with a group which included that eloquent Prelate—Dr Magee—Bishop of Peterborough, and afterwards Archbishop of York, we were joined by Mr Bright, who was then advanced in years, but by no means lacking in animation. Bishop Magee was attired in the garb usually worn by Prelates of the Church of England on such occasions, the coat being of a dark violet hue. Addressing him, Mr Bright said: “Your coat, Bishop, reminds me of an amusing thing said by one of your former Episcopal brethren, namely, the late Bishop Wilberforce. Meeting him at some such function as this, I asked, ‘Why do you wear that rather peculiar coloured coat?’ to which he at once replied:

‘Oh! Mr Bright, don’t you know that a Bishop must always be *in-violate*?’ ”

Bishop Magee himself had a ready gift of repartee. It is said that once when travelling in a railway train, a young fellow who was with a companion in the same compartment, observing the Episcopal garb, began to interlard his talk with frequent swearing expressions. Meanwhile, the Bishop quietly continued his occupation, namely, writing of letters, without appearing to pay any attention to the jabber. After a while the youth reached his destination, but before leaving the carriage he said to the Bishop: “I hope, my lord, I have not annoyed you with my conversation? ye see I’m a plain man, and like to call a spade, a spade.” “Indeed,” said the Bishop, “I should have thought that you would have called it a bl——y shovel.”

It may have been this same Bishop who was asked by some cheeky person: “Can you tell me, my lord, the way to Heaven?” “Certainly,” replied the Bishop, “turn to the right, and keep straight on.”

One cannot help thinking that Bishops must sometimes feel that their distinctive habiliment is, when travelling, a source of inconvenience; but there was certainly no feeling of that sort on the part of the Bishop of Quebec, who mentioned at a meeting where I happened to be present, that soon after his arrival in Canada he had an interesting conversation with a fellow-passenger who, after a time, said: “I think, sir, you are an Englishman?”

“Yes,” replied the Bishop.

“I thought so,” added the passenger, “because I observe that you wear gaiters which I understand is the case with all Englishmen.”

If I had not heard the Bishop mention this incident I would certainly have been incredulous as to any Canadian having seriously made the above remark.

But I hasten to give another specimen of Bishop Wilberforce’s humour—not in the form of a pun. During his active career he became recognised as not only an excellent Bishop, but also a man of affairs, and, in particular, one possessing the gift of diplomacy, and this led to the invention of the nickname of “Soapy Sam.” And it is said that a young lady, who must have been decidedly precocious, ventured to ask the Bishop why this epithet had been applied to him, and to this he immediately replied in perfect good temper: “Oh! my dear, don’t you know? of course, it means that I frequently get into hot water, but that I always come out with my hands clean!”

Another specimen was told to me by the late Sir George Bowen. (To understand this item it should be explained that at that time there was an extremely prominent advertisement of “Thorley’s Food for Cattle,” and at

most of the railway stations in England there was a big picture representing horses, sheep and oxen, eagerly partaking of this article of diet.)

On a certain occasion the Bishop had undertaken to give an address in his own Diocese, the audience being composed chiefly of farmers. At the outset, the Bishop remarked he had not been very well recently, and that his doctor had been reluctant to allow him to appear that evening, so that he would have to be brief. On hearing this, some would-be wag called out "Try Thorley's Food, my lord!" "Ah! yes," said the Bishop—"yes—Thorley's food—good for horses—and" (looking in the direction of the interrupter)—"for *asses*; but *it doesn't suit Oxon*." (The Episcopal signature "S. Oxon." had become quite familiar to the public.)

I happened to quote this little tale after breakfast one morning at Haddo, to some of our guests. It evoked some risibility; but one of the group said—partly to himself, but quite audibly: "The Bishop was mistaken, because Thorley's Food *does* suit oxen very well." It should perhaps be explained that this visitor was chiefly connected with the Society of Friends, and was evidently not familiar with the Episcopate.

Another example of the Bishop's quickness was narrated to me by Sir George Bowen.

The late Baroness Burdett Coutts munificently provided the Columbia Market for the convenience of people living in the East of London. When it was completed, Miss Burdett Coutts—as she then was—asked the Bishop of Oxford to conduct a brief religious service in connection with the opening ceremony. To this he readily consented, and accompanied the donor to the place in her carriage. On the way, Miss C. remarked that one of her chief helpers in carrying out the enterprise was a prominent drysalter in the City; but, she added, "Perhaps your lordship doesn't know what a drysalter is?" To this the Bishop instantly replied, "Ah! yes, Miss Coutts, indeed I do know what a dry psalter is; Tate and Brady's, certainly."

(For the information of any reader, except those of somewhat mature age, it must be mentioned that during the middle of last century it was the almost universal custom that every edition of the Church of England *Book of Common Prayer* contained at the end, what was described as "a new version of the Psalms" in metre, compiled by Tate and Brady, two Ecclesiastics whose reputation as scholars was, however, not of the most distinguished kind.)

Sir George Bowen informed me also that he recited this little tale while he was the guest of the Marquess and Marchioness of Dufferin, during their official residence in India; and he observed that Lady Dufferin did not join in

the indication of amusement which the story evoked; so, afterwards, he said: "Perhaps your Excellency did not quite recognise the point of that little story about Wilberforce?" to which (according to Sir George) Lady Dufferin laughingly replied, "Oh! yes, of course I saw it; but with those A.D.C.'s and other young people about, I didn't care to admit that I am old enough to know about Tate and Brady!"

I would fain linger yet with that resourceful Bishop, but there is much pasture ahead, especially in the Episcopal field. And indeed it is interesting to observe how often those who attain to positions of eminence in any Church, are endued with the gift of humour. And has not this promoted their promotion?

At any rate, there can be no doubt that to no calling is this gift of more essential value than to the ministers of religion; and indeed it should be placed as only second in importance to the inestimable benefit of a good wife. Surely there was much point in the petition of George Macdonald's grandmother, who, on hearing that a new Pope had been installed at Rome, asked that he might be guided aright, and be granted a *good wife*.

The foregoing allusion to promotion in the sense of ecclesiastical preferment recalls a quaint misapprehension mentioned to me by Lord Crewe, many years ago. During a conversation with an ex-Cabinet Minister, who, by the way, was also a raconteur, Lord Crewe quoted the story of the clergyman who, when called upon to preach when Lord North—at that time Prime Minister—was present, took as his text the following verse from the Psalms, "Promotion cometh neither from the east or west, nor yet from the south." On hearing this, Lord Crewe's friend said, "Yes, that's not a bad story, nor a new one: but I have always understood that Mr Pitt was the Prime Minister referred to(!)"

Apparently there was a little mix up, the story having been confused in the listener's mind with that of the young clergyman who, preaching before Mr Pitt soon after he became Prime Minister, and when still extraordinarily young for that position, chose as his text, "There is a lad here that hath five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?"

This topic suggests allusion to a supposed occasion when Bishop Wilberforce aptly quoted from the first verse of the versification already mentioned (Tate and Brady's). (The incident was described in that most excellent journal *Public Opinion*; and it must have been in one of the earliest numbers, for it was read aloud by the clergyman tutor mentioned in the first chapter of this book—with whom I stayed in 1863.)

The story was that, on the occasion of a weekend visit to a country house, there was a discussion on the Sunday morning (the usual experience in those days, when attendance at Church Service was much more habitual than, unfortunately, is the case now) as to the alternative of walking or driving to the Church, which was some little distance from the house. The Bishop, who was one of the party, at once declared his intention of walking, while Sir James Graham—who was also a guest—remarking that the weather seemed to be unsettled, indicated his preference for the carriage.

The walking party, of course, left the house first, the carriage with a full contingent following later. Before the Church was reached there was a slight shower of rain, and when the carriage overtook the pedestrians, Sir James Graham called out to the Bishop:

“How blest is he who ne’er consents
By ill advice to walk;”

but the Bishop instantly retorted by quoting the remainder of the verse:

“Nor stands in sinners’ ways, nor sits
Where men profanely talk.”

Before closing these allusions to Bishop Wilberforce, it should be recorded, at least by way of reminder, that while he was both a statesman and a wit, he also, and above all, was a sincere and devoted Christian leader and teacher.

This, of course, is fully manifested in the Memoir of his Life; and I cannot refrain from adding an example of his adaptability.

He was preaching one Sunday afternoon in the old Parish Church of St Alphege, Greenwich. It was then quite of the old-fashioned “three decker” style, and somewhat of a “sleepy hollow.” I noticed that the Bishop used no manuscript but simply leaned over the pulpit cushion, and spoke in an easy, informal way.

After the service, he walked with my uncle—the late Admiral Baillie Hamilton—to his home, Macartney House, which, like Rangers House, is on the border of Greenwich Park.

I was a mere lad then and, therefore, did not take part in the conversation, but listened. During the walk the Bishop said: “I felt that what those people needed, was a straight, simple talk; so I practically discarded the sermon which I had brought, and spoke in almost a conversational way.”

Although many more samples of wit on the part of dignitaries of the

Church of England are within mental view, some of which may be drawn upon—if space permit—later, it seems fitting now to produce some choice specimens from leading members of other ecclesiastical bodies—particularly in Scotland.

Many years ago, a group of leading English Churchmen arranged to hold a meeting in London, for the purpose of offering a welcome and greeting to the Moderator of the Church of Scotland. The Archbishop of Canterbury, with characteristic broad-mindedness, presided, and Dean Stanley was also present. The only utterance of the occasion which I remember, was the declaration of his opinion as to the marked prevalence of a sense of humour amongst the Scottish clergy.

Illustrations of this quality have been given in a previous chapter, and a few more can now be added.

In the Scottish Churches there is a plan whereby a minister who, through advancing years, finds the burden of his charge too heavy, can be partly relieved by the appointment of what is known as an “assistant and successor.”

In this way an element of permanence is secured for the assistant or colleague, since, humanly speaking, it is only a matter of time when he will have full charge, and the full stipend, such as it may be.

And I remember that the late Dr Marshall Lang, who was a Moderator of the Church of Scotland, and latterly Principal of the University of Aberdeen, when speaking on a subject which included the above arrangement, said that he heard of an elderly minister who once said to his “assistant and successor”: “I suppose, my young friend, you are ‘thinking long’ for my dying?”^[1]

“Ah, no, sir,” replied the younger man, “you must not put it so; for it is your *living* that I desire.”

It is quite certain that in each of the Scottish Church Assemblies anything amusing is most welcome; and indeed it is probable that the same is the case in most ecclesiastical gatherings.

For a long period the foremost personality and leader in the United Free Church Assembly, was the late Principal Rainy. He was a man of marked ability and statesmanlike qualities, and he was sometimes spoken of as more a statesman than a theologian; but this was not really the case, as his friends (and he had many) knew very well.

I am indebted to Dr Rainy for an interesting anecdote regarding the celebrated preacher—the late Mr Spurgeon.

He had observed a few young men who occasionally attended the services at the Tabernacle (as Mr Spurgeon's place of worship was called) and who, taking a position near the door of one of the galleries, did not remove their caps, apparently in order to indicate that they were present, not for the purpose of joining in the service devotionally, but simply to hear the oratory, as such, of an eloquent preacher.

Spurgeon decided that he would get those caps removed. And he accomplished this in the following manner.

On entering the pulpit, he said: "Before beginning my discourse, I would like to mention that quite recently I had an unusual experience, that of attending a special service in a Jewish Synagogue. Naturally, when entering a place of worship, I was about to take off my hat—but an attendant courteously checked me, saying: 'Excuse me, it is our custom here to retain the head-covering,' and of course I at once complied with the request; and" (looking towards a particular part of the gallery) "I shall be glad if our young Jewish friends, whom we are glad to see amongst us, will conform to *our* usage, in the same manner." And needless to say, in a trice, off came the caps.

Although now dealing primarily with Scotland, we shall still come into touch with the Episcopal Order in that country.

Scotland has been, and is, fortunate in her Bishops. Although their respective communities form only a minority of the population, they—the Bishops—have uniformly taken an active and beneficent share in the promotion of the public welfare of the districts with which they are associated, and with the national life of the country as a whole. And this participation is very readily welcomed by the Presbyterian majority.

A striking example of this was manifested in the case of the late Bishop Chisholm, who was for many years Chairman of the Aberdeen School Board. In earlier years he was the Roman Catholic Priest for a district of which a small town, north of Aberdeen, was the centre. His experience there included a little incident which greatly amused him, and which he used sometimes to relate, so that it became well known in that region.

Returning home one night from a Church engagement in the country, he observed a man who, obviously as a result of too many potations, had subsided into the roadside ditch; and Father Chisholm, unwilling to leave the man in that plight, hoisted him up, and managed to pilot him along the road, into the town, where he propped him up against an iron railing, saying: "I expect you will be able to get home now."

On this, the man solemnly extended his hand, and said very deliberately,

“I’m obliged t’ye, Father.”

“Oh, then you knew me,” said the Priest.

“Fine do I ken wha ye are,” replied the man. “Ay, but I’m above prejudice.”

Another quaint experience was told to me by Dr Chisholm after he had been for many years Bishop. He had travelled to a town about 45 miles from Aberdeen to perform some Church function; and when this was completed, there was still a considerable time to wait before the next train. Accordingly, he adjourned to the hotel. There he was welcomed by the proprietor who said: “I think your lordship should take a seat in the commercial room; there is a good fire there, and a comfortable arm-chair.”

To this arrangement the Bishop at once agreed. There was no one else in the room at first; but soon a little man bustled in, and after surveying the intruder for a moment, said: “Excuse me, sir, but this is the commercial room—reserved for travellers.”

“Yes,” said the Bishop, “so I understand, but the proprietor was good enough to suggest that I should sit here.”

“Then may I ask what line you are in?”

“Well,” replied the Bishop, after a moment’s pause, “I’m in the spirit line.”

“Oh, in that case,” said the commercial man, “of course it’s all right.”

One other Bishop in Scotland should be mentioned; this time, of the Scottish Episcopal Church, namely, the late Bishop Campbell of Glasgow, greatly esteemed and deservedly popular.

I scarcely knew him personally, but I am sure that his gifts included that of humour, in full degree.

Two small incidents concerning him may be quoted.

At a large dinner party given by a former Lord Provost of Glasgow, Bishop Campbell was one of the guests. Towards the end of the dinner, he rose and “said Grace,” no doubt in one of the usual forms—such as, “For what we have received, etc.”

After the party had moved from the table, the Lord Provost said, confidentially, to the Bishop: “It was very kind of your lordship to say grace after dinner, but I confess I felt a little embarrassed, because my own minister of the Presbyterian Church to which I belong, was also present, and I was afraid he might feel that the natural thing would have been that I should have

asked him to officiate, as to returning thanks.”

“I am indeed sorry, Lord Provost,” said the Bishop, “that there should have been any mistake; and in fact I understood that it was your wish that I should act as I did.”

“Indeed?” said the Lord Provost, and then the Bishop added: “Yes, one of the attendants whispered something in my ear indicating a message from yourself, in which I caught the word ‘benediction’ which I understood as meaning that I was to say grace.”

“Well,” replied the Lord Provost, “that’s curious—ah! *now* I see what happened; I *did* send a message, but it was to say that I thought you would find the benedictine—the liqueur—rather good; and evidently the word got mixed up.”^[2] Another reminiscence concerning Bishop Campbell which he probably narrated, or which at any rate would be thoroughly appreciated by him was, that some English friend, having addressed a letter to “The Right Rev. the Bishop of Glasgow, The Palace, Glasgow,” the letter was returned from the Post Office, marked, “Not known at the Palace—try the Empire.”

And in order to impart further credibility, if needed, I may mention that something in the same line actually came within my own observation not very long ago, for, while staying at the Palace Hotel, Aberdeen, amongst my letters which had been sent on from the Post Office, there was one addressed “The Palace,” but, fortunately, I observed in time that it was not intended for myself, but for my friend, the greatly valued Bishop Deane (Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney) whose residence does not carry the designation of “Palace,” but the much more appropriate and attractive title of “Bishop’s Court.”

Having already in a previous chapter given an assortment of Scottish clerical specimens of humour, it will not be necessary to linger long on that topic; but no attempt to deal with the subject will be complete without, at least, some reference to the celebrated Dr Norman Macleod. In his biography, excellently accomplished by his brother—the Rev. Donald Macleod—it is mentioned that in his youth he had a great tendency to effective mimicry; but that would not be a prudent cult for a minister, and it was probably dropped, except within the most intimate circle; but the following extract from the Memoir gives a good idea of his prevailing sense of fun.

To his sister Jane:—

DALKEITH.

I feel terribly my loneliness, especially as preventing me from enjoying literary society. I began pondering in my mind whether

there was anyone in the town who could share my pleasure in reading ‘The Prelude,’ and ‘In Memoriam,’ or have a talk with me about the tendencies of the age. Of all my acquaintances, I thought Mrs Huggins probably the most *spirituelle*, and off I went with ‘The Prelude.’ I found her in her usual seat by the fireside, her face calm and meditative, her thumbs still pursuing their endless chase after each other as if each had vowed an eternal revenge of his brother. There was an air of placid repose in her time-worn features. . . . I was disappointed with her views of poetry. I read the Introduction, and the following conversation ensued:—

‘I.—We have here, I think, a fine combination of the poet with the poetic artist.’

‘H.—I wadna doot. How’s yer sister?’

‘I.—Well, I thank you. She has been a long time cultivating the ideal under me; but her talent is small.’

‘H.—Is her *coch* (cough) better?’

‘I.—Rather, Mrs Huggins. But, pray, how do you like Wordsworth?’

‘H.—I dinna ken him. Whar does he leeve? In Pettigrew’s Close? Is he the stickit minister?’

Lastly, here is a specimen of the somewhat old-fashioned ministerial style.

The Rev. Walter Dunlop, former minister in Dumfries, met on the road a man driving a flock of geese. Owing to their wayward disposition, the man was losing his temper and called out “Deil choke them.” A little farther on Mr Dunlop passed a farmyard where a man was endeavouring to drive in a number of swine and banning them with “Deil tak’ them,” upon which Mr Dunlop stepped up to him and said, “Ay, ay, my man, your gentleman’ll be wi’ ye i’ noo; he’s jist back the road there a bit, choking some geese till a man.”

And now a few more Anglican gleanings.

The late Bishop Courtney, for many years Bishop of Halifax, Nova Scotia, told me of an occasion at an English Parish Church when for some inaugural occasion the musical provision for the service was supplemented by some amateur instrumentalists, every effort being made to produce a good effect in combination with the choir. The Bishop was present and preached the sermon.

After the service, the vicar, while walking with the Bishop said: “I hope

your lordship was pleased with the musical part of the service? We had taken a good deal of trouble about it.”

“Ah, yes,” said the Bishop, “and one might also say that it was scriptural.”

The vicar, instead of being content with this utterance said: “I don’t quite follow your lordship’s allusion?”

“Oh,” replied the Bishop, “I was merely thinking of the verse: ‘The singers go before, the minstrels follow after.’ ”

Another little incident described by Bishop Courtney was this: At a country Church in the days when an offertory was not, as now, the invariable accompaniment of a Sunday service, a collection was being made, but the congregation being large, it was proceeding somewhat slowly. On observing this the rector beckoned to a worthy farmer who was seated near the chancel, and whispered to him: “They are not getting on very quick with the collection, Mr Giles; would you please step across to the rectory and look into the drawing-room—the door windows are open—and bring a silver basket which you will see on a table and help to take up the collection?”

Mr Giles departed and soon returned and moved amongst the congregation, but after a short time he returned to the chancel and whispered to the rector: “I done as you bid me, sir, but there’s none of them will ’ave any.” And then to his dismay, the rector perceived that the silver basket was full of mixed biscuits.

Members of the Church of England, at any rate of the younger generation, may be somewhat incredulous regarding the statement that the offertory was not, during the period referred to, recognised as an inherent part of every Church service, but such is the fact; one might, for instance, hear some such remark as this: “There is to be a Charity Sermon to-day, so there will be a collection,” and this would evoke such a reply as “Oh, indeed; could you give me change for half a crown?” And the curious thing is that at that time, and indeed one might say from time immemorial a collection was invariably part and parcel of every service in the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, and presumably in those of other denominations. No doubt copper was the prevailing form of coin deposited in the collecting ladles, or at the door.

The late Dr Henry Philpotts, Bishop of Exeter, became so well and honourably known that he was often described as “Henry of Exeter,” a kind of complimentary adaptation of a use of former times in English history. He too was evidently a man of humour, as exemplified by the following example.

It happened that toward the latter part of his life, a Dr Philpott was

appointed Bishop of Worcester. Soon afterwards at a meeting of Convocation he happened to address the assembly. He was followed by the Bishop of Exeter, who began by saying: "I'm afraid I cannot concur with the remarks of my singular brother."

A good many years ago the late Dr Elliott was Dean of Gloucester. He was greatly liked, and when a vacancy occurred in the Bishopric it was much hoped by the Canons and all connected with the Cathedral that he would be the new Bishop. One morning a senior Canon, on taking up the newspaper observed an announcement that the appointment had been given to Dr Ellicott, but the Canon misread the name and mistook it for Elliott. Immediately he hastened to the Deanery and exclaimed: "Mr Dean, I am delighted to hear that you are to be our Bishop." "Nay," said the Dean smilingly, "I am only Elliott, without the 'C'."

These last two items were told to me by a dear and valued friend of ours—a splendid fellow in every way—and greatly beloved, namely "Robbie Bowen-Colthurst." He was eminently a type and illustration of the combination of deep religious conviction and principle with pervading brightness and genial sense of fun.

Many years ago the University Authorities of Cambridge received an intimation that the members of an important embassy from Abyssinia desired to have an opportunity of visiting the University. The authorities felt that this was a request which ought to be complied with, and arrangements were made accordingly.

In due time the party of Orientals arrived, and were suitably received. They were fine looking men, of swarthy complexion, and they were all clad in white garments of an African type. They were accompanied by an interpreter.

Naturally, the great quadrangle of Trinity was visited. While there, one of the strangers, a strikingly tall, handsome man, advanced to the fountain, and, splashing the water with his hands, uttered at the same time some strange-sounding words. The interpreter was asked what this meant: "He is invoking the spirits of his ancestors," was the reply.

Subsequently the party were escorted to the railway station; and when entering the train, one of them stumbled slightly over the lower folds of his long robe and knocked his shin against the iron step of the railway carriage. This seemed to evoke a smothered ejaculation, and a bystander remarked: "How curiously sometimes one touch makes the world kin; you might have imagined just now that this Eastern was an Englishman."

Some time afterwards—but not soon—it began to leak out that the so-

called Orientals were in reality young Englishmen, including several Cambridge undergraduates; and there is reason to believe that Bowen-Colthurst was a prominent member of the group. He it was, probably, who performed ablutions at the fountain.

I never heard of any investigation into the affair. Certainly there were no penalties. Perhaps the authorities felt that, all things considered, it would be advisable to “let sleeping dogs lie.”

Robbie Bowen-Colthurst was early in the War. One evening a sergeant in the trench where he was stationed observed something unusual at the end of the trench, and moved along to see what was happening. Our friend, characteristically, went with the sergeant, but he forgot that his notable height, and the comparative lowness of the rampart made it absolutely necessary that he should stoop low down; and alas! in a moment a bullet pierced his brain, and the heart of his bright attractive young wife.

So farewell to Robbie—for a while.

On a certain Sunday, after evening service at St Mary Abbot’s, the Parish Church of Kensington, of which my old and particular friend—Edward Carr Glyn, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough—was the vicar, I had what was always a much appreciated experience—a chat with him alone in his vicarage.

During our talk he happened to mention a little tale, namely, that a lady meeting the Bishop of London (Dr Temple) had said: “Oh! Bishop, I want to tell you something very remarkable. An aunt of mine had arranged to make a voyage in a certain steamer, but at the last moment she had to give up the trip; and that steamer was *wrecked*; *wasn’t it a mercy* that she did not go in it?”

“Well, but”—replied the Bishop, “I don’t know your aunt.”

I happened to have occasion that same night to write a note to Lord Granville, about some parliamentary matter—I forget what—and knowing that he always liked anything in the nature of a story, I put in the above little item as a P.S. In his reply (sent with his usual kind promptness) he added, “Thanks for your good story.”

At that time, Lord Granville had occasion frequently to see the late Sir William Agnew on business matters. It also happened that during the same period Sir William had acquired the chief proprietorship of *Punch*; and consequently, as he mentioned to us, he used to attend the “Weekly Dinner” of that renowned and historic institution; a fact of which, naturally, he was not a little proud. And I have not the least doubt that Lord Granville, in his next interview with Sir William, mentioned to him—in his genial way—the above

anecdote, and that thus it found its way into the *sanctum* of *Punch*; at any rate, it appeared a few weeks later, of course disguised as to the *appearance* of the Bishop, but, as to the essential point, almost exactly as I got it from my friend.

[3]

The above specimen would indicate that the wit of the distinguished Prelate was often of a somewhat caustic style; and this element was perhaps reflected in his manner. But this was only external, for he was truly kind-hearted, and greatly liked as well as highly esteemed, by the clergy of his diocese, although some of them coined the phrase, adapted from a verse in the Psalms, namely, “there are no polished corners in our Temple.”

I thought this was very neat, and at a dinner-party I quoted it to the lady next to whom I was seated. She made no remark, but I became conscious that the quotation was regarded as decidedly feeble, and one which might as well, or better, have been left unsaid. After dinner I happened to tell a friend that I had mentioned the phrase to my neighbour at the table, but that it had evidently fallen very flat. “Yes,” he said, “it doubtless would, because the Bishop is her brother-in-law.”

That was sad, but indeed I have so many relations myself that in the case of some of the more remote, I have at times found it difficult to “place” the exact affinity; and one might be pardoned for a lapse in identification of relationship in other circles.

And if the above unfortunately quoted phrase ever came to the knowledge of the Bishop (as may quite possibly have been the case) I don’t believe he would have been in the least annoyed: but contrariwise, would have relished it; but that’s where humour comes in.

Another of the utterances attributed to him, was that, when he had driven down one evening to his official residence at Fulham, in a hansom cab, the driver, on receiving his fare (and having, of course, observed the Episcopal garb) said: “Well, my lord, I can’t help a’ thinkin’ that if I’d been driving Saint Paul, I’d ’ave got a better fare.”

“Oh—but, my friend,” said the Bishop, “you are mistaken as to that, for Saint Paul would doubtless have been at Lambeth, and that would only be a shilling.”

Whether this remark was actually uttered or not, Bishop Temple in due time became the occupant of Lambeth Palace; and a most excellent Archbishop he was.

And it is good that so distinguished a personage, who so well served his

day and generation, should have been followed by a son who has already made his mark in such eminent degree as the present Bishop of Manchester.

It goes without saying that ecclesiastical circles in Ireland have not been unfruitful in their contributions to the store of humorous sayings, and one figure stands out so prominently in this respect, that he seems almost to dwarf the products of his contemporaries. The reference is to the late Rev. Father Healy, for many years the Parish Priest of Bray, County Wicklow. His witticisms were mostly of the entirely impromptu kind, and frequently contained the element of sarcasm. Nor did he like to be “trotted out.” Here are two illustrative specimens.

A young lady meeting him one morning, greeted him thus: “Oh, good morning, Father Healy. Now, won’t you say something funny?”—to which came the prompt reply (or retort), “Well, I’m glad to see you; isn’t it funny?”

And the other, containing the element of sarcasm—but not too much—was this.

A certain man who had built and furnished a new house was showing it to Cardinal Cullen, who was accompanied by Father Healy. In one of the rooms, on a shelf above the writing-table, there stood a neat row of books. Pointing to them, the owner said: “These, your Eminence, are my friends.” But Father Healy chimed in, “Yes, and he has treated them like friends; he has never cut them.”

The late Archbishop Crozier, latterly Primate of the Protestant Church of Ireland, often related amusing anecdotes, but the only one which I know is the following, which he gave on some occasion when I happened to be present.

Two brothers, named Dick and Tom, were at school together. They had an aunt who lived in a very quiet part of the country. From her they received, shortly before the summer holidays, a letter saying that she would be very pleased to have one of them to stay with her for a week. She could not conveniently take them both, but they could settle for themselves as to which of them should come. The boys felt that she would expect this invitation to be accepted; and in due time Dick appeared at the aunt’s residence.

“Well, Dick, I’m glad to see you, and how did you settle whether it was to be you or Tom?”

“Well, Auntie, as you left it to us to decide, we thought we’d better toss.”

“Oh, I see; and so you won!”

“Oh no,” said Dick; “I lost.”

[1] “Thinking long”—a purely Scottish expression, signifying a wistful desire for something not at once attainable.

[2] I believe there is another version of this incident, but I give it as I first heard, or at any rate interpreted, it.

[3] Having been asked to verify the above, by a reference to the issue of *Punch* in which it appeared, I have done so. It will be found in Vol. XCIV, year 1888, March 31.

Instead of “Steamboat,” a “Railway Train” is used; but of course this is immaterial. And perhaps the Railway Train is the preferable. But the Steamboat was the form in which I first heard the joke.

CHAPTER IV

WIT AMONGST THE LAWYERS

Perhaps the inherent seriousness of Law has, through the sense of contrast, stimulated the nimble exercise of wit on the part of the Legal profession.

At any rate, the prolific supply has become proverbial; and a mere layman may naturally feel a certain diffidence in approaching this emporium, lest he should give the impression of inadequacy regarding the samples selected. However, as a matter of precaution, a beginning shall be made, tentatively, with Scotland, proceeding thereafter via Ireland.

The late Sheriff Comrie Thompson will long be remembered in the City and County of Aberdeen as a good judge, and also as a man of much kindness and geniality. He told me some of the quaint utterances of the late Lord Young, who was for many years Lord Advocate, and afterwards became one of the Judges of the Court of Session.

On a certain occasion, when Mr Young was still in practice at the Scottish Bar, Thompson was acting as his junior. The case was one in which railway construction was involved—and in the “proof” the expression “strong blue boulder clay” was several times quoted by the young counsel.

After a while the judge, who happened to be old Lord Deas, who spoke with a distinctly Scottish accent, intervened with the remark, “I’d be much obliged t’ye, Mr Thompson, if you’d tell me just what exactly ye mean by *strong blue boulder clay*?”

The young lawyer was somewhat at a loss, for a moment, and stooped to consult, *sotto voce*, his leader, as to the reply that should be given. But all the help he got, was the somewhat impatient exclamation, “Oh, tell him it’s the clay he’s made of; and get on.”

Comrie Thompson also told me that during a Will case, Lord Deas remarked. “Well, Mr Young, all I can say is that if I were to make a will of this sort, and if, after my death, I were to come back, and find that the interpretation which you suggest had been adopted, I would have been very much surprised.”

But Lord Young, assuming a tone of insinuating anxiety, replied: “Oh! but your Lordship wouldn’t come back!”

As to Lord Deas’s Scottish accent, let it not be supposed that the allusion to

this implies any lack of deference.

Thus, by way of parallel, I recall a remark made by the late Lord Ashbourne, who was for many years Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and was afterwards created a Peer. One day in the House of Lords I asked him if he had been recently in Ireland, and he replied (with unmistakable intonation): “I always go to Ireland several times in the year, to keep up my accent.”

The late Lord Morris, too, had a pronounced brogue which he also, perhaps, in a manner, cultivated, and thereby hangs a tale which may be inserted later.

My final reminiscence about Lord Young is this. We had a visit from him at Haddo House, late in his life: and during the visit he mentioned (amongst many other things) that while he was in Parliament as Lord Advocate, it happened one day that a question was put, from the Opposition, about a *leak*, which, it was rumoured, had been discovered in one of the ships of the Royal Navy.

Mr Goschen, who was the First Lord of the Admiralty, was replying to the question, and in endeavouring to prevent undue importance being attached to the mishap, assured the House that the leak was a small one—quite small. At this point the Lord Advocate whispered to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Robert Lowe, afterwards Lord Sherbrooke: “It may be a small leek, but he has got to eat it.”

This tickled Mr Lowe’s fancy and he began to repeat it to Mr Gladstone who was sitting next to him, but Mr G. seemed to be preoccupied and paid little attention to the communication. And this was evidently regarded by Lord Young as an example of Mr Gladstone’s supposed lack of the humorous sense. But to that inference I would certainly demur. Mr G. would, of course, be listening attentively to what Goschen was saying; and moreover, his trained parliamentary instinct would make him realise the sort of comment which would have been made in certain quarters, if the Prime Minister showed signs of amusement in the midst of a speech by one of his colleagues on a matter affecting one of the ships of the British Navy.

Mr Gladstone could appreciate a joke as fully as anyone; but there were certain concurrent requirements as to appropriateness, regarding *time*, *taste* and—perhaps particularly—as to *accuracy*. A homely example of this occurs to one’s mind.

I happened once to quote during a conversation with him a little tale, which I heard about sixty years ago, from my mother, recording a supposed characteristic remark by Mr Canning. He had been attending a church service

where the sermon was preached by a bishop with whom he was acquainted, and the two walked together after the service. By and by, Mr Canning said, "Well, Bishop, your sermon had at any rate one great merit, it was brief."

"Ah," said the Bishop, "I am glad to hear that you were pleased on the whole with my discourse; for I was afraid I might have been tedious."

"Oh, but," replied Canning, "you *were* tedious."

When quoting this to Mr Gladstone I, unfortunately, alluded to the preacher as Dr Blomfield, a well-known Bishop of London. Mr G. seemed pensive for a moment and then said, "I doubt whether Dr Blomfield was Bishop of London during any part of Canning's life." This was disconcerting, and some time afterwards I consulted my friend—Mr J. G. Swift MacNeill—that mine of accurate information, who has recently published a volume of highly interesting reminiscences entitled, *What I have Seen and Heard*.

Regarding my lapse as to Bishop Blomfield, Mr MacNeill was in a measure able to reassure; for he informed me that before being translated to London, Bishop Blomfield was Bishop of Chester, so it was quite conceivable that he might have preached in London during Canning's lifetime; also, that his promotion to London must have been, if not actually during Canning's lifetime, almost immediately after he passed hence.

So I was not so very far out of reckoning, after all, but evidently Mr Gladstone was correct.

Many of the Irish law stories of a past period cluster round the personality of a celebrated advocate, Mr Curran: and of course, as often happens, in the case of one who attains celebrity in any particular line, some of the things attributed may be more or less apocryphal; but that does not matter much, provided that they are worth telling.

In the case of actual or imaginary "passages" between bench and bar the advantage is on the whole most frequently attributed to the latter, and no doubt this is natural, at any rate it applies to some of the best known tales about Curran.

Thus, it is said that during the proceedings of a court on circuit in the country on a summer day with the windows of the building open, while Curran was addressing the court a donkey in an adjoining field happened to bray loudly. The judge intervening said, "Excuse me, Mr Curran, one at a time please." Curran bowed acquiescence, and then proceeded with his speech. Later, when the judge was delivering his charge to the jury the donkey again brayed; on which Curran rose and said: "I am sorry, my lord, but there seems

to be such an echo that I can scarcely make out what your lordship is saying.”

Coming to modern times, of course, one has to be cautious, especially in the matter of giving names; but perhaps it is allowable to mention a slight passage of arms between two well-known members of the bar, long since elevated to very high positions.

One of these notable lawyers when pleading the cause of his clients in a certain case was, towards the close of his address, moved—or appeared to be moved—to tears. The opposing counsel rising to reply, remarked that he thought that with regard to the phenomenon which they had just observed it would be felt that nothing more remarkable had occurred since Moses struck the rock in the wilderness.

Now, crossing to England, I shall only attempt here to touch the fringe of this large division of our subject.

The late Lord Herschell, distinguished Lord Chancellor, who had a keen sense of fun and humour, told me one of the sayings of the celebrated (not always in a most favourable sense) Lord Chancellor Westbury. He is reported to have asked a Member of the House of Lords Court of Appeal why he had ceased to attend their sittings.

To this the elderly Peer replied, “Oh, I’m old, and deaf, and getting stupid.”

“But,” said Lord Westbury, “that doesn’t matter; I’m old, and Colonsay is deaf, and . . . is stupid: but we make a very good Court.”

Turning to a comparatively recent source of humour within the legal realm, whose personality is remembered by a wide circle with affection and lasting regret regarding his early demise, one must be allowed a few words of reminiscence of the late Sir Frank Lockwood.

One of the most amusing examples of his irresistible sense of fun—often mixed with an element of good humoured mischief—can be given.

He and Murdoch Maclaine of Lochbuie married sisters; and it happened that the genial party of four were once making a tour together in Scotland, including the Highlands. On arriving at Oban, when registering in the hotel book, Mr Maclaine adopted—not in any jocular way—the custom which was quite usual, especially in the Highlands, whereby owners of estates, especially when accompanied with the headship of a Clan, used their territorial designation on all suitable occasions, and they were often so addressed by friends and neighbours. And so in this instance, the first entry read thus: “Lochbuie and Mrs Maclaine.”

When Lockwood's turn came, after surveying the above item for a moment, he said, "Ah, I see that this is the custom of the country, so of course I shall adopt the same mode," and he wrote: "19 Kensington Gardens Square and Mrs Lockwood."

During the period referred to Lord Rosebery founded a small dinner club which, at his suggestion, was called "The Thirty-nine Articles," the idea being also that the membership should be limited to that number.

The meetings were extremely informal and pleasant and included such personages (Lord Rosebery being, of course, the presiding genius, though the actual chairmanship of each dinner went by rotation) as the late Lord Russell of Killowen, then "Sir Charles," a name to conjure with; Lord Haldane, and various others, all participants in public life and perhaps almost exclusively that of Parliament; and Sir Frank Lockwood, needless to say, was the constant source of good-humoured merriment, including that which was evoked by his remarkable talent as a caricaturist which he often exercised with pen and ink sketches at the club dinner table.

CHAPTER V

THE SCOTTISH ELDERSHIP

It is deeply rooted in the national life of the country, and has been so for centuries. Perhaps the very fact that as an institution it is thus so firmly established, and so familiar to the people of Scotland, without giving rise to controversy, has caused it to be little noticed, and, it may be added, not fully understood, elsewhere.

But not a few who have made their mark, not only in Scotland, but farther afield, have filled the office of Church Eldership.

Two such, naturally, occur to one's mind. The Fourth Earl of Aberdeen, who, after filling various high offices in the State, became Prime Minister in 1853, was for a considerable time an elder for the Parish of Methlick, in which Haddo House is situated, and he also attended meetings of the General Assembly. And coming to more modern times, his position as an elder formed a notable and abiding feature in the distinguished career of the late Lord Balfour of Burleigh.

In the excellent biography written by Lady Frances Balfour there is a record of the modesty and sense of serious responsibility with which he accepted appointment as an elder at the early age of twenty-two—and he filled the office, most effectively, without a break, for nearly fifty years; and during the same period he was every year a member of the General Assembly, where he gained a quite exceptional position from the warm esteem and unswerving confidence which he inspired, while his influence in the promotion of the great cause of Church Union will ever be gratefully remembered.

He was not one of the first to espouse that cause; but when he became convinced of its need and its feasibility he devoted all his energy—and that is saying much—and also the clear reasoning force of his mind—which is saying no less, to the attainment of the object.

The Eldership as an institution, an office, is certainly in itself comprehensive, in more than one sense. It comprehends an essential element in the Presbyterian Constitution—so essential that it might almost be described as the backbone of that Constitution (and, indeed, it has been designated by some authority as “the glory of the Presbyterian Church”). This by no means implies any lack of recognition of the pervading importance of the Ministerial office. The reference is rather to the strengthening effect on the whole body which is

obtained from the wisely devised mingling of the lay with the clerical element.

This is manifested and developed in the most complete form in the General Assembly; but the same principle is in operation, or at least in existence, in every parish. In each and all we have the system which provides that in church management there shall be a link between minister and people.

That, of course, merely describes the matter broadly. As to the nature and functions of the Eldership, different theories have been from time to time propounded. Thus, one view would tend to minimise the functions of the elder; while, on the other hand, an older theory represents that the Elder should be recognised as a copy of the Presbyterian of Scripture, and this view could be used for arguing that the functions of the elder might be placed on a much higher level than is usually recognised, in regard to authority and privileges, since the terms "Overseer," "Presbyter" and "Elder," are used interchangeably throughout the New Testament. But it will suffice to remark here that while the theories as to the position and functions of the Eldership have varied, the actual practice has also been altered with various times and circumstances. This is only natural and indeed necessary.

In the early period of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, it was expected that the elders should not only be ready to act when called upon, but that they should take the initiative. Thus, in the First Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland, issued in 1560, we find (after a reference to the duty of assisting the minister in the execution of discipline, etc.) that, "They shall watch upon all men's manners, religion and conversation, that are within their charge." And to modern ears it may sound rather startling to read what follows: "They should take heed to the doctrine, diligence, and behaviour of their minister and his household, and if need be, admonish them accordingly."

But evidently as time went on, the drawbacks and liability to misuse, furnished by the encouragement of anything in the nature of espionage and inquisitorial methods, became recognised, and in later ordinances we find that attention is directed more to the securing of the right men rather than to the definition of their duties after appointment; and surely this is wisdom. And I think it may be said that this paramount requirement as to fitness, so far as human judgment can go, is pretty well recognised throughout the country.

Broad acres and a substantial bank balance, though, to say the least, certainly not less influential in Scotland than in other parts of the world, are not, generally speaking, permitted to weigh unduly in the scale when the question of appointment to the eldership is being considered. This remark calls to mind a passage in a book of truly Scottish poems, by Mr Charles Murray, entitled *Hamewith*, which has attained great popularity and appreciation. In

one piece there is an allusion to appointment to the eldership as a natural step in the rise and progress of an individual, who was admittedly somewhat of the “Mr Worldly-Wise-Man” type. Thus:

An’ he dreeve his gig to kirk an’ fair as canty as the rest;
An’ when they made him Elder, wi’ the ladle it was gran’
To see him work the waster laft an’ never miss a man.

Of course the wise and proper sense of responsibility as to selection for the eldership, may cause some doubt and hesitation at times as to the choice which should be made.

A clerical friend told me that on one occasion, after a church meeting where the question of an addition to the Eldership was discussed, and where apparently the minister had been called upon to make some suggestions, two men who had been at the meeting, were walking home together, when the following dialogue occurred:

First Man: “I didna think muckle of the Minister’s choice for Eilers.”

Second Man: “Ay, but ye ken, the Minister, honest man, maun just big’s dyke wi’ the feal at the fit o’t.”

For the benefit of the “general reader” it should be explained that the above is an old Scottish proverb indicating the need, at times, of making the best of the material at hand for any special purpose. “Feal” (or “fail”) is a sod or piece of turf, and the idea is that the dyke is mainly composed of that material; and of course the simplest, and sometimes necessary, method of construction is to use what is available close to the dyke, or, as the proverb puts it, “at the foot of it.”

As to the duties of the eldership, there is reason to regret that the change from too much being expected has involved too little in regard to the potentiality of the office. At the present time the regular and normal function of the eldership is that of the weekly church collection. The usual method, as the above quotation indicates, has long been by the use of the “ladle,” and that instrument continues in a very large number of churches, especially in the country. This has furnished material for various quaint anecdotes. Here is one.

A man had on one occasion accidentally dropped a half-crown, instead of the intended penny, into the receptacle. This worried him very much, and on the following Sabbath when the ladle was passed before him he pretended not to see it, and put nothing in. The officiating elder, who knew of the previous

mishap, quickly sized the situation and did not further obtrude the ladle. On the following Sabbath the same thing occurred, and after a while the elder practically ignored that member of the congregation; but he had kept note of the date: and on the thirtieth Sunday, after the half-crown had been given, he held the ladle in front of the contributor and whispered, “Your time is up now, Geordie.”

Another reference to the mode of collection is found in the story of this conversation between two men returning from a kirk. One of them (alluding to the manner in which the new elder had performed his part) remarks: “Weel, Sandy did fine wi’ the ladle,” to which the other replied, “Hoots, he’s been practeesin’ for a fortnicht amang the nowt wi’ a neep at the end o’ a graip” (a fork).

It should be mentioned, however, that the use of the ladle, or collecting bag, is now found only in the churches of the Established Church of Scotland—and these mostly in the country parishes. In the other Presbyterian Churches the usage is that of the plate at the door, under the supervision of one of the elders, appointed for that duty.

Some stories are current about the taking or asking for change with a view to limiting the contribution of the very prevalent copper. This may sound very “Scotch”; but a friend has just told me that during a visit to Brittany when he happened to be present at a service of the parish church and handed a franc to the collecting official, the latter at once proceeded to offer change!

The long established Scottish custom of the taking of a collection at every church service has already been referred to as a recognition, partly perhaps by tradition, and the appropriateness of an offering as an intrinsic part of public worship. And so indeed, there was more than appeared on the surface in the quaintly expressed decision of an old boatman who had charge of an open boat when a gale suddenly sprang up. This became so fierce that all in the boat became alarmed, fearing that at any moment they might be swamped, and soon the head man called out to his comrades: “Will some o’ ye offer up a bit prayer?” There was no response, however. Soon he called out again, more urgently than before: “Will some o’ ye sing a psalm or gang ower a paraphrase?” Still no response, whereupon the old fellow pulled off his coat and said, in a sort of desperation, “Then we maun dae something religious—I’ll tak’ a collection.”^[1]

Candour compels the admission, however, that there was a time when the collections often included many spurious coins. This occurred chiefly during the middle of the eighteenth century when there was a widely prevalent lack of the manifestation of spontaneity in religious observations; and we also all

know that when certain practices become common influences which might otherwise operate seem to become dormant. And, moreover, with regard to the prevalence of this evil in Scotland one has heard of such things occurring elsewhere and in more modern times.

I remember reading of a minister (not in Scotland) who, after announcing taking up the collection requested that any of the congregation who intended to put buttons into the collecting boxes would abstain from hammering down the eyes because the deception would not effectually be undetected and that meanwhile the buttons as such would be useless.

The dishonest, or at least evasive, procedure in Scotland appears to have consisted usually, not in the use of absolutely counterfeit money, but of what was called a “doit,” which appears to have been a Dutch coin of debased metal, worth about a twelfth part of a penny. Hence the phrase “not worth a doit.”

The above scandal has certainly been for a long time extinct, and it may be questioned whether throughout Scotland there are more than a very few cases of false money being found in church collections in the course of a whole year, and when such have been found it may safely be assumed that it was a case of unintentional error, and even that is not so likely to occur as in former times, because, apparently, whatever may be the case in regard to fraudulent paper money, counterfeit metal seems to be increasingly rare.

I recall, however, an incident supposed to have occurred to the late Mr Hugh Miller, who acquired wide fame as an author and geologist, as well as a fine type of robust Christianity. In his early days he had to struggle with privation. Once during that time he received a shilling. This was to the lad quite a windfall and he determined to keep it intact as long as possible as a sort of nest egg; but at last things became so tight that it became a question of no food versus no changing of the shilling; so he took out the coin saying, mentally, “You and I have kept company for a long time, but now we must part,” and then entering a shop he placed his cherished shilling on the counter and asked for some simple articles of food. Fortunately, he was not unknown to the shopman who, after taking up the coin, held it in his hand for a moment or two, and then said, “I am sorry—I am sure you didn’t know, but—this is a bad shilling.”

I heard this very effectively told by the late Mr W. T. Paton, whom his many friends will ever remember as a most lovable man and an extremely earnest Christian worker and speaker; and one can imagine how Mr Miller himself would tell this little story in after life.

Of course, it provides a *moral*; but as to that, perhaps it will be advisable to

adopt the procedure which, while a girl, and attending the late Professor Roche's classes in London, Lady Aberdeen admitted that in those early days she followed, because, when asked during a study of La Fontaine's fables, what she did about the "Morals" which are attached to the stories, she replied, "Je les saute, Monsieur."

The professor was so tickled by this naïve reply that he gave to his pupil—always a favourite I suspect—an extra good mark.

Appointment to the Eldership is not a mere matter of nomination. There is always a service of dedication—in fact, of ordination—recognised as such.

This was doubtless originally instituted with special reference to the central duty and privilege of the office, namely, that of assisting the minister when the Holy Communion is administered.

The assignment of this sacred function to the Eldership certainly suggests the thought that the office might be utilised in other, and (so to speak) more ordinary, lines of ministration, than is at present customary. That theme, however, will not be further touched upon just now.

But, in concluding these observations, I would fain endeavour to depict one of the individual instances wherein the features of the office of the eldership have been notably manifested.

I am thinking of the late Hon. Major Robert Baillie. He passed from our midst a good many years ago, but his name and personality have not been forgotten, especially in the part of the Tweedside district where he lived, namely, near Dryburgh Abbey. His eldership was to him a very real and essential part of his life, and its responsibilities were accepted and acted upon in the fullest manner, yet with a peculiar and most striking unobtrusiveness. "For nineteen years he represented his Presbytery in the General Assembly, sitting out its long hours with indefatigable attention—silent, when he would have been gladly listened to—speaking in a few forcible and convincing words, when the occasion demanded." I quote these words written by Dr Mair, in his preface to a small, but remarkable book called *Recollections of a Happy Life*, in which with simple, graphic and touching language, some description is given of a personality distinguished by a rare saintliness and charm. The book was written by his sister, Lady Grisel Baillie, one of like mind, who was the first Deaconess in the Church of Scotland—a lady who can never be forgotten by any who had the happiness of knowing her.

Major Baillie was surely a man in whom profound religious devotion was combined with a buoyancy and sprightliness which continued till the very end

of his life, at the age of eighty. He was thus a constant living refutation of the mischievous fallacy that religion is associated with gloom. Here is a brief and typical extract from his sister's tribute: "He loved birds, flowers, little children, everything that was simple and natural. Children loved him at first sight. He was intensely beloved by those who knew him. His death was a real sorrow to the little ones, especially to those who had been taught by him. He was full of fun and interest to children. I have seen them holding him by his knees so that he could not get away from them. His mirth and playfulness attracted them. He used to stop and speak to them on their way from school and compose rhymes, much to their amusement. 'Give me a ball,' he would say, and then he would play so cleverly, the boys gazed in delight. In winter, at the time of snow, he would say, 'I'll give you a chance, try your snowballs,' and they used to pelt him well."

And when once more we think of him in relation to the eldership, a vision floats back on the memory, recalling a scene in the little Church of Mertoun, which nestles amongst the trees of the beautiful grounds of Mertoun House, on Tweedside. It is Communion Sunday, Major Baillie is there officiating as one of the elders. Tall, and with the erect bearing of a soldier, absorbed in his sacred duties, and so wholly imbued with the spirit of devotion, that an observer might have felt, and did feel, that the expression on his countenance was such as might reflect that of an angel sent forth on a mission—

“. . . With the gladness of one who goeth
In the light of God most High."

This will be the natural place for some allusion to another feature of Presbyterian Church equipment, namely, that of the precentor.

Until a comparatively recent period, this office was regarded as no less an inherent institution of the Church, than that of the eldership. The official relationship of the precentor has always been chiefly with the minister, and his place in the church, usually called "the Desk" was immediately below the pulpit; and the wearing of a gown was orthodox.

Various quaint incidents and expressions are related concerning precentors of the past. One of these I heard for the first time one evening, when Mr Gladstone happened to be our guest. He was reading a now well known little book (at that time comparatively new) *Past and Present of Aberdeenshire*, by the late Rev. William Paul, D.D. After a while Mr Gladstone began to read aloud the following passage (the reference being to an incident in the Parish Church of Banchory, some time towards the end of the eighteenth century):

"The minister used to sit late on Saturday nights, and, when he became old,

he was sometimes drowsy in the pulpit on the Sunday mornings. It was at that time usual for the precentor to sing a portion of a psalm by himself until a sufficient number of the congregation had in the opinion of the minister assembled, and the minister then stopped the precentor by tapping him on the head: and this custom was called giving him the ‘putt.’ One day, after entering the pulpit, the minister fell asleep, and the precentor having sung till he could sing no longer, at last stopped. This awakened the minister, who got up in the somewhat irritated state usual to those who are suddenly awakened out of sleep, and said to the precentor, ‘What was your business, Tammas, to stop before ye got the putt?’ To which Tammas replied, ‘It’s easy for you, minister, to sit snottin’ an’ sleepin’ there, and to haud me baain’ an’ baain’ here till there’s scarce a breath in my body.’ ”

The memory of the sonorous voice of the reader, vibrant also with amusement, has caused the little story to be always associated in one’s mind with its first hearing.

I have spoken of precentors in the past tense because, in their case, “the old order changeth,” indeed has already passed, at least in regard to the nature of the duties.

The widespread introduction of instrumental music has made this change inevitable; and now frequently the position of precentor is merged in that of organist; and even when the precentor acts as choirmaster, the instrument is of course also relied upon for leading and support. There are, however, still three notable occasions on which the old style as to precenting, and singing without accompaniment, is absolutely retained—namely—at the General Assemblies of the (as yet) three Scottish Presbyterian Churches; and without doubt this observance is appreciated by the vast majority of the members.

In the Church of Scotland that function has been specially performed by Mr Robert Hamilton for fifty-two years; and on the fiftieth anniversary of his appointment he received a token of thanks and congratulation.

In the United Free Church—the late Mr Duncan Fraser was for many years the *doyen* of precentors, not only in that Church, but—I believe it may be said—of the calling, throughout Scotland.

On the occasion of the memorable Service of Thanksgiving for the completion of the union between the main body of the Free Church of Scotland to the United Presbyterian, when there was a vast assemblage in the Waverley Market, Edinburgh, Mr Fraser officiated as precentor. The opening psalm was the 133rd, to the fine old tune of “Eastgate”—which is marvellously well adapted for the words, especially when the assemblage is large:

“Behold how good a thing it is,
And how becoming well,
Together such as brethren are
In unity to dwell.”

The first few notes were, according to usage, given as solo (Mr Fraser’s voice was a very fine baritone) and then as if by one universal impulse the whole multitude joined in the singing, with intense but measured fervour; and when the fourth line was reached—with the repeat, almost wholly in one note (C)—the effect was enthralling.

Mr Fraser has written a book entitled *The Passing of the Precentor* (published in 1916, by Gall & Inglis, Edinburgh and London), which contains extremely interesting records of the institution of the Precentorship in Scotland, and in particular, very striking biographical notes regarding some notable members thereof. Two of these, namely, John Templeton and John Wilson, born in 1800 and 1802 respectively, after acting with great acceptance as precentors, eventually moved to London and gradually became recognised as two of the foremost vocalists of their time, including a leading share in music of the Opera. They were friends, but not rivals, and as at that time the Opera Houses of Covent Garden and Drury Lane were, as Mr Fraser mentions, under one management, it was arranged that there should be no clashing between the appearances of these two artistes.

The following terse description of their respective characteristics has been quoted: “Templeton’s greater powers excited wonder as well as admiration; Wilson drew tears.”

But, in addition to their work in London these artistes were frequently heard throughout the country, for at that time it was a common thing for well-known singers to join in tours through the country to give concerts in which quartettes were a leading and delightful feature; and I recall the occasion at St Andrews, when I was there as a lad, of a visit of this kind, where the lady singers were Madame Lemmens Sherrington and Madame Patey Whytock (they were unmarried at that time). Oddly enough I have forgotten who filled the parts of tenor and bass, but the singing of “As it fell upon a Day,” as a duet by the two ladies, was in itself a treat to be remembered.

One other feature in the character of Templeton and Wilson must be mentioned, namely, the manner in which the fame they gained in London never “turned their heads,” and this can best be illustrated by two incidents recorded by Mr Fraser.

During his earlier years Templeton had been precentor in the Church of St

Andrews, Edinburgh, the minister of which was then Dr Brown, father of the well-known author of *Rab and His Friends*. After he had become famous as one of the finest tenors of the day, he happened to be in Edinburgh for a short holiday and made a point of calling on his old minister. During their conversation, Dr Brown said, "Oh, John, I wish ye wad give us a day in the desk." Templeton at once cordially complied with the request, but stipulated that the arrangement should be kept quiet.

However, things of that sort are apt to leak out, and when Templeton entered the "desk" the church was crowded to the door. The service began by Dr Brown giving out a psalm, to which the famous singer took the double common-metre tune called "St Matthew." Those who know this tune will recall that the first part is grand and inspiring, opening in "C" Major. The second part is equally fine, modulating into "A" Minor. The last two lines return to the original key, and finish with a ring of triumph.

As Templeton soared through the varying modes with his beautiful voice, the congregational singing gradually fell off until, when the second stanza was reached, not a voice was heard from the pews, emotion, or something akin to it, bringing an impressive stillness over all.

When the prescribed number of verses had been sung, but before Templeton could shut the book, Dr Brown leaned over the pulpit, and in his kindly voice, touched with emotion, said: "Just go on, John; just go on!"

One old lady who heard Templeton on this occasion, used to tell of the incident, and in a voice thrilling with emotion she always added: "And when he was dune, we were a' greetin'."

Once when Templeton and Malibran and a quartet of eminent artistes were touring in Scotland the stage-coach broke down just as they neared Aberdeen. There being no help at hand, and as the night was stormy, they were glad to avail themselves of the shelter of a farmhouse, which was kindly placed at their disposal. Treated most hospitably by the farmer and his family, the storm-stayed singers found the evening pass pleasantly away.

When the hour for retiring to rest drew near, the farmer said they "wad tak' the Book." The foreign artistes did not at first understand, but Templeton did.

"What psalm?" he asked.

"Oh, we'd better tak' the 103rd."

So, having handed round books, the farmer began the psalm to the tune of "Coleshill." The family had most of the singing to themselves in the first verse, but in the second, suddenly the walls seemed to open, and such a rush of

harmony filled the room as the farm-house never heard before nor since.

Next morning as the strangers were leaving they proffered some acknowledgment for the hospitality that had been shown them.

“What,” said the farmer, “gie money to us! I dinna ken wha ye are, but I’m far wrang if we’ve no’ been entertaining angels unawares.”

A similar testimony could be given regarding Wilson, and, by the way, when Queen Victoria visited Taymouth Castle in 1842, Wilson was called upon to sing before Her Majesty, who was greatly pleased, and when the programme was completed, asked if he could sing “Wae’s me for Prince Charlie.” This wish was immediately complied with, and, as we are told, much to the Queen’s delight.

There is not space to add more about David Kennedy, a worthy disciple and friend of his predecessors, but those who have not already seen Mr Duncan Fraser’s book will find further interesting information regarding him and others, together with some attractive anecdotes.

[\[1\]](#) See *The Kirk and its Worthies*, published by T. N. Foulis, London and Edinburgh.

CHAPTER VI

SPECIMENS OF IRISH WIT

“The Bull” as a form of comic expression has long been recognised as a distinctively Irish commodity, so much so that if a person speaks of “a bull” it is often taken for granted that he has merely omitted the adjective which should have preceded the word; and the source of this distinctive Irish feature has sometimes been seriously discussed. For example, Miss Maria Edgeworth (and I confess I have only just discovered this fact) wrote an “Essay” on “Irish Bulls,” published in 1803, in the course of which the eminent authoress offers this explanation: “English is not the mother tongue of the natives of Ireland; to them it is a foreign language, and consequently it is scarcely within the limits of probability that they should avoid making blunders both in speaking and writing.”

With all due deference to that charming authoress, I do not think the above explanation will be generally regarded as adequate.

By the way, it is amusing to learn, as narrated by Mr Michael Macdonnell in his delightful book on *Irish Life and Character*, that when Miss Edgeworth’s Essay on “Irish Bulls” was announced, the Yorkshire and Lancashire Agricultural Society assumed that the treatise was one which the Society ought to possess, and accordingly several copies were ordered, for the use of members of the Society, who were disappointed to find that the “Bulls” referred to were “creatures of the brain” and not sleek animals pastured on the grazing lands of Meath or Limerick.

After all, it does not much matter what the original source of “Bulls” may be, nor how they should be analysed, so long as they impart merriment. And certainly as such they are by no means to be despised. For one thing, they almost always have the quality not only of spontaneity, but of unconsciousness; for if “a Bull” is artificially contrived it is not likely to be of much worth as a piece of wit. And so, in so far as Ireland is the chief source of this product, there is cause for gratitude to the Emerald Isle; but of course it is not a case of a monopoly, and this may be illustrated by quoting a thoroughly Scottish specimen.

Until comparatively recent times it was quite a common thing in Scotland that the churchyards and other places of burial should be very much the reverse of well kept; thus, for instance, one might often observe amongst the luxuriant

growth of herbage between the tombstones, nettles and perhaps thistles. This remark applies mainly to country burial places, and not to the precincts of towns, where for a long time past it has been necessary to establish cemeteries which have been laid out with much care and taste.

It is said that after a new cemetery had been completed near a small town, two worthy citizens walked out together to inspect the new arrangement which was entirely different from that of the places of interment with which they had hitherto been acquainted.

After surveying the scene before them for a few moments in silence, one of the visitors said, "I dinna like it; I'd rather dee than be burrit in sic a place." But the other remarked. "Wi' me, it's the verra reverse; I winna be burrit onywhere else, if I'm spared."

But now reverting to the Irish supply—the proceedings in the British Parliament have often been enlivened by the perpetration of "Bulls," the Irish predominating but not without competition. It is said, for instance, that a Welsh member concluded a definite denial of a statement which had been made during the debate, by saying, "It gives me great pleasure to have nailed that lie to the mast."

Some of the Irish members gained quite a reputation in this line: thus, Mr Macdonnell describes how Sir Patrick O'Brien spoke of the author of a certain political pamphlet as "a mere political fly who is acting the part of a snake in the grass; a backstairs assassin of the people who has the audacity to appear before them in the light of day and stealthily stab them in the back."

And it was this gentleman who, when the Royal assent was given to the Act for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, exclaimed: "Thank God! the bridge has at last broken down, which has so long separated the English and the Irish people."

It has been stated that even in a Parliamentary Blue Book containing one of the Annual Reports of the former Commissioners of National Education in Ireland the following sentence occurred: "The female teachers were instructed in plain cooking. They had, in fact, to go through the process of cooking themselves in turn."

Many Irish humorous sayings have been uttered by or attributed to the car-drivers, especially those of Dublin. They were quite aware of their reputation and doubtless often played up to it, especially when employed by tourists who usually expected some entertainment of that kind. Sometimes, however, the quaintness of the "jarvey" (the origin of which designation I have not ascertained) was evoked in an unexpected manner.

Thus it is said that two English ladies who had paid a visit to Dublin, remarked when they were about to leave the City: "By the way, we ought to have taken a drive on an outside-car to get some fun from the driver; and look, there's one standing on the other side of the street, let's engage him for a drive."

This was done, and various questions were put to the driver, a middle-aged man, with the intention of extracting from him something amusing. But his replies were quite laconic; and this continued throughout the drive.

On arriving again at their hotel one of the ladies said: "We have often heard that the car-drivers of Dublin frequently say funny things; but we haven't got anything of that sort from yourself, so we are a bit disappointed, but perhaps you are an exception; can you give me your name?"

To this the jarvey replied very promptly, "Ah, no, Miss, *that* I cannot do, for I gave my name to another girl years ago."

A bit of sarcasm is reported of another jarvey during a comparatively recent period, namely, not very long after one of the lamentable devastations to which certain portions of Dublin were subjected between 1916 and 1921.

An American visitor while driving in an outside-car and observing the results of those troublous experiences, remarked: "In my country we would have had all this rebuilt before now; you seem to be rather slow in that line here."

The jarvey said little at the moment, but, later, when passing the Bank of Ireland Building and being asked by his fare what it was, the jarvey replied, "Shure, I didn't see it at all yesterday."

It has seemed almost necessary to speak of the outside-car and the jarvey in the past tense, for, to the general regret of many it is rapidly disappearing. Of course the advance of the motor-car would, inevitably tend to this result. While I was residing officially in Dublin I was asked to receive a deputation of outside-car-drivers who urgently asked that I would do anything in my power to hinder the placing of motor-cars upon the streets for hire in competition with the old vehicle. I could with sincerity assure the deputation that I was completely in sympathy with their views; nor did it seem necessary to tell them what they would be sure to find for themselves soon enough, that the eventual establishment of motor-cars was inevitable. Meanwhile, however, as a matter of fact motor-cars have not been allowed, until very recently, to take up positions in the streets of Dublin for hire. Of course they have been freely used, but people requiring them have had to telephone their orders to the various garages. This restriction, however, is coming, or has come, to an end,

and so the farewell of the outside-car, or as it used appropriately to be described, the jaunting-car, is, sad to say, final, but the memory thereof will long be retained.

I conclude this portion of our subject by quoting a pithy remark of a Dublin jarvey which is also illustrative of the very prevalent domestic harmony in Ireland. A gentleman having hailed a car and stated where he was going, observed that the driver was taking care to wrap himself up effectively, and this led the passenger to say, somewhat impatiently, "You seem to be taking a lot of care of yourself?" to which the driver replied, cheerily, "Yes, in truth, sir, what's all the wuorld to a man whose wife's a widow."

The following item which was narrated by the late Sir Francis Hastings Doyle, and vouched for by him as genuine, may here fitly be cited as an example of incipient Irish wit.

During the time that Sir Robert Peel was Irish Secretary, he was attending an examination at one of the National Schools, and was asked to question the boys in the Old Testament.

"Tell me," he said, "what was the reason why Moses left the land of Egypt?"

The young fellows belonging to the first class were not able to answer the question, but a small boy behind them, shrewd-looking and bright-eyed, jumped up eagerly and called out, "I know, your honour."

"Do you, my little friend?" said Peel; "come to the front then, and tell us all about it."

The child obeyed, and when he got to the front, looking Peel full in the face, he explained the matter thus: "Plase, yer honour, he shot a *Peeler*."

Evidently the designation of the police, derived from the fact that Sir Robert Peel was the originator of the institution, in its modern form, had already been adopted, in Ireland.

The alternative title of "Bobby," from the same source, became of course more common in England.

ULSTER SPECIMENS OF HUMOUR

In a pamphlet by the late Sir John Byers, M.D., entitled "Sayings, Proverbs, and Humour of Ulster" some very good samples of that quality are to be found, including the following:

While driving from a station in County Down to meet a medical friend, Sir

John remarked to the driver of the car that his horse was making a good deal of noise. To this the driver at first demurred, but on reaching the top of a steep hill the “roaring” became so evident that when attention was again drawn thereto it could not be ignored; but by way of explanation the driver said, “It’s the rubber tyres, sir.” To this Sir John replied that he had never heard tyres sounding so loud before, and then the further explanation was given thus: “I mane, sir, if there were no tyres on the wheels, you wouldn’t hear the ould mare.”

Another quaint example which has almost an American ring about it was this: Coming into hospital one day Sir John Byers heard a patient say to another, “Is your chicken soup thin?” The reply came at once, “Ay, the bird only walked through them,” to which the first answered, “Maybe it was on stilts.” (It should be observed that the above use of the word ‘them’ is a Scotticism, for in Scotland soup was plural; and the same with porridge.)

One more example taken from Ulster from the same collection, but which might pass as “Irish” in the general sense, was this:

Two men were brought before a magistrate for fighting in the street. As the evidence against one of them was not conclusive, the order was given for his release, and the magistrate was about to inflict a fine on the other, when the man who had been liberated addressed the magistrate thus:

“Shure we were not fighting when the Polis tuk us.”

“What were you doing then?” said the magistrate.

“We were just trying to separate one another.”

Talking of Ulster inevitably recalls to mind the great Ulster hero—William of Orange; and it may be indicative of Irish humour, but not generally known, that William, in virtue of his holding the principality of Orange in France near Avignon, was bound to seek permission from his feudal lord, who was then the Pope, before he could embark on his expedition to Ireland.

The late Professor George Sigerson, the distinguished authority on literary and historical questions, gave a most interesting lecture to the Irish Literary Society on this subject a few years ago, in which he also mentioned the astonishing fact that the first place to illuminate, in honour of the victory of the Boyne, was the Vatican!

As to Irish wit in general, although in the chapter on Clerical Wit some of Father Healy’s utterances were quoted, one cannot do better than revert to that same fertile source by way of concluding this brief selection; and the following has, I think, rarely been equalled at any time or in any country in regard to

point and neatness.

The late Lord Plunket, who was for many years Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, lived chiefly at Bray, about twelve miles from the city. Father Healy was the parish priest of Bray, and the two were on very friendly terms. One evening when Lord Plunket was walking in a leisurely manner towards Harcourt Street Station, to take the 6.30 P.M. train (known in those days as the Dinner Train) to Bray, Father Healy overtook him and remarked, "We shall need to be quick, Archbishop, to catch the 6.30!"

To this Lord Plunket replied, "But I make it that we have ten minutes yet."

"Oh, well," said Father Healy, "in that case I'll take it easy, and go with your Grace."

On arrival at the station the attendant porter exclaimed, "Is it the 6.30 you were maning to take? Sure she's afther leavin' five minutes ago."

"Dear me," said the Archbishop, "I am indeed sorry, Father Healy, that I have caused you to miss the train. The fact is" (taking out his watch), "I was depending on this watch of mine; it is a chronometer, and the gift of the Chapter of our cathedral, and it is a watch in which I have always put much faith."

Father Healy: "You put faith in it? Ah! but it's good works that are needed."

In his last illness Father Healy was not regarded by his medical advisers as a very tractable patient. The late Sir Christopher Nixon, having been called in for consultation, addressed the patient thus: "My dear Father James, you are exceedingly ill. *We* know what is best for you, and I must ask you to submit your *will* to us."

"You might change it," was the witty reply.

CHAPTER VII

SAMPLES OF AMERICAN HUMOUR

It is well recognised that the typical humour of America is usually of the dry quality (the obvious opportunity for some would-be facetious use of the word “dry” is avoided).

Another characteristic is a sort of subtlety, which suggests an inference which is not always too obvious, but which somehow creates amusement even before or without analysis; and perhaps scarcely a better specimen of this particular type could be found, than the following, which I heard from an accomplished friend, Mr C. Elliott (Judge) at Washington, during a visit in the month of May this year; namely, a man asked another, “Do you play golf?” Answer: “No; but I can’t give it up.”

As to the *dry* quality, the late Mr Phelps, a very acceptable Ambassador to Britain, told us while he was our guest in Scotland, about a stranger who happened to be in one of the New England States, and being doubtful about his exact whereabouts asks someone whom he meets, “Can you tell me how far it is to the City of Hartford?” to which the answer was given, “Wa’al, the way you’re now going it’s about twenty-four thousand miles; but if ye turn round and go the other way; it’s about a mile and a ha’af.”

When talking about quaint sayings, etc., Mr Phelps told us that he once, without the least meaning to be funny, said something which afterwards seemed to him to be quite amusing.

On one occasion during a voyage across the Atlantic, when the wind was freshening, he was seated in his deck-chair well wrapped up, and in that sort of condition when anything like a movement would be extremely unwelcome. However, a lady, a stranger to him, who had been seated near, rose, and approaching him with uncertain steps said, “I am sorry to trouble, but am not feeling well; would you very kindly assist me to my stateroom?”

Mr Phelps told us that notwithstanding the absolute disinclination to rise, he felt that the reputation of American men in regard to chivalrous attention to ladies made it obligatory for him to do as requested; so he struggled up and offered his arm to the lady. They descended the stairway together, and then began a progress along a passage which, to Mr Phelps, seemed to be almost interminable. At last he stopped and said to his companion, “Are you quite sure, Madam, that your room is on *this* vessel?”

There is a well-known *jeu d'esprit* by the late Mr Evetts when Secretary of State, which it may be allowable to quote, partly as a specimen, but also because, like many other utterances, it may sometimes be given a different setting from the original; and because I happened to hear it first in the most direct manner, namely, from the person to whom the remark was actually made.

This was the late Lord Coleridge, for many years Lord Chief Justice of England. I had the advantage of dining with him one evening soon after his return from a visit to the United States, and he then told me that while he was at Washington he was very agreeably escorted to various points of chief interest by the Secretary of State, who was, of course, a most interesting and pleasant companion.

While they were crossing the Potomac in a steamboat, Lord Coleridge said: "I remember reading somewhere, Mr Evetts, that when George Washington was in his prime, he was so strong that he could throw a silver dollar across this river; but now that I see how great is its breadth I suppose we must regard that story as of a legendary sort?"

"Well," replied Mr Evetts, "Lord Coleridge, you must not expect me to make any admission which would seem to disparage the fame of the man whom we regard as the Father of our country—but you must remember, *a dollar went a great deal further in those days than it does now.*"

One has heard a sort of sequel, or would-be "capping" of the above about the British crown across the Atlantic; but I think this rather spoils the original story; and of course in any case Mr Evetts would never have dreamt of supplementing his joke by any such addition when speaking to a British visitor.

Of course a good many American witticisms have been composed at the expense, so to speak, of the coloured folk; though, in the main, intended to be free from anything that would be hurtful to their feelings.

Here is one which was quoted with very amusing effect by Mr Barrymore, the distinguished actor, during his recent visit to London, in the course of which he was entertained to dinner by the Lyceum Club.

In order to illustrate some point, he told how a certain man of colour had been selling what he described as veal and ham pie: but after a while some people came to him and said, "Now, we have got to tell you that some of those who have eaten your *pies* are ill and some have died, and we want to know what's inside those pies, and no faking about it."

To this the pie-maker replied, "Rabbits."

"But," said the inquirer, "there must be some other ingredient, what is it?"

"Horse."

"But in what proportion?"

"Fifty-fifty—one rabbit, one horse."

Another tale which has appeared in print is of a man who was brought up on a charge of keeping an illegal still for manufacturing whisky. He pleaded not guilty, and the trial commenced.

The clerk, "Name?"

Answer, "Joshua."

Then the magistrate thinking he would raise a little fun, asked, "Are you the Joshua that made the sun stand still?"

Answer, "No, judge, they called mine the Moonlight Still."

The next item—an attractive one I think—was sent to me by my friend, Mr Charles R. Kearney, of Washington.

An old negro was wandering around a Southern town, one day, with a worried expression on his face. An acquaintance met him and asked: "What yu look so puzzled about, Sam?" Sam replied, "Muh eyes am grown powerful bad and the doctor done send me to an optimist an ah cawnt find one."

Some years ago, while in America, I had the good fortune, when travelling from Washington to New York, to find as a fellow passenger the late Colonel John Hay, who was for a while the very popular American Ambassador to Britain, and at the time mentioned, was Secretary of State at Washington.

We had luncheon together, and needless to say, it was a very enjoyable experience. I remember a little tale which he mentioned about a man who had rather quickly "made his pile" in the Far West Gold Diggings, and having found his way to New York, expressed to some acquaintance a desire to have a real tip-top dinner, such as he had heard the grand "toffs" were in the habit of patronising. In response, the advice given to him was, "You should go to Delmonico's; there they will give you something top notch."

Accordingly he resorted to what was in those days the best known restaurant in New York, and took his seat at one of the tables, where the first thing placed before him was some beautifully clear consommé. He looked at this doubtfully, and then finished it. The next dish was a salad with endive as a prominent feature. Again he was somewhat puzzled, but disposed of the

contents of the dish. Then followed, as a special delicacy, a crab. The brown shell was surveyed with surprise, and then the would-be diner called the waiter and asked for the bill, saying, "I've drank your dish-water, and I ate your bookay: but baked beetle I cannot stand."

He did not use the word "beetle," but I have inserted that word as a substitute, for the reason that in America it is, or was, usual to describe any of the beetle tribe—large or small—by a much shorter word; but in England it is quite different, so that the use of that word would be liable to give a wrong impression.

Happily, with the advance of sanitation and sanitary habits, both the word and the thing are now seldom heard of; but it was not always so; and I remember that many years ago, a gentleman wrote to the press announcing that he had become very tired of his name, and that he intended to adopt and assume a new designation. His actual name was Mr Alfred Buggy (or Buggey) but in future he was to be known as "Mr Norfolk Howard." This was certainly a great improvement; and, moreover, the new nomenclature had a sort of aristocratic aroma. But *Punch* could not refrain from a little fun about this intimation. It took the shape of a picture representing a family inspecting some rooms, evidently with a view of engaging them for a seaside holiday; but before arriving at a decision, the father of the family remarks to the landlady, "I hope there are no—er—Norfolk Howards here?"

If any readers feel doubt as to the accuracy of the above, they must kindly verify the reference for themselves, for the esteemed publisher of this book is waiting for MS., and I have not time to institute a search; nor have I any apprehension of being called upon to retract and apologise.

Colonel John Hay, on the occasion above mentioned, told me something else, better worth repeating than the incident of the miner's dinner, namely, the following:

During a voyage of an Atlantic liner on which Mr Chauncey Depew was a passenger, he was entertaining a group of friends one evening in the smoking-room with some of his inimitable stories. Naturally, the listeners showed their sense of amusement, with one solitary exception. This man maintained an aspect of indifference, and indeed almost of gloom. Mr Depew of course could not avoid observing this, and he was doubtless prompted to trot out even additional anecdotes; but in vain, at least with regard to the melancholy man.

At last Mr Depew rallied him with some such suggestion as this, "Well, Mr —, won't you contribute something to our cheerfulness?"

The man thus appealed to, pretended to heave a sigh, and said, "Well, I

have been ruminating a bit as to what constitutes the difference between me and a turkey; and I have come to the conclusion that it's just this—that a turkey hasn't got to be stuffed with chestnuts until after he is dead."

Of course it is not to be assumed that Mr Depew had really been dealing out "chestnuts"; that is not his way; and it may safely be surmised that the turkey man had deliberately pretended to be bored in order to deliver at the proper time a carefully prepared hit. Of course it would evoke a laugh, in which Mr Depew himself would be able to join without the slightest lack of sincerity.

During a whole generation there have been in America two personalities eminent as wits and raconteurs, namely, the late Mr Joseph Choate and Mr Chauncey Depew. They formed a kind of Castor and Pollux; though the simile is not really quite applicable, because, though both famous, they had very distinctive characteristics.

Mr Choate passed from the earthly scene in 1917, but, happily, Mr Depew is still with us, and in full alertness and vigour. I have used the word "us" deliberately because, while an American of the Americans, his sympathies and interests are wide, and he may truly be described as cosmopolitan; also it is perhaps unnecessary to remark that although he is so celebrated in regard to wit and humour, this is only, so to speak, an attribute to his notable business endowments as represented by his prolonged and successful position as president and chairman of that wonderful railway system—the New York Central—while his attainment in another intellectual phase has been from time to time notably manifested, as for example, on the occasion of his address to the International Convention of Lawyers at Saratoga, and as Orator on various National occasions.

But before making some further reference to his numerous contributions to the humorous side of life, I would like to record a few reminiscences of Mr Choate.

I met him for the first time at one of the annual dinners of the Saint Andrew Society of New York, namely, on Saint Andrew's Day, 1895. These gatherings of that distinguished society are, one may be sure, always notable; but I think the occasion now referred to was so in an exceptional degree. For one thing, the fact that both Mr Choate and Mr Depew were present gave promise of some lively passages between the two eminent protagonists in wit.

At any rate, there was a very large attendance, and every one seemed to be much on the alert. As for Mr Choate, even before we were seated he took up one of the programme cards, and pointing to one of the items, namely, "The

Drama," he said, "Is there not a misprint here? Should it not be *Drams*?" but the chairman, the late Mr George A. Morrison, senr., remarked, sharply, "That's a chestnut."

To this Mr Choate made no defence; but when the speeches began it was soon evident that he was in a very effective, and especially a chaffing mood. It happened to be called upon rather early in the proceedings, probably because I was there as a guest and as Governor-General of Canada at the time; and, I think I made some slightly chaffing allusion to Mr Choate.

Had I "known my man" then as well as I did afterwards, I would not have been so rash; but when Mr Choate rose he certainly subjected me to some merciless chaff, based upon the fact that I was wearing the Highland garb which was at that time even less frequently seen in the United States than it is at the present time. However, I was in good company, for Mr Andrew Carnegie also came in for some banter; but Mr Choate reserved his fire chiefly for Mr Depew who had already spoken; and Mr C.'s utterance was to the following effect:

"We have all enjoyed Mr Depew's speech; we always do. And I sometimes wonder what would happen if, through any misfortune, we were to be deprived of our Chauncey. And I confess I did receive recently something of a shock—it happened thus: On coming down to breakfast one morning I found on the table, as one often does, some prospectuses of various enterprises, with an invitation to invest therein, and one of these was headed THE DEPEW NATURAL GAS COMPANY, *Limited*."

This, of course, evoked general laughter, which became a veritable roar when Mr Choate proceeded in a tone of deprecating appeal: "But why—oh *why, Limited?*"

None joined more heartily in the laughter than Mr Depew himself; in fact he rose from his seat and shook hands with Mr Choate by way of congratulation.

The sparklets in conversation for which Mr Choate was especially famous were the more effective because of the obvious spontaneity by which they were so often characterised. The following is a good example.

On a certain occasion the conversation had turned to the subject of the so-called "Transmigration," and someone then said, "What would you elect to be, Mr Choate, if you were to leave this world and return hither?"

"Oh, I would elect to be Mrs Choate's second husband," was the instant response.

There was certainly also no small charm and grace therein. Of course there was no need to verify the saying; but as I was not fortunate enough to be present on the occasion when it was uttered, I did take an opportunity of asking Miss Choate about it, and she confirmed the impression as to the instantaneous and, as it were, irrepressible manner in which it was uttered.

Another example occurred when Mr Choate during his Ambassadorship in England received the high compliment of being made an Honorary Bencher of the Temple. There was a great assemblage of the legal fraternity, of every rank. During his speech of acknowledgment Mr Choate said, "We are all lawyers here this evening—except the judges." This of course caused much amusement and it was doubtless as much appreciated by the judges as by anyone else.

The phrase was in truth a good specimen of that distinctively American humour which has a sort of subtlety, difficult to define, and which seems to say what is not said, and not to mean what ostensibly it might mean; but the moment one begins to attempt an analysis one realises its futility; so I pass on, and simply record the fact that Lady Aberdeen and I will always retain most kindly memories of Mr Choate. He and Mrs Choate and his most agreeable family invited a large party of friends to meet us when we were in America about eight years ago, and a most pleasant reception it was.

One more example of his gift of singularly prompt impromptu was told to me seven or eight years ago by Mr Hill, son of the well-known "Railway King"—the late James Hill, who was usually designated in the Railway World as "Jim Hill."

His son happened to be in Fifth Avenue, New York, when he observed Mr Choate, whom he knew by sight but not personally, evidently intending to cross the street at what would have been a decidedly risky moment, so he immediately extended his arm so as to check Mr Choate's advance. This action on the part of a stranger naturally surprised Mr Choate; but he immediately recognised the situation and thanked his helper, adding that apparently the spot was a place only for "the quick and the dead."

The last occasion when I met him was at one of a large number of functions, etc., to which I was hospitably invited during a somewhat prolonged visit to the United States. When taking my seat at the Chairman's table, Mr Choate, who was exactly opposite, surveyed me with his whimsical expression, half closing his eyes, and then said, "Lord Aberdeen, it seems to me that wherever an American spree is on, there you are to be found."

Not very long afterwards I was attending his funeral service in the beautiful Church of St Barnabas in New York. Needless to say it was a most impressive

occasion, notably in regard to the pervading atmosphere of deep and sincere feeling. The music too, essentially appropriate, was beautifully rendered.

It was in London that I first met Mr Chauncey Depew, where I was introduced to him by the late Mr George Smalley. That was quite a number of years ago—about forty, I think—but Mr Depew’s freshness and vitality have been marvellously maintained up to the present time.

His distinctive line of wit may perhaps be described as especially that of the raconteur. I remember the first story I heard him tell. Of course it is in a sense now an antique, but it is allowable to quote it, partly because of its typical character, and partly because of an addendum which I think the author inserted.

The tale was about a man who, having entered a restaurant, ascertained that by the payment of one dollar he could partake of any of the provision available. Accordingly he commenced with two kinds of soup, followed up by an entrée or two, then a portion of joint, and subsequently a bird of some sort. The waiter observed the procedure with interest and surprise, but, of course, according to the bargain, he could not interfere.

After disposing of the bird the visitor said, “And now, waiter, what have you got for dessert?”

“Well, we have pumpkin pie, and rhubarb pie and cherry pie and custard pie.”

“Very well,” said the feeder, “bring me some pumpkin pie, some rhubarb pie and some cherry pie,” and there he stopped; but the waiter in a tone of disapproval and reproach, demanded:

“And what’s the matter with the custard?”

Of course the “moral” would be the undesirability of specifying several things out of a group and omitting one.

But Mr Depew’s supplement was that some time after this little tale had been narrated, an Englishman approached him and said: “Would you mind telling me what was the matter with the custard?”

I dare say our friend has from time to time rather enjoyed poking fun at typical or imaginary Englishmen, and why not? especially when such pleasantry emanates from one who is well known as a warm friend of England, this being personified by the fact that he is the President of the American wing of “The Pilgrims,” that celebrated Club, which exists for the one purpose of fostering and maintaining the most cordial relations between the two countries.

CHAPTER VIII

MISAPPREHENSIONS

It is curious, or at any rate it is a fact, that a great many of the sayings which are a source of amusement, are based entirely on some sort of misinterpretation.

The first example may certainly be accepted as genuine, for I obtained it many years ago from a former member of the distinguished family referred to.

One of the Dukes of Marlborough (either the grandfather or great-grandfather of the present Duke) became possessed of an emu, which had the run of Blenheim Park. The Duke became much interested in this gigantic bird; and when leaving for London he gave special instructions to his land steward to be sure to send any information regarding the welfare, etc., of the biped.

And sure enough, about a fortnight later the Duke received a telegram to the following effect: "The emu has laid an egg, and in the absence of your Grace, I have put it under the biggest goose I could find."

But it is necessary to add that there is another tale which might easily be confounded with the above, unless indeed, as seems probable it is not a case of two versions of the same, but two distinct stories with a merely accidental resemblance.

While at Washington last Spring I happened to mention to Sir Esmé Howard, the extremely acceptable British Ambassador to the United States, the little story already quoted; and His Excellency then remarked that he had always understood that the incident was connected with a former Duke of Norfolk. I therefore asked His Excellency to send to me the version which he had heard, and he has kindly done so as follows:

"In the days of Charles, Duke of Norfolk, who died about the year 1815, there was a large eagle owl at Arundel which was called 'Lord Thurlow'^[1] because its temper was so bad. On one occasion when the Duke was away, he received a letter from his agent stating that Lord Thurlow had laid an egg and that in the absence of His Grace it had been placed under the largest goose in the farmyard."

In some ways of course this story (or this version) is even more comic than that of the emu.

But Sir Esmé has kindly sent to me a supplemental tale which seems to be

at least a tradition in the illustrious family of Fitzalan-Howard. This is to the effect that Lord Chancellor Thurlow happened to be a guest at Arundel Castle, and while taking a walk alone through the grounds he came on the owl's cage. He asked the keeper of the birds what the large one was. The keeper replied that it was called "Lord Thurlow." The Chancellor asked why. "Because," said the keeper, "it's the cussedest, ill-naturedest critter in the whole world."

It is at any rate quite clear that the Thurlow stories are quite distinct from that of the "Emu."

And as to the verification of this I think it is amply provided by the fact that although Mr Winston Churchill, to whom we applied for information, does not remember having heard the actual story, he *does* recollect seeing an emu in the park at Blenheim.

The next tale may be based chiefly on imagination, and I take no responsibility beyond recording what I happened to be told many years ago.

A well-known duke was elected as chairman of an extremely important railway company. On the first morning after this event the duke approached, on foot, the entrance to the headquarters of the railway. The uniformed official on duty there is said to have greeted the newcomer thus: "Well, my man, what can we do for you? If you are after one of the porter's places I am afraid they are mostly filled up." And the supposed reply of the duke was "No, chairman." The attitude and feelings of the official may of course be left to imagination; but it may be hoped and indeed believed that he was not allowed to suffer for his indiscretion.

The next illustration has doubtless been often quoted: but there can be no harm in repeating it here, partly owing to not only a surmise but conviction that no detriment resulted to the error-maker.

A girl who had obtained a situation in the south of England, on arriving at the rather small station where she had to alight, and not observing any railway porter disengaged, said to a passenger who had evidently just left the train and was walking towards the station gate, "Would you very kindly help me to carry my box to the house where I am going? I was told that it is quite near the station just across the road, Number 2 Primrose Villas."

"Oh, with pleasure," said the passenger, and accordingly the two conveyed the box to the garden-gate of the little house named.

"Thank you so much," said the girl, "and will you please accept this sixpence?"

"Thanks," said the passenger, putting the sixpence in his pocket, and lifting

his soft hat he departed.

Next morning when the girl was rubbing up the door handle, etc., while her mistress was standing near attending to some flowers, the girl happened to turn round and observed a passer-by on the road and said, "Ah, ma'am, there's the kind man who helped me with my box last night." The lady looked aghast and exclaimed, "Man, did you say, girl? Why, that's the dook!"

I believe it has been stated that the duke put the sixpence on his watch-chain, as a memento, and having known the man I can quite believe it.

One other supposed ducal episode may be given.

There were three passengers in a first-class compartment of a through train from London. One of the three was tall and decidedly distinguished in appearance. The second was not tall—in fact rather the reverse; but no one with experience could have mistaken him for any other than a man of mark. Both of these two were dukes. The third was a man of very unimposing appearance, and when he spoke it was evident that he had not the advantage of being what is called "highly educated."

The journey was long and occasionally there was conversation between all three passengers. At length the train arrived at the station, an important junction, where the tall passenger was to leave the train. He shook hands with the second passenger with whom he was evidently well acquainted, and, nodding to the other, stepped on to the platform. The third passenger looked out of the window and soon exclaimed to his remaining fellow traveller, "That gentleman must be someone of much importance; look at the stationmaster with his hat off while he talks; and the porters all touching their caps. I wonder who in the world he can be!"

On this his fellow-passenger said, unconcernedly, "Oh, that's the Duke of _____"

"Dear me," said his companion: "Now fancy a man in his position talking so affably to two little nobodies like you and me."

Mistakes of course often occur through lack of acquaintance with a language. Thus it is said that on a West Highland steamboat, one of the deck hands, named Donald, a worthy Highlander, with, however, a tendency to be irritable, had been subjected to various questions and instructions about her luggage and so forth, by a middle-aged lady tourist, until Donald lost patience, and let slip a suggestion that the lady might go to Jericho—or perhaps he used, inadvertently, a stronger expression.

The lady was of course affronted, and sent a message of complaint to the

Captain, adding that unless the offender apologised, she would certainly feel it necessary to report the incident to the company's manager. The Captain on the bridge, naturally did not relish the job, but felt it necessary to send for Donald, and told him that he must "take back" what he had said to the lady and apologise.

Meanwhile rain had begun to fall, and although the boat was approaching the landing-place, most of the passengers had resorted to the saloon.

By and by, a tall figure clad in decidedly moist oilskins entered, and approaching one of the passengers said, "Captain is sayin' ye needna go to Jericho now."

But it will be fitting now to refer to a misapprehension through a linguistic error which is historic.

In the year 1736 there was a disturbance in Edinburgh on the occasion of a public execution. The mob became disorderly and indeed violent; and eventually the Civic Guard, which might be described as the City Police of the time, were ordered by the commander—Captain John Porteous, to fire upon the crowd; and indeed it was stated that Porteous had himself joined in the shooting, and consequently he was placed under arrest pending a judicial investigation. Meanwhile, of course, great excitement prevailed in the city and in a few days a gang of men, all disguised, broke into the prison where Porteous was confined, dragged him out and hanged him from a lamp-post.

This glaring case of lynching was, of course, very properly, taken up firmly by the authorities, and a judicial investigation was held in the House of Lords.

The Provost of Edinburgh and other members of the Town Council were summoned to London as witnesses. During the examination the Provost was asked by the Duke of Newcastle, who seems to have taken the leading part in the proceedings, as to what kind of shot was used when the Civic Guard discharged their weapons; and to this question an answer was given as follows (the reader must bear in mind that many changes have occurred since 1736): "Ou, juist sic as ane shutes deuks and siclike fules wi'." And of course this utterance sounded to English ears like "Dukes and suchlike fools." The Duke of Newcastle was incensed and spoke warningly about contempt of Court. Fortunately, however, the Duke of Argyle was also a member of the Commission, and hastened to explain that there was no thought of incivility on the part of the witness, but that he simply intended to indicate that the shot was one of the same sort as that which was habitually used for shooting ducks and suchlike water-fowl (and doubtless at that time many of such birds frequented the then marshy ground on the east side of the city.)

The explanation of course restored calm, and doubtless also evoked a good deal of amusement.

The incident, it may be remembered, is referred to by Sir Walter Scott in the notes to the *Heart of Midlothian*.

But perhaps a more complete missing of the mark through a language error than any which have thus far been mentioned is to be found in an utterance now to be quoted.

During the earliest days of the Great War it happened that an Englishman was invited to address a few words to a regiment of French soldiers; and it was suggested to him that if he was sufficiently acquainted with the French language to address the men in their mother tongue this would be of course decidedly desirable.

Without professing to be much of a French scholar he replied that he thought he could manage to make himself understood. All went pretty well until the concluding phrase which was given thus: "Et j'espère que vous serez tous bénis."

Lord Herschell (who, as all his friends know, is a finished French scholar) has kindly sent to me the following example of "the danger" of "a little knowledge" of French, which he came across while travelling in Western Canada many years ago, namely, this item on a menu in the dining-room of a country hotel:

"Brochures de foi grace,"

evidently intended for:

"Brochettes de foies gras."

By a natural transfer of thought these allusions to dukes recall an instance where a celebrated duchess caused a quaint misapprehension.

A very attractive spot on Deeside, Craigmyle, now the Scottish home of Lord Shaw of Dunfermline, was formerly and for a long period in the possession of one of the various lines of the Gordon Clan. One of these lairds was a worthy and very simple-minded man of whom Dean Ramsay has recorded the following:

On one occasion when the beautiful and clever Jane, Duchess of Gordon, was scouring through the country intent upon some of these patriotic schemes which often occupied her fertile imagination and active energies, she came to

call at Craigmyle, and having heard that the Laird was making bricks on the property for the purpose of building a new garden wall, with her usual tact she opened the subject and kindly asked, "Well, Mr Gordon, and how do your bricks come on?" Good Craigmyle's thoughts were much occupied with a new leather portion of his dress which had been lately constructed, so, looking down on his nether garments, he said, in pure Aberdeen dialect, "Muckle obleeged to yer Grace, the breeks war sum ticht at first, but they are deeing weel eneuch noo."

And now there will follow some more illustrations of misapprehension, without any attempt at regular sequence.

Soon after Charterhouse School had been transferred from London to Surrey the distinguished head-master at that time, Dr Haig-Brown, was entertained to a dinner by the mayor and corporation of the neighbouring town.

In proposing Dr Haig-Brown's health the speaker said: "We are sure that our head-master will know how to combine *suaviter in modo* with the *fortiter in re*," adding, "you see, head-master, we have not quite forgotten our Latin."

Dr Haig-Brown replying said, "I really hardly know whether to appreciate most the quality or the *quantity* of our friend's utterance."

This naturally amused those who had observed the misplacing of accent; while the speaker would of course remain unconscious of the cause of the smiles, and in fact would probably regard such as indicating appreciation of his speech.

Many years ago I paid a visit to Belgium, chiefly for the purpose of inspecting the monument which was erected on the Field of Waterloo by my grandfather and other members of the family in commemoration of my great-uncle—Sir Alexander Gordon—who was killed during the battle. He was an A.D.C. to the Duke of Wellington who had formed the highest opinion of him, and he was a very popular officer. I had heard that the monument was in need of some repairs, etc., and this was indeed the case.

Soon after returning to London I was a guest at a dinner party when I happened to be placed next to the hostess. Immediately after we were seated she asked if I had been long in town, to which I replied, "No, I have just returned from Belgium where I went chiefly to examine the tomb and monument of Sir Alexander Gordon."

"Oh, indeed," said the hostess, "and how is he now?" I rather evaded this query by replying that he was pretty well when I last heard of him, but I perceived that another Sir Alexander was in my companion's mind, which was

quite natural owing to some mutual family relationship.

The next has no connection with the above except as being in the military line to some extent.

A sergeant having occasion to visit the regimental canteen obtained a small can of beer. On leaving the canteen he perceived that the colonel was approaching the spot though still some little distance away. Whether it was because of some slight irregularity as to time, or perhaps merely for the sake of appearances, he did not wish that the colonel should observe what he was carrying, and so, hastily unbuttoning the upper portion of his tunic he placed the can on his chest, and then refastened the garment.

By this time the colonel was close at hand. After receiving the sergeant's salute he stopped and said, "I hope you are all right, Sergeant . . . ? not suffering from a tumour, or anything of that sort, I hope?"

To this the following reply was given, "No, sir, can—sir."

The following little tale, based upon the custom of a former time in Scotland when it was a common practice to make imaginery Highlanders a sort of "butt" of good-humoured raillery, was rather a favourite with our own children when young, so possibly it may be amusing for some children also of another generation.

A Highlander looked into a village shop one evening and asked for something which would do for his supper on his way home. The shopman suggested a red-herring. "But," asked the Highlander, "what way would I cook it?" "Oh," said the shopman, "just give it a sight of the fire." The Highlander took the herring accordingly.

The distance which he had to go was considerable. Darkness was coming on and he was getting hungry. It happened to be about Hallowe'en time, and some boys had kindled a bonfire near the road. The Highlander thought this would be a good opportunity of letting the herring see the fire, so he held it up opposite the blaze: but after a few moments the string to which it had been fastened got loose and the herring fell down. The Highlander groped for it in the damp grass at the roadside and got hold of what he imagined was the desired article and immediately rammed it into his mouth: but in reality it was a frog, which naturally resented the operation: but the Highlander exclaimed, "Kick here, kick there: ye hae seen the fire and doon ye maun go."

Kintore, a small town, about fifteen miles north of Aberdeen, is one of the Royal Burghs in the north-eastern part of Scotland. The railway station is also a junction. In the former days (I am almost inclined to call them the "good old

days”) of the Great North of Scotland Railway, now part of the L. & N. E. R., when things were done in a more leisurely manner than now, a tourist passenger in a train going North, observing that Kintore did not seem to be a very busy place, asked (in the way which tourists are apt to do) a porter who was standing on the platform, “Why are we stopping here?”

The porter replied, “Ye *maun* stop here; it’s a junction ye ken: and forbye Kintore’s a Royal Burgh.”

“Indeed,” said the tourist, becoming interested, “and is there a Provost and Magistrates?”

“Ay,” said the porter.

Tourist: “And does your Provost go about with a chain?”

Answer: “Na, na, he jist gangs about louse.”

The railway reference leads to a little story told by that delightful friend—the late Sir Harry Brooke, K.B.E. Perth Railway Station is well known as an extremely busy place; and the traffic was not always so effectively arranged as it is at present and has been during recent years. Sir Harry used to tell of a man who had occasion to change his train at Perth. He had a good deal of luggage which he entrusted to a porter with instructions to be sure to put it into the train for his destination, while he went to the refreshment room for tea, etc. While he was there one of those nervous-making—for some people—bells clanged loudly. The passenger hastily left the refreshment room and proceeded to the part of the platform where the train was standing which he imagined was the one he had to take: but as it moved away, he observed with disgust his luggage still on the platform while the porter stood seriously surveying it. Irritated, he called out, “You silly fool, why didn’t you put my luggage in?” To this the porter—also now annoyed—shouted back, “Your luggage is nae sic a fool as yersel’; you’re in the wrang train!”

While on railways, another misapprehension, or more than one, in that line may be mentioned.

A party of young men were returning one evening from a football match somewhere south of London. One of them, taking off his bowler hat, inserted his ticket in the hat-band, so as to make sure of producing it when required, and then relapsed into slumber. His companions observing this, quietly removed the ticket without disturbing him.

By and by, Vauxhall was approached and the cry, “All tickets ready, please,” was soon heard. The sleeper was nudged by his companions and warned that he would have to show his ticket immediately. He hastily

examined his hat and then his pockets.

“Any o’ you chaps seen my ticket?”

“Why, have you lost it?”

“Yes, thought I’d put it in me ’at.”

“Well,” said the others, “you’d better look out, you’ll be fined if you’re caught travelling without a ticket.”

“What d’you think I’d better do?”

“ ’Ide, man: git under the seat.”

Quickly this was done and in another moment the ticket-collector appeared. “Tickets, please,” and all were handed to the collector, who said: “Why, there’s only five of you gents, and you’ve given me six tickets!”

“Oh, it’s all right, ticket-collector, we have a friend here, but he prefers to travel under the seat.”

There was another case of travelling under the seat, but of a different character. This was told to me by our old friend—the late Sheriff Donald Crawford.

A young fellow whose father happened to be a railway director heard him once allude to the fact that if any passenger could prove that he had been wrongfully ejected from a railway carriage, the company would be liable to a fine of £5. The young man took note of this, and finding himself one day alone in a railway compartment, waited till the train was approaching a station where he knew that tickets would be collected, and then crawled beneath the seat, taking care, however, to leave one foot slightly visible. When the train entered the station, he firmly grasped the iron stanchion beneath the seat and waited events.

Very soon the door was opened and a porter’s voice exclaimed: “Ah! I see what it is, you’re trying to travel without a ticket; you’ll have to come out of that.” No answer. The porter then gave a pull at the visible foot. No result. The porter then beckoned to another man for assistance. They both pulled but the passenger still retained his hold of the stanchion.

Soon the stationmaster came up. “What’s all this about?” he said.

“Why, sir, here’s a chap trying to hide, evidently travelling without a ticket.”

At last, when with united exertion the passenger was extracted, considerably dishevelled and dusty, he demanded, “What do you want?”

Answer: "We want your ticket of course."

"Well," replied the passenger, producing his ticket, "and now you will pay me £5, or give me an order for that amount, for having put me out of the train while I had a ticket."

Some time ago a friend told me of the following incident. An acquaintance of his happened to be at Pisa during a tour through Italy. He entered one of the churches while a service was being held, and while sitting quietly amongst the congregation, a church official—probably an acolyte—passed amongst the worshippers, sprinkling "Holy Water," repeating at the same time a brief formula. The visitor, who happened to be a Scotsman, did not at first pay much attention to what was being said, assuming that the words were either Italian or Old Latin: but all at once the utterance seemed to him to have a familiar kind of sound; and after a few moments of thought it occurred to him that the sentence sounded strangely like the old Scottish proverb, "Jeuk and let the jar go by" (a pithy old saying, the metaphor being that of a wave—"jar"—encountered, when the prudent course is not to attempt to overmount the obstacle but to duck (jeuk) the head until the wave has rolled past).

The traveller's curiosity having been aroused he remained after the congregation had dispersed and then observing the official referred to, attending to his duties as to extinguishing lights, etc., the clergy having retired, he approached him and asked if he could speak English. The man nodded.

"And did you ever hear the old Scottish proverb?" and then the traveller quoted the above phrase.

The attendant looked round cautiously and then confided to the questioner that he was a Scotsman and had been a sailor. The ship on which he had been engaged was wrecked on the Italian coast. The survivors of the crew were taken to Pisa and well cared for. In due time arrangements were made for their conveyance to their homes; but this man having taken a liking to the town elected to remain in the hope of finding some employment and after a while succeeded in getting a place at that church as an attendant. Amongst his duties was the reciting of a phrase which he was to learn. He was not much of a scholar but the words seemed to him to have a resemblance to a Scottish proverb which he remembered his parents used occasionally to quote; so he had got into the way of repeating the words as a sort of substitute for those which he had been taught but which he had not rightly got hold of; and had never met with any complaint as to inaccuracy. (Doubtless the sentence would not often have to be uttered in close proximity to any of the clergy.)

I am afraid that if some of my Catholic friends observed this tale they

would be disposed to tell me that it must be regarded as mythical. Of course I must acquiesce in any such verdict, but I have given the tale as I received it (with perhaps a few supplementary details) from my friend who is a fully reliable person. Of course I am not responsible for his informant, though he was evidently regarded as dependable.

By a sort of mental association I recall another anecdote imparted by no less a person than the late Earl Granville.

This is what he told me—only some slight explanatory items being inserted.

A certain clergyman of the Church of England when no longer quite young, and after he had been married and had two young daughters, joined the Church of Rome. He was a man of ability and zeal, and before many years had passed he became the Catholic Bishop of Amiens. Some time afterwards a reception was given in Paris by a well-known French Marchioness, and the Bishop, who happened to be in Paris at the time, was one of those invited. On arrival at the entrance to the salon and being asked by the attendant, in the usual way, for the name of himself and those accompanying him, he gave the following (of course, in French): “The Bishop of Amiens, and his two daughters.”

On this the attendant exclaimed: “Jamais je ne me permettrai à faire une telle annonce à Madame la Marquise.”

Then the Bishop: “Dites donc, l’Evêque d’Amiens et les nièces de son frère.”

Attendant: “A la bonheur, Monseigneur,” and at once, in sonorous tones, the revised announcement was delivered.

Again, I apprehend, Catholic friends will shake their heads as to the credibility of the above. Well, of course, there’s the tale as I received it from Lord Granville and of course my responsibility does not extend further back.

Now, reverting to Scotland, there is a certain example of misapprehension which, I am aware, has appeared in print perhaps more than once, but as the form has varied I take the opportunity of recording what I think is the original and correct version.

The minister of a certain Church in Glasgow once received an urgent request on behalf of a family, one of the members of which had become seriously ill, and there was a strong wish for a pastoral visit at that home. The minister without further question readily proceeded to the address which had been given.

After sympathetic and helpful ministrations to the sufferer, the minister when preparing to depart said to the wife, "Let me see, I don't seem to know you; do you attend at my Church?"

"Oh no," was the reply (given with a tone of some complacency), "we belong to the Barony."

"Oh, indeed," said the minister, "then I wonder why you didn't send for Dr MacLeod?"

"Weel," said the wife, "ye see, sir, this is an infectious case and we didna like to risk Norman."

Another misapprehension, and with a railway connection, is said to have occurred in India during a Viceregal journey northward, the destination being Peshawar where a field day was to be held for the occasion of a visit by the Viceroy.

Early in the morning, *i.e.*, at about 5 A.M., one of His Excellency's A.D.C.'s was awakened by the train, which was, of course, a Viceregal special, having come to a halt. Looking out of the window he perceived that the station was a very small one, and in order to ascertain the cause of the delay he stepped on to the platform without altering his night garb of pyjamas. Not a sound was to be heard except the tick, tick, tick, of a telegraph instrument in the small station office. Advancing thither, the A.D.C. found a native operator busy at the instrument; and began to address him with considerable emphasis as to the absurdity of His Excellency's train being delayed at that rubbishy little station, involving the risk of dislocation of the arrangements at Peshawar where the General in Command would be waiting to receive His Excellency. The telegraphist waited, though with signs of anxiety until he could put in a word and then exclaimed, "But, sahib—the train, she has gone!" "What," shouted the A.D.C., and hurrying to the door, he had the mortification of seeing the last vehicle of the train disappearing round a curve; and not another train until at least twelve hours later!

Making a jump from India to Canada, I recall how a former Governor of the State of Wisconsin, Mr W. D. Hoard, speaking as a visitor at an agricultural meeting, in the eastern part of Canada, and wishing to give an illustration of some people's tendency to one-sided views, told of how, during a winter evening at a railway station, in the waiting-room of which a large stove was dispensing much-needed warmth, a sea-faring man, seated on one of the benches, and "no more" than sober, was rather in a dozing condition. After a while there was a new arrival in the person of a man who came in, chilled to the bone by a long sleigh ride over the frozen snow, and who had the

misfortune to have one leg shorter than the other. His shoulders too were not quite evenly shaped. He advanced towards the stove and spreading out his hands seemed to wrap himself around the stove-pipe to obtain as much warmth as possible. The sea-faring man was seated behind and on being partly aroused, he was surprised to observe the peculiar aspect of the figure in front of him, which seemed to be bent into strange shape. After watching for a few moments he rose and tapping the gentleman on the shoulder said, "Are you a well man, sir?" "Yes, sir," replied the other, rather snappishly; but again he was asked, "Are you sure there's nothing wrong?" "Quite sure, sir!" "Then," resumed the other, "if I were you I'd get away from that stove, for you're warping terribly." While alluding to this Governor, Mr Hoard, I may as well record another and rather better story which he gave.

At that time there had been a good deal of discussion about artificial manures, some of which had been greatly advertised as likely to be of enormous value to farmers, and Mr Hoard declared that he had heard of a Scottish landed proprietor who said to his farm steward: "The time is coming, John, when I shall be able to carry in one pocket of my waistcoat, what will fertilise a whole acre of land." "'Deed, sir, and I'm thinkin' maybe ye'll be able to carry the crap in tither pouch."

I have alluded to that most genial personality, the late Sir Harry Brooke of Fairley, so great a favourite in his own county of Aberdeenshire; and another of his stories comes to mind. It was to the effect that during a visit to Ireland the late Field-Marshal Sir George White, with two other friends, one of whom was Lord Rathmore, made a picnic expedition by outside Irish car to some attractive resort. They had taken luncheon and when they had nearly finished partaking thereof, one of the party said, "By the by, we must give some lunch to the old jarvey, who is waiting over there. Here are some sandwiches and we must give him a little whisky. Hullo! it's all done, that's a pity, but look here, we can give him some of this liqueur which may do instead. You had better take it, Plunket. You've got the silver tongue and will make it all right."

Accordingly, Lord Rathmore advanced and proffered the sandwiches remarking: "I am sorry there's no whisky left, but there's some stuff here which may do instead; and perhaps you'll like it all the better when I mention that it is made by monks of your Church at a place in Europe called Chartreuse. Would you like to try it?"

"Indeed I would, sorr."

Some of the liquid was then poured into a liqueur glass and handed to the driver. He took it at a gulp and then said, "Begorra! Did your honour say that was made by the monks?"

“I did.”

“Then,” said the driver, “long life to them! And rest to their souls; but a bad end” (he perhaps used a stronger word) “to the shart-winded beggar that blew the glass.”

There was the warmest possible friendship between Sir George White and Harry Brooke, the former having been in command of the 92nd Gordon Highlanders when Harry Brooke joined as a young subaltern.

When, many years later, Sir Harry had retired from active service, and when, with great zeal and care he established the excellent Institute in Aberdeen for the benefit of retired soldiers of the regiment, he had the great satisfaction of securing the presence of Sir George White to perform the opening ceremony. Sir George in his pleasant way remarked that he thought he could claim to be a grandfather of the institution, for it was certainly Captain Harry Brooke’s child, and he (Sir George) had long regarded Captain Brooke as a son.

Some years ago at one of the Sir Walter Scott Anniversary Dinners in Edinburgh, I had the advantage of sitting next to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. We were both to make speeches later, and perhaps this prompted me to mention to my neighbour the story of how, when a Shah of Persia visited this country he was entertained (amongst other functions) at a big function in the City of London. Soon after the repast had commenced, the Shah, surveying the scene, as his manner was, through large blue spectacles, asked the chairman: “Who are those men who look so gloomy? Are you going to cut their heads off after dinner?” The Chairman replied, “No, your Highness, it’s not so bad as that, but these are the men who have got to make speeches after dinner.”

Sir Arthur then said, “I never heard that before.” This was a gratifying remark, especially from such a source; but in truth if I had supposed that it was likely to prove a chestnut, I would not have told the story, except by way of quotation. Perhaps there is a sort of guiding instinct in such matters.

When in America a few years ago I got another Shah of Persia story (perhaps, useful for illustrative purposes) from that pioneer pilot, and attractive professor of the science of town-planning, Dr John Nolen, of Cambridge, Mass., which is not as the uninitiated might imagine a sort of off-shoot of Boston, but the home and haunt of the far-famed University of Harvard. Dr Nolen’s tale was that another of the Shah’s entertainments took the form of a grand concert. The programme was fairly long; but, towards the conclusion the Shah was asked, of course through the interpreter, if he would like to have any of the numbers repeated. In reply, the interpreter announced that His Highness

would like to hear the first item repeated.

“Good gracious!” exclaimed the chief organiser, “that’s the sonata! Well, let’s have the first movement, and we can then ask again.”

This portion having been performed, inquiry was again made as to whether it was what had been desired.

“No!” was the reply, “His Highness says it came before that.”

“Oh I now we understand; the Shah must mean the tuning-up of the violins, ’cellos and bass fiddles before the programme began.”

But by this time perhaps even an indulgent reader will be inclined to adopt the utterance of the man who, after being fed on rabbits, ended a sort of plaint with the words:

“Rabbits tender, rabbits tough,
Though I’m thankful, I’ve enough.”

And so, although, of examples of misapprehension there are still more to follow, it will be well in order to avoid harping too long on one string to interpose a brief chapter of another sort.

[\[1\]](#) The allusion is of course to the First Lord Thurlow who was twice Lord Chancellor, towards the end of the eighteenth century. Unlike his descendants, he had the reputation of being the reverse of affable.

CHAPTER IX

AN AMERICAN RAILWAY YARN OF FORMER DAYS

NOTE.—It is a little difficult to adapt a tale of this sort for both American and British readers, because of certain distinctive expressions and methods.

Thus, in the U.S.A. the supposed conversation between the engine-driver and the signalman, would be with the conductor of the train.

The “caboose” of course corresponds to the brake van of a British goods train, but the former is usually larger, and is provided with a cupola, for observation.

In the U.S.A. one of the two brakemen of a freight train is usually on the engine.

“Old Bill” was known and liked all over the road. He was somewhat of a character; and although by length of service, and also an excellent record as a sure and steady driver, he would normally have been assigned to a passenger run service, he remained “on the freight.” And it was generally understood that this was by his own choice. Doubtless he preferred the greater degree of freedom, which in various ways inevitably exists in the freight running, than in that of the passenger service; and apparently Bill was content to accept this as a sort of counterbalance to the smaller pay. And perhaps the train-master would be inclined to make things easy for Bill, in regard to the class of trains which he was to handle, etc.

One evening, at a certain station, Bill, having completed his shunting, indicated to the signalman whose box was close to where the engine was standing, that he was ready to start for the next station—Juggin’s Junction—where he would have to be side-tracked to allow the western express to pass. The signalman, however, called out, “Why, Bill, I’ve got to clear the road for the express, and I don’t see how you can make the junction in time, with the load you’ve got,” to which Bill replied, “You lemme go; I’ll make Juggins right enough.” After some further parley, the signalman resignedly says, “Well, Bill, you generally get your way, and you’ve got no one into the soup yet; but you know I’ll get the blame if the express is checked even ten seconds before reaching Juggins.” Bill simply grunted, “Right O”—and then—chunk,

chunk, *chunk*—and the long train of cars moved slowly away.

About two miles farther on, an ascending grade begins, averaging about one per cent. (or, according to British phrasing, 1 in 100) and this continues almost to the junction, three or four miles ahead.

On reaching the foot of the incline, Bill took up one of the locomotive oil cans, with enormously long spout, and handing it to the engine brakeman, said, “You’ll step back to the tail of the train, and stand on the rear steps of the caboose above the off-side rail, and let oil drip on it for nigh a mile; then shift to the near side rail and give it the same; and then come back to the foot-plate.”

It must be borne in mind that in America it is the common practice for the crew of freight trains, when composed of covered cars, as in this instance, to pass to and fro on the roofs, when they have occasion to do so. And as the cars are coupled close together, there is no great difficulty in the process, even when the train is in motion. But, of course, there would always be the risk that a man might fail to observe when the train approaches an overhead bridge; and it is to guard against this danger that within a short distance of each bridge, a frame is usually erected, from which are suspended a number of heavy strips of leather—which look like huge bootlaces—so that if a train-man walking or standing on the top of a car is unaware of the proximity of a bridge, he is warned of the fact by a swipe—probably severe, but in the circumstances a cause for thankfulness.

So the brakeman accomplished his mission, and then returned to his place on the engine.

The junction is reached, and the freight train is backed into the appointed side-track; but not a moment too soon, for at the very instant the express is signalled as having entered the section. A few moments of silence ensue, the more marked, because of the contrast to the stir and bustle of the place during the day; and then, through the still night air is heard the deep and raucous note of what used to be called the steam “Cow” of an American locomotive. The sound is caught up and re-echoed from the surrounding hills with a strange and weird effect; and soon there is heard also the roar of the “exhaust” of the locomotive of the approaching express at top speed. But this roar is soon changed to sharp staccato blasts—rapid, but distinguishable—when the grade is reached, which means the addition of perhaps tenfold to the work of the engine. But, hark, what’s that? Whirr, whirr—accompanied by loud bursts of the exhaust. Evidently the driving wheels are slipping. There is a moment of recovery; the engine driver has opened the sand-tubes; but again, whirr, whirr—whirr—the grip is lost. It is as if some huge animal were struggling and panting with the exertion of endeavouring to overcome some mysterious

obstacle. And certainly the express is losing time.

At last, the flaring headlight of the engine comes in sight round a curve, and the train, with speed reduced to twenty-five miles an hour, rolls through the station. The engine driver, observing Old Bill standing on the foot-plate of his engine, waves a hand towards him, shouting, “Awful bad rails on the grade to-night, Bill,” and in response Bill yells out, “Ye’es—that’s so.”

CHAPTER X

MORE MISAPPREHENSIONS

The recent allusion to harping upon one string recalls the following sarcastic utterance.

A man, showing to a friend a cigar, which had a label attached in the usual way, said: "I am connected with the firm that makes these cigars; and we undertake that if any person can show by producing a thousand of these labels that he has purchased, or caused to be purchased, that number of our cigars, the firm will give to him a grand piano."

To this the friend replied, "Me smoke a thousand of your cigars? Why, I guess I would then need a harp rather than a grand piano."

As will be inferred, this has a decidedly American flavour and should therefore, properly, be inserted amongst American souvenirs. However, it will do no harm here, and moreover, it suggests another reference to that instrument which someone described as "a little orchestra in itself."

It is said that in a certain country district there was, a good many years ago, an addition to the social community by the arrival of a lady, evidently well endowed with means, who had acquired a house in the neighbourhood. The name was Mrs Broadwood. The other residents were very ready to make the new arrival feel at home by calling, and inviting her to their various abodes. Someone inquired if the lady was connected with the celebrated firm of Broadwood. The answer was, in effect: "Yes; but it is understood that Mrs B. rather likes to ignore any association with a business enterprise; so it is desirable when conversing with her, to avoid saying anything which might imply allusion to that connection."

"Oh," said the inquirer, "I'm glad you told me, because I have asked Mrs B. to tea one day next week, and I shall be careful."

The tea visit was duly accomplished; and all went well, though the hostess was conscious of a sort of undercurrent of anxiety, lest she should make some *faux pas* regarding musical instruments. In due time the visitor said, "I am afraid I must be going; might I ask for my carriage?" The hostess rings the bell; then a slight pause, which seems long. The servant enters. Hostess: "Will you please send for Mrs Broadwood's piano? Oh!—I mean——"

The late Hon. George Brodrick was a man of mark and well known at

Oxford and also in Parliamentary circles. Eventually he was appointed Warden of Merton College, Oxford, and became a very popular occupant of that desirable position. A distinctive feature of his countenance consisted in decidedly prominent front teeth; and some typically non-deferential undergraduate wag devised the *sobriquet* “Curius Dentatus.” This will be familiar to Oxford men of a former generation, and indeed also to the more modern; but the term is introduced here for the sake of adding a kind of sequel which is perhaps not well known, namely, that the Warden was supposed to have come across this would-be pleasantry in printed form; and the tradition is that he remarked, “Well, that is certainly a high compliment; and I would like to think that I could have deserved to be spoken of as resembling Curius Dentatus.” (It will not be necessary to remind readers of Roman history that Curius Dentatus was regarded as a splendid specimen of the best type of the Roman in the time of the ancient Republic, and as an example of frugality and disinterested public spirit.)

Of course one may perhaps surmise that the Warden was not really taken in; but that the above interpretation on his part was a neat method of paying back. If so, it reminds one of a characteristic utterance of the late Henry Ward Beecher, told to me by his friend and colleague—the late Dr Lyman Abbott—namely, that on a first of April, Dr Beecher received an envelope containing only the words “April Fool”; on which the doctor remarked, “I have often received letters in which the writer forgot to sign his name; but here is a letter from one who gives his name and nothing else.”

The allusion to the above-mentioned classical hero recalls a reference to another noble personality of a later period. The late Lord Wriothresley Russell, uncle of the first Duchess of Abercorn, told me that he was once showing some members of the household of one of the Abercorn country establishments through Chesterfield House, which was at that time the town residence of the Marquis of Abercorn (as he then was). Passing along one of the corridors he indicated a fine bust, on a pedestal, and remarked, “That is Marcus Aurelius.”

“Indeed, my lord,” said one of the party; “any relation of the present Markiss?”

And here is another family story, also genuine.

When my late brother-in-law, Lord Polwarth, decided to start a pure-bred shorthorn herd at his home in Berwickshire, he very sensibly consulted that far-famed and most successful authority on the subject, our late valued friend and neighbour, Mr William Duthie of Collynie. He not only advised Lord Polwarth as to judicious purchases, but also suggested that it would be prudent to secure a foreman from Buchan, the eastern portion of Aberdeenshire. This

was done and the foreman naturally advised that the men who were to work with him should also hail from the same region.

They were all “fine quiet men” (an Aberdeenshire phrase indicating high praise) and they gave a favourable impression in their new surroundings; but one of them did not at first seem to thrive; so his wife consulted the doctor of the parish, describing the unfavourable symptoms. She was asked what sort of food her husband usually took.

“Oh, weel, just much the same as at hame; parridge and milk, and whiles brose wi’ tatties, and maybe sowens for supper.”

It may be doubted if the doctor understood the meaning of “sowens,” but it was evident that the man was mainly depending on farinaceous food; so he said, “I think your husband should take some animal food; it will brace him up.”

The wife seemed rather dubious, but replied, “Weel, I suppose he micht try.”

“All right,” said the doctor, “and you had better call again in about ten days and let me know how he does.”

And sure enough the wife reappeared at the appointed time but not looking cheerful.

“Well,” said the doctor, “and how is the new diet suiting your husband?”

“Weel, he manages middlin’ well wi’ the neeps; and whiles the linseed cake; but oh! doctor, he canna thole the strae!” (he cannot stand the straw).

There is another tale from a family source which inevitably comes to mind; but here I must premise that in Scotland, especially in the northern parts, the primary meaning of the word “*pig*” is any kind of earthenware jar or jug. To a Scottish reader this explanation may seem superfluous; but no, because, for instance, recently a very desirable neighbour of ours told me that though she has lived in that district for thirty years, she had only just become aware of the above signification of the word. This is perhaps the less surprising because, although of course at the principal Agricultural Shows in Scotland there is always a swine section—and often very fine specimens are exhibited—yet the keeping of pigs is in many parts of the country quite rare; and one might certainly visit a hundred farms in various districts without finding one piggery.

Whether this is due to some lingering superstition of a past age, one cannot say; but certainly in some parts of the country, especially on the East Coast, and perhaps particularly amongst the fisher folk, the prejudice has existed

within comparatively recent times. It is recorded, for instance, by Dean Ramsay, that a stranger minister conducting service in a church of a Fifeshire village, happened to read the chapter which describes the event in the country of the Gadarenes. At each repetition of the obnoxious word the congregation showed uneasiness, and muttered exhortations were heard of “cauld airn,” which meant “touch any kind of metal by way of averting ill luck.”

But now to the other story. The mother of the late Lord Balfour of Burleigh—Mrs Bruce of Kennet—told us that on one occasion when there happened to be a fine litter of pigs at the home farm, she thought that a sucking pig would be a nice present for one of her neighbours at a farm near by, and so instructions were given to ask a little girl who called every morning with the milk, if on the following day she would take a small pig to Mrs Brown.

“Ay will I,” she said, and accordingly next morning the young pig was brought forward; but Jeannie shrank back saying, “Ech! but I couldna touch yon beastie!”

“But, Jeannie, you promised to carry a pig to Mrs Brown?”

“Ay, I said I’d tak’ a pig, but I didna say I wid tak’ a sma’ sou!”

There used to be a very amusing recitation, which I heard inimitably rendered by the late Mr John Grant, of Methlick, based on the same Scottish meaning of “pig.” It may be summarised thus. An English lady having occasion to spend a night, in winter time, at a small country hotel in Scotland, is asked by the prim housemaid if—the night being cold—the lady would like to have a pig in her bed.

Lady: “What’s that you said? A pig? Ridiculous! And it sounds like impudence: I shall complain to your mistress.”

Maid: “Nae impudence indeed, ma’am; and nae fear aboot the mistress, for it wis hersel’ bade me ask.”

Lady: “But what is the idea of such a notion?”

Maid: “Jist to keep yer feet warm, ma’am.”

Lady: “How absurd, and what a mess.”

Maid: “Na indeed, ma’am, oor pigs are a’ as clean as clean.”

Lady: “And do *you* have a pig in your bed?”

Maid: “Na, ma’am, it’s mair for the gentry folk; me and my neiper lass juist lie on cauf.” (Chaff, indicating the cheaper kind of mattress.)

Lady (shocked): “What! a calf? worse and worse! what extraordinary

people.”

Of course so-called Scotticisms have often given rise to comic fallacies, thus it is recorded that Henry Dundas (afterwards Viscount Melville) applied to Mr Pitt for the loan of a horse “the *length* of Highgate.” This, of course, gave Mr Pitt a chance of making fun of his friend by writing back to say that he was afraid he had not got a horse quite so long as Dundas had suggested, but he was sending the longest he had.

This story may seem rather “tall,” but it may be assumed that the incident occurred when Dundas was still comparatively young; and of course the actual phrase was still quite common in Scotland: for instance, if a man were asked how far he was going, he would probably reply, “I’m going the length of so and so.”

And I think I can, if not “cap,” at any rate give a comparatively modern parallel to the above tale, drawn from an authentic source.

My father-in-law—the late Lord Tweedmouth—was, as Sir Dudley Marjoribanks, for many years the Member of Parliament for Berwick-on-Tweed; and although for most part a silent M.P. in the House, he was certainly greatly liked and trusted by his constituents.

When Sir Dudley became Lord Tweedmouth he was succeeded in the membership for Berwick by Viscount Bury, eldest son of that fine old Waterloo veteran—the Earl of Albemarle, in whose honour, every year, until he passed hence, a reception was held at Dorchester House on Waterloo Day—always a most pleasant and interesting affair, when the kindly genial veteran received the congratulations and homage of his family and relatives and a host of friends.

Lord Bury was of course an excellent member, but he, perhaps naturally, was not familiar with the Scottish element in the celebrated burgh which he represented: and Lord Tweedmouth told me that when one of his principal supporters—an alderman I think—wrote to Lord Bury asking for an order for the Strangers’ Gallery in the House of Commons, “On *Friday first*,” he received a prompt reply enclosing the order, but with the added remark that the alderman had made a mistake as to the date, because Friday was not the first of the month but the third: and it is supposed that this observation was not at all relished by the applicant, who imagined that Lord B. was trying to be funny at his expense, and indeed Lord Tweedmouth believed that his support from the member was jeopardised.

The expression which he had used is of course still extremely usual in Scotland: and a very convenient method it is, too, for indicating with certainty

the exact day referred to. It is rather quaint that according to Scottish usage the expression, for instance, “next Thursday” would be equivalent to the English mode, “Thursday week,” but this style is going out.

Quite apart from any quaint results arising from Scotticisms it is not without interest to notice certain idioms and nuances of expression which are distinctively Scottish and reveal the nationality even without any trace of accent; thus the English phrase “the long and short of it, etc.,” would in Scottish use be “the short and the long”: so too “bread and butter” would be “butter and bread,” which, by the way, if analysed, seems a rational form, as the butter is uppermost; though, on the other hand, the bread is fundamental.

Another word which has had a different use in England and Scotland is “whenever,” which in the smaller country would signify “as soon as,” and not “every time”: thus a Scotsman might say “whenever he discovered so and so”—meaning of course, “directly” or “as soon as.”

In that delightful story, *Penny Plain*, in which one seems to become realistically acquainted with all the characters, and especially with the charming central figure, the Scottish use of the word “whenever” is with obvious appropriateness used by Mrs Hope, the typical highly educated, though slightly old-fashioned, Scottish Dame: but it is somewhat disconcerting to find the word used in the same sense (namely, “as soon as”) by the essentially English Miss Reston, unless indeed we are to assume that she had already unconsciously acquired some Scotticisms during her stay at Priorsford. Otherwise this is an instance of how extraordinarily accurate real authors have to be: and perhaps the talented and successful authoress of *Penny Plain* will not thank me for the above allusion: but at any rate she will admit that it is made by a very appreciative as well as an attentive reader.

The following quaint little misapprehension was mentioned to me by a former Lord Chancellor of Ireland—the late Sir Samuel Walker—a very able and agreeable man. His story was that the late Duchess of Inverness (at whose death the title expired) had amongst her acquaintances a Mr Tomlinson, who very often paid his respects to the Duchess. On one occasion he said: “I must tell your Grace that I am about to build a new house: it will be rather large, and when it is completed I would very much like to show your Grace all over it.”

“Oh, indeed,” said the Duchess, “and when do you expect that it will be ready, Mr Tomlinson?”

“Oh, well, I expect it will take two or three years before it is quite finished.”

On which the Duchess said, “Two or three years! Why, Mr Tomlinson, I

expect I may be in Kensal Green by that time!”

“But,” said Mr T., “your Grace would be coming up for the London season?”^[1]

Here is an example of a linguistic misapprehension, which also takes the shape of a sort of conundrum.

An Englishman who had a Scotsman as guest at a restaurant, inquired, towards the end of the meal, “Now, will you take an ice, or a merang?” To this the guest replied, “No, you’re richt.”

And if to any reader this seems obscure, the key could probably be obtained by asking someone, preferably Scottish, to repeat the inquiry of the story several times over.

Our friend, Dr George Muirhead, who has made his mark, amongst other attainments, notably as a naturalist, and in particular as the author of that very attractive book, *The Birds of Berwickshire* (a sort of Berwickshire Thomas Bewick), told me that once when he was showing to someone a drawing or description of a curlew, his companion remarked, “Ah, yes, I remember, at school, having to learn some lines which began ‘Hark! to the curlew’s solemn sound.’ ”

I have recently come across the following quaint specimen:

A clergyman expounding to one of his parishioners the importance of parents being prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of their children, said, “In order to send my son to college I had to pinch like anything: but I managed it.” “Ah, yes, sir,” said the parishioner, “but my husband is too much afraid of the law to do anything of that sort.”

^[1] Kensal Green is the largest of the cemeteries near London and contains the family burial places of a vast number of well-known people.

CHAPTER XI

MEMORIES DRAMATIC

My first meeting with Miss Ellen Terry was at one of the delightful suppers which Sir Henry Irving used to give, on the stage at the Lyceum, after a performance.

I was placed next to Ellen Terry, and without delay I inquired if she demurred to talking about matters theatrical, and the reply was to the effect that she did not care to talk about anything else.

That was the first of many pleasant conversations, and of various opportunities of witnessing the appearances of that consummate dramatic artiste.

And although in every scene in which she took part her share therein held a dominating attraction and interest, yet one had a sort of sub-conscious impression that she had “a way wid her” which would prevent those who acted with her from feeling that they were being outshone: or rather, that if that was inevitable, there was no such purpose on the part of their brilliant colleague, but that she and they were in truth sympathetic comrades and partners in their united work. And of course the influence of this kind of mutual understanding must vitally conduce to the effectual success of dramatic enterprise; indeed, without it, true success could not be attained.

As to Ellen Terry’s singular gift of sympathetic adaptability and assimilation, I recall a slight but typical instance. It was on the occasion of one of her always welcome visits to Dublin during our official residence in Ireland. There was an idea, or tradition, that Ellen Terry was rather averse to having bouquets thrown to her on the stage; however, I did not wish to be debarred from offering some sort of floral token: and so Lady Aberdeen obtained a large bunch of daffodils, partly because that is reputed to be Ellen Terry’s favourite flower, and also because, fortunately, it was then springtime.

The bunch was duly sent in, before the curtain rose: and it was a delight to observe how those flowers were utilised throughout the piece (it was “Captain Brassbound”). At the outset the daffodils were worn across one shoulder, in a manner so fitting and attractive that it might have been supposed that they formed part of the original design of the costume.

In subsequent scenes also, the flowers reappeared: and when the episode

was reached where Captain Brassbound has to present himself attired in the unaccustomed and ludicrously unsuitable garb of a conventional black frock-coat, the leading actress, stepping forward, stuck a daffodil into the lapel of the coat, thus making the unfortunate man look more than ever a figure of fun. And so on, throughout the piece. And this was certainly also a characteristically graceful method of conveying to the donor of the flowers an intimation that his little offering was acceptable.

In her retirement from the active practice of her art, Miss Ellen Terry may surely have an abiding and thankful feeling of satisfaction in the knowledge, not only of the pleasure which she has imparted during past years to a vast number of people, but in the further conviction that, to not a few, this sentiment applies not only to the recollection of various productions as a whole, but also to individual passages—gems which continue in one's memory to shine with undiminished brightness as the years roll on.

And probably I am only one of many who, if called upon to specify one such memory, would name Miss Terry's appearance and utterance as Portia, in the "Merchant of Venice"—when rendering that famed masterpiece "The quality of mercy." The tone and clearness of voice, the air of composure, and the charm of aspect, can still be vividly recalled to mind as a moving and fascinating experience.

The brilliant dramatic career of Miss Ellen Terry will always be associated with that of Sir Henry Irving, whose genius caused him to be recognised as the foremost British actor of his time, and has given him historically a high place amongst the famous actors of the world.

It was in 1878 that Irving fully discovered Miss Terry's exceptional gifts; and from that time onward her participation in his chief productions was regarded by him as essential: "Our dear friend Miss Ellen Terry," as he was wont to allude to her, in some of his innumerable and always happily expressed speeches, when called before the curtain after a performance; and perhaps the use of the word "our" was a sort of instinctive, and therefore, of course, the more effective recognition and expression of the feeling—already referred to—of all the members of the "Company" regarding his talented colleague.

It might be interesting if a collection of opinions could be obtained from a number of those best qualified to contribute such, as to which of Sir Henry Irving's many dramatic achievements brought to him the most enduring fame. Of course I am not equipped for joining in an adjudication of that kind: but if a surmise from a sort of outsider is allowable, I would venture to predict that a majority of experts would estimate his rendering of "Becket" as, on the whole,

his finest performance and *chef-d'œuvre*. From first to last, throughout the play, he seemed to be made for the part and the part for him. Who can forget, for example, the effect of the scene, early in the play, which opens with the Archbishop seated alone in his simply furnished apartment? Soon, Rosamond (Ellen Terry) enters hurriedly, and implores protection from molestation to which she has been subjected. She is motioned to safety within. Quickly her pursuer—the ruffianly and half-drunk Fitzurse—follows, and demands an interview with the lady. The great Archbishop's only response is to rise, and grasping the lofty symbol of his office to exclaim in a voice of indescribable vehemence and scorn, "*Back!!* lest I smite thee with my crozier." The recreant knight shrinks off, but—as might be anticipated—he reappears in the final scene as one of the assassins.

In the year 1904 Irving visited Aberdeen. At that time there was in that city a small social institution called the "Pen and Pencil Club," in which the late Mr G. M. Barclay was the chief guiding and stimulating influence. We had many enjoyable re-unions, and one of the chief purposes of the club was to give entertainment to any notable visitors: and of course such was arranged for Irving, to take place one evening after his engagement at the theatre. The play that night was *Becket*. In the later part of the piece, as may be remembered, there is a striking scene which opens with the spectacle of a council chamber, in which a large number of barons, etc., are assembled. A noisy discussion is going on, and it is evident that the prevailing utterances are those of hostility to Becket; but suddenly the wide doors are thrown open, and the stately figure of the great Archbishop is observed—and the instantaneous effect is absolute silence throughout the chamber—for a few moments.

This episode naturally recurred to one's mind at our supper party, when we were all assembled, waiting for the guest of the evening. I happened to be chairman on that occasion so it was my duty to be at hand to receive him on arrival. Meanwhile, of course, there was a loud hum of conversation. Suddenly the door was opened and our guest appeared. Complete silence immediately ensued, so I said: "You see, Sir Henry, your entry has exactly the same effect as that of 'Becket' upon the barons: but we are all true men here." He pleasantly accepted the welcome, though, appropriately, making no remark at the moment; but during his speech later, at the table, he made a neat allusion to the reference to "the Barons," with some complimentary application to his northern hosts.

Irving died in the year 1905. The event, which came suddenly, created a wave of feeling throughout the country. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, and the general recognition of the fitness of this high honour (never previously

accorded to an actor and perhaps never before proposed) was in itself a memorable tribute.

When I received from the late Mr H. B. Irving (Sir Henry's eldest son) a warmly expressed wish that I should be one of the pall-bearers, I at once accepted the invitation with the feeling that to take that part would be a real privilege: and so it was, and will always be remembered as such. And the more so, because, even apart from the personal affection of friendship and appreciation, the pall-bearers were enabled to observe more fully than if stationed in any one spot the profoundly impressive and unforgettable character of the whole scene.

When the procession emerged from the cloisters and entered the nave, it was seen that the immense space was filled by a great and motionless throng. But it was not the vastness of the assemblage but the expression of the individual countenances which was so touchingly impressive. On every face there seemed to be tears, and as the coffin was borne slowly forward, the eyes that followed it seemed to say, "There goes the last of *our friend*."

When we had passed through the gate leading to the choir, one became conscious of a change. Deep respectful sorrow was there, but without visible manifestation. Perhaps the slight difference of atmosphere was due to the fact that the crowd in the nave represented especially that part of every theatre in which real drama is produced, where the most appreciative, and also perhaps most discriminating, portion of the audience (mostly in ordinary day dress) is to be found. The service proceeded with that peculiar solemnity which is always imparted when the whole assemblage is moved by one heartfelt emotion. And perhaps this was most of all experienced during the singing of "Crossing the Bar."

The late Sir Frederick Bridge, who was at that time the organist of the Abbey, had come down from the organ loft in order personally to conduct the choir, without accompaniment, in rendering the fine music to which Tennyson's matchless verses have been set, in a manner which made one feel that his heart was indeed with his friend.

I need not, or rather must not, dwell longer on this memorable occasion, especially as there is a most interesting and beautifully written description thereof in the *Memoir of Sir Henry Irving*, by his devoted friend and helper, the late Mr Bram Stoker.

It is of course well recognised, and by none more than by members of the craft, that, while nearly every one appreciates appreciation, the manifestation

thereof is to the dramatic profession almost essential for the effective exercise of their art.

It is easy to understand this, and, therefore, it is not surprising that in addition to the actual applause of an audience, individual assurances of grateful satisfaction are likely to be welcomed, so that if any feel impelled to send a missive of that kind they need not be deterred by the apprehension of being thought troublesome or obtrusive.

And I recollect an occasion when having been much struck by one of the performances given by the late Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, I sent to him a letter of appreciation, and speedily a very cordially expressed telegram was received from him, in which he spoke of the "Radiant message" which had reached him. That was of course a very gratifying missive, but at first I was somewhat puzzled as to the exact application of the word "radiant": but afterwards I inferred that it was a neat and graceful recognition of the fact that in addition to the main and primary reference to his own striking performance, I had attempted to distribute some distinctive allusions to the manner in which other principal members of the company had accomplished their parts.

It need hardly be remarked that in addition to his own high attainments as an actor, Sir Herbert Tree became celebrated in his successful reproductions of Shakespeare, and notably, in his splendid "settings" of the plays which he presented. His death in the year 1917, at the comparatively early age of sixty-three, was widely felt as a public loss, and his kindly genial disposition will always be remembered by his many friends.

Numerous have been the pleasant meetings with our friends—Sir John and Lady Martin Harvey—including the occasions of their visits to Dublin, during our official residence there. And certainly one of the benefits of such a position as that which Lady Aberdeen and I were called upon to occupy in Canada and Ireland, consists in the fact that in discharging one of the duties of the office, namely, to offer some kind of entertainment or hospitality to persons of note, there is provided an occasion for coming into contact with many interesting people who have made their mark in various walks of life.

In the case of Lady Martin Harvey (Miss de Silva, to give her professional title) there was a further link in the fact that, like Lady Aberdeen, she had a great love for the long-haired Skye terriers, some of whom were always to be found in close company with both ladies, and when Sir John and Lady Martin Harvey were travelling, the company was never complete without some of these canine friends, and even at the theatre, one or more would usually be found on guard in Lady Harvey's own room. And surely there are no more companionable animals than the members of that attractive breed.

Among the notable successes which have brought fame to Sir John Martin Harvey, that of "The Only Way" will always stand out prominently, and not only in regard to dramatic distinction, but because it is a play which conveys a message of value. But in a recent production, "The Burgomaster," it seems to me that Sir John equally touches high-water mark, with fascinating effect. On the last occasion when I witnessed the performance, as soon as the curtain fell, I went behind, to have a talk with the actor: and finding him still on the stage said, "I can't believe that I'm speaking to Martin Harvey." "No," he replied, "I am the Burgomaster."

The Martin Harveys are amongst the star visitors to Aberdeen, where they are always announced and welcomed as "favourites": but in how many other places in this country, and also beyond the seas, are they thus described!

Anyway, let us hope that they will be spared to pay many more visits to the far north "Silver City by the Sea."

Another well-known and talented actor whom we claim as a firm friend is Mr Cyril Maude.

Some of his chief dramatic successes have been in the character of elderly men, such as Sir Peter Teazle, yet *in propria persona*, although not now exactly young, as years ago, he has always had the air and manner of a young man. And in that delightful piece "The Flag Lieutenant," he, as the lithe and active young officer, seemed to be "to the manner born."

But, alas! we must now think of him with deep sympathy, because of his irreparable loss in the recent passing of his beautiful and much loved wife, so well known as Winifred Emery, of winsome personality as well as a gifted dramatic artiste.

During a voyage to America, some years ago, Lady Aberdeen and I had the pleasant advantage of making further acquaintance with Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson.

His distinction—in the most comprehensive sense of the word—is so well known as to make any comment thereon seem superfluous: but I would like to dwell for a few minutes on one notable episode in his remarkable dramatic career, namely, in connection with Mr Jerome's "The Passing of the Third Floor Back."

That play may, I think, be regarded as unique in character; but, before alluding to that aspect, a word or two of remembrance and comment regarding its production may be allowable. The whole design and nature of the piece of course demand most delicate treatment; and it is difficult to imagine that

anyone else could have equalled Sir Johnston in his rendering of the central part. And he was well supported. This remark applies to every member of the cast; but two other parts can be recalled to mind with special vividness. First, that of the servant maid, beautifully rendered by Miss Gertrude Elliott (Lady Forbes Robertson), and next, the also difficult rôle, excellently filled by Miss Haidée Wright, in the part of the rouged and artificially coiffured lady who has the trying experience of appearing for the first time after having been induced to discard all external disguises.

Obviously the more that the talented artistes who undertook the first Performance were stimulated—and one might say, inspired—to give the Piece a rendering worthy of its character, the more also does one realise the high merit, the originality and the good judgment, evinced by the author.

Previously, Mr Jerome's fame had been chiefly acquired by his extremely able and attractive contributions to humorous literature. And possibly there may have been at first some surprise when he produced a work, not only of notable dramatic distinction, but also one containing essentially serious, and indeed sacred, elements. But, after all, such surprise was not really called for; because a study of Mr Jerome's previous writings would reveal the fact that they are throughout characterised, not only by an abundant flow of wit and humour, but by refinement and good taste—qualities which are so manifest in the Play referred to, and which were so essential for its right presentation.

Clearly it has a message, and yet it is not what could properly be called a "propaganda" play. But it seems to create a landmark in dramatic development—and especially to furnish an object lesson, suggesting how the drama, without straying beyond its proper field, can be the means of beneficent influence, concurrently with all the best attributes and attractions of dramatic art. That may be already accepted in theory, but in practice, there is a hindrance, a drawback, caused by a kind of parasitic growth, with which the theatre, as an institution, has long been afflicted.

Some years ago there was a debate in the House of Commons upon a question, raised by a much respected member, regarding a certain play, which he contended ought not to have been authorised for public performance.

Another well-known and popular member, in defending the authorisation, remarked that "The theatre is not a Sunday School."

That was certainly a pregnant utterance. It indicated the view—only too common—that in matters theatrical we must not expect or demand the same standard of tone and taste as in other phases of public life. And, in the above-quoted sentence, there is another significant word, namely, *school*. For

assuredly the theatre is inevitably always a school, with an influence which is far-reaching and immense. How enormously important, therefore, it is that the influence should be free from vitiating elements. And what is the chief obstacle to the practical recognition of this obvious need? Does it not consist in the habitual tendency to dismiss (often with contempt) any effort or suggestion towards the elimination of detrimental elements, as emanating from mere puritanical notions?

There is surely a good deal of nonsense and hollowness in this kind of use of the word “puritanical.”

Of course nobody can deny that there are “strait-laced” opinions, in all walks of life, which seem to disapprove of various perfectly harmless forms of mirth and recreation. On the other hand, there are undoubtedly millions of people who are entirely free from kill-joy or morose views, but who nevertheless have scruples, or more than scruples, about attending dramatic performances, because they feel that they cannot rely upon the absence of certain features which would jar upon their sense of what is wholesome and right.

And those are not true friends of the drama who treat with derision these honest doubts and misgivings.

Not many years ago a well-known and most successful actor-manager (not now alive) told me that an experienced dramatic author had once asked him to take a play which he had written.

The manager, after reading the piece, replied that he would accept it, on condition that one sentence were omitted. The author did not see his way to agree to this, and so the play was not accepted.

Assuredly no manager will ever have reason to regret an action of that kind, even from a business point of view. Thus, in the above case, if the play had been performed with the sentence referred to retained, it would certainly have given offence to some of the audience, while, on the other hand, it is inconceivable that the play, as a composition, could have suffered by the omission of the words.

And another very successful actor told me confidentially that after a time he had struck out from a play which he had produced a few sentences which tended towards the so-called “*broad*” character, and that he had never ceased to be glad that this had been done.

One cannot help thinking that the application of the recognised rules of *good taste*, would often provide the means of guidance in these matters.

And now I can imagine that some reader who has had sufficient patience to proceed thus far, will already have mentally exclaimed "What about Barrie?"

Yes, verily, and a good and pleasant thing it is to remember and to contemplate his delightful and fascinating productions, which have given, and continue to give, enjoyment unalloyed to so great a multitude—and it is a significant and cheering fact that while I write, several of the Barrie plays are running simultaneously in London.

Of course this does not conflict with the thesis which I have indicated, but, in a sense, supports it, as proving that a right tone can be maintained in theatrical production, and that it will be welcomed.

At the same time there is the sense of regret that so many who (as already remarked) have adopted the habit of abstinence from the theatre are thus without the source of healthy recreation provided by these plays: for a custom of that kind, once formed, is not easily departed from—partly because of the questioning and discussion which such departure is apt to evoke from one's immediate circle.

Meanwhile, Sir James Barrie has been endowed with the "O.M." (Order of Merit).

And when he was invested with this exceptional mark of distinction by the King, it may, without presumption, be surmised that His Majesty (whose views on such subjects are not unknown) would feel an added satisfaction in conferring the honour, as including recognition of that element in Sir James's conspicuous contributions to Literature and Art, which is a source of gladness and thankfulness to so many of his fellow-countrymen.

And when alluding to the cheering facts and omens in the dramatic domain, one cannot fail to refer to the now historic institution of "The Old Vic.," as the theatre in the Southwark district of London has come to be known.

It was founded by that pioneer princess in work for the benefit of the London poor—the late Miss Emma Cons—whose mantle of wise and resourceful organisation has been inherited by her friend and coadjutor—Miss Lilian Bayliss—who has recently received from the University of Oxford the Honorary Degree of D.C.L.: and this appropriate and notable mark of honourable recognition has surely been welcomed with rejoicing by her many friends and her fellow-workers. This auspicious episode has, as it were, synchronised with the emerging of "The Old Vic." from one of those visitations of anxiety which so many of the best institutions seem destined to experience; for, owing to structural changes and other unexpected

circumstances, there was a menacing prospect of the extinction of that centre of healthy recreation and instruction: but the "friend in need" appeared in the shape of one who, anonymously, contributed the princely donation of £30,000: and the situation has been saved, for, we may hope, more useful activities than ever.

The reference already made to the scope and the influence of the drama, naturally leads to some notice of a department of that influence which has recently attracted fresh attention, namely, its possibilities in the direction of promoting international understanding and goodwill, and an exemplification of this most desirable process gives an opportunity of referring to our valued friends, Mr and Mrs James K. Hackett, and, by the way, we cannot forget that Ireland can claim the right of placing Mr Hackett's name on her long roll of fame, for he acknowledges descent from Baron Hackett of Ireland.

Mr Hackett's presentation of "Macbeth" in London in 1920 will be long remembered by all who had the good fortune to witness this wonderful production of Shakespeare's great play.

Mr Hackett's splendid presence, his sonorous voice, and the strength of his personality all combined to give his portrayal of the character of Macbeth something quite unique and one acclaimed by practically all the critics as quite exceptional.

The fame of this production caused the French government to extend to him an official invitation to play "Macbeth" in Paris, this being the first time that such an honour was extended to a foreign actor. Mr Hackett asked for permission to associate English actors with him in his cast, and Miss Sybil Thorndike shared with him the triumph so rarely accorded to English-speaking actors in Paris.

The President of the French Republic, accompanied by the Prince Imperial of Japan, attended, and the French Government afterwards accorded the Cross of the Legion of Honour to Mr Hackett, he being the first English-speaking actor to be so honoured.

The President of the United States created a new precedent in personally felicitating Mr Hackett on his success on this occasion, believing doubtless that in such international co-operation as was shown at the "Odéon" between the artistes of Britain, America and France, one of the most potent methods of promoting goodwill amongst the nations had been illustrated.

Perhaps a still greater tribute was paid to Mr Hackett when he was invited to represent Shakespeare himself at the great celebration of the tercentenary of Molière's birth, held in Paris in 1922.

In virtue of Mr Hackett's success in his own country and Great Britain and in France he was looked on as an international, and so the proper person to represent Shakespeare and his works on this occasion when some 3500 players representing every phase of dramatic art throughout France assembled at the Opera House to do honour to the memory of Molière.

It must not either be forgotten that at the Shakespeare celebrations at Stratford-on-Avon in 1922, Mr Hackett achieved another outstanding success in the rôle of Othello, which he had also presented at Paris with Mrs Hackett as Desdemona.

It must be admitted that the difficulties of language sometimes create strange situations in carrying out international co-operation. Mr Hackett thus relates:

"While the performance at the Odéon Theatre was one of the greatest international triumphs ever achieved, it had its very strenuous and trying moments. My company was composed of English and American actors, none of whom spoke French. None of the French stage hands spoke English. Therefore it was quite impossible to give directions which the French stage hands could carry out.

"During a hurried dress rehearsal I came upon the stage and found one of my assistant stage managers, who had been born within the sound of Bow Bells, addressing in forcible language, which is familiar to the cockney quarter of London, a number of smiling and obsequious French stage hands. The conversation was somewhat as follows:

"‘Yer bloomin’ idjiots, why don’t yer do what I tells yer?’ (Bows and smiles on the part of the French stage hands.) ‘Don’t stand there grinnin’ yer blinkety blink French frogs.’ (Low bows and smiles from the French.) ‘Stop yer grinnin’ and do what I tells yer.’ (More bows and polite smiles.) Terrific outburst on the part of the assistant stage manager. He looks at them and they are still smiling pleasantly, whereupon he grabs at his hair and begins to tear it, emitting inarticulate sounds. I put my hand on his shoulder and said: ‘My boy, don’t you realise that they don’t understand a word you are saying?’ He looked blank for a moment, clapped his hands to his head and said: ‘Bless me, guvnor, I am that beside meself I’ve forgot me French as well as me English!’ ”

In the April number of *The Brotherhood World* this year (1925) there is an able article on this subject, namely, "The Drama and International Friendship," by Mr Hermon Ould, in which he discusses and effectively brings out the peculiar endowments of the drama in regard to the cultivation of those

conditions, which may indirectly be one of the greatest forces for the promotion and maintenance of World Peace. And as a specific example of this process Mr Ould reminds his readers that the epochal dramatic production, "Saint Joan," has had a long run, not only in London and New York, but also in Berlin, and in Vienna, where we are told it has "outvied in popularity even the musical comedies for which Vienna is famous," and it has also been produced with notable success at Warsaw, and in Russia, and now in Holland.

All this furnishes glad tidings: and indeed, quite apart from any indirect and unconscious influences, it is good to know that so many of our fellow creatures have had an opportunity of enjoying this masterpiece, the central personality of which has been so nobly and inspiringly interpreted by Miss Sybil Thorndike, with conspicuously fine support throughout the piece. A feeling of deep indebtedness to the celebrated author has indeed been universally evoked; and this will be combined with the hope and expectation that this magnificent outcome of talent will be followed by nothing less exalted, from his fertile and resourceful brain.

I cannot conclude this chapter without alluding to the phenomenal success which has attended the productions of the Irish Players of the Irish Theatre, founded and maintained by the indefatigable efforts of Lady Gregory and Mr W. B. Yeats, backed by Miss Horniman and other friends.

They were fortunate indeed in finding such actors as the brothers Fay, Sara Allgood and Maire O'Neill, who in the early days of the enterprise, pursued their daily avocations by day, and at night gave themselves heart and soul to the production of that wonderful series of plays which have made the Abbey Theatre in Dublin known all over the world as an example for those who wish to represent and cultivate the national spirit and art in drama, in a natural, healthy way.

In the days of the revival of Irish Literature and Art it was a happy fortune that brought together such a group of play-writers and of players who could do justice to their cause. They have had many imitators, amongst whom may be mentioned the Ulster Players, and the Scottish Players, who have both achieved no mean success in representing the pathos and humour combined, native to their own people. And now we have the Art League of Service, who have instituted a company who travel with all their simple stage properties in a caravan, from village to village throughout the land, seeking to awaken and foster a taste for true art and healthy sentiment, by presenting a varied programme of short sketches full of elusive charm and humour which elicit everywhere immediate response and ensure crowded houses.

Our friend and neighbour, Mr Leith Hay, of Leith Hall, has already shown

what can be done in this direction by a number of plays reflecting various phases of Aberdeenshire humour, whereby also local talent, which might otherwise have remained latent, has been evolved and practised with much success.

CHAPTER XII

A FOG: THE GREAT BELL: THE PRINCESS

On a certain morning in the month of December 1878 there was a dense fog in London.

I had occasion on that day to visit the home of my childhood, on the border of Greenwich Park; and, accordingly, in order to reach Charing Cross Station, I started from Grosvenor Square in a hansom cab. Caution was essential; and when we reached the north-east corner of Berkeley Square, where the wider space from the pavement lamps made the obscurity still more deep, I thought it prudent to step out of the cab—there was no need to call a halt, as we were moving only at a foot's-pace—and to walk beside it, towards Piccadilly. There the light from the shop windows, combined with that of the street lamps, made progress more easy, and in time I reached Charing Cross. The trains (or some of them) were running, though slowly, and with the aid of fog signals, etc.; and eventually I arrived at Greenwich, which was at that time the terminus of the branch.

Here the fog still prevailed, but being perfectly familiar with the surroundings, I had little difficulty in finding my way. I decided to proceed by Groom's Hill, one of the three modes of ascent to the celebrated plateau of Blackheath (the golf course of which is far the oldest in England, having been established by King James I. (VI. of Scotland)). On the way up the fog became less and less dense, until, on reaching the summit, I found myself in a flood of glorious sunshine—without a cloud visible in the whole blue firmament above.

I entered the Park by the wicket-gate near the top of the hill, leading to a spot called "the Point," from where, in ordinary circumstances, a wonderful view of the metropolis is obtained.

I remember seeing somewhere a most vivid and graphic description of this view; and I have an impression that it may have emanated from the pen of Charles Dickens. Grateful indeed would I be if any expert Dickensian would verify this surmise. And certainly nothing could be more probable than that Dickens, during any of his long walks from London to Eltham, should have diverged from the dusty main road—so pathetically traversed by David Copperfield when tramping to Dover—and, entering the Park by the above-mentioned gateway, should have walked through its cool and refreshing glades, regaining the public road at the farther end, towards Shooter's Hill.

But on the day now described, there was no view of the great City; but instead, a vast expanse—not of murky yellow fog, but of pure white fleecy cloud, forming a sort of silver sea, apparently of boundless extent. The effect, especially as a contrast to the previous experience, was entrancing, and the surrounding stillness was complete, except that one could hear the subdued rumble and rattle of unseen trains, the sound coming up mysteriously through the intervening veil.

But, all at once, the silence of the upper range was broken by the sound of a bell, evidently far away, but yet the deep and rich tone seemed to reach and to pervade the surrounding air, in a manner most impressive and moving, and never to be forgotten. I knew not whence it came, but one felt instinctively that these solemn tones were conveying the tidings of an event of national concern and recalled the words which occur in one of Hans Andersen's exquisite fairy tales, named "The Bell," which concludes thus: "*And above them tolled the holy invisible Bell.*"

What I heard in Greenwich Park, was the great bell of St Paul's, which is tolled only on the occasion of the death of a member of the Royal Family, and this time it was for the passing of one greatly beloved—the late Princess Alice—who died on the 14th December 1878.

The British people had a special fondness and admiration for the Princess; and no wonder, for she had much personal charm, combined with a beautiful, unselfish disposition. Well do I remember the first and practically the only time when I saw her—sixty-seven years ago. It was during a brief visit with which Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort honoured my grandfather (the fourth Earl of Aberdeen) at Haddo, in October 1857. We children lost our hearts entirely to Princess Alice; and in so doing only reflected—by a sort of anticipation—the feelings of the general public who followed with eager interest all details concerning the engagement of the Princess at an early age to Prince Louis of Hesse, her marriage and the story of her many beneficent activities in her new home.

The tragic death of one of her little sons, caused by his falling out of the window of the Princess's room whilst her attention was momentarily diverted from him, created a fresh wave of popular sympathy, and the touching circumstances of her final illness were such as naturally took hold of the public mind. For it will be remembered that all Princess Alice's children and her husband were simultaneously laid low with the fell disease of diphtheria, and that was before the days of antitoxin, and the doctors only consented to her remaining in attendance on her family on condition that she did not come into close proximity with them or kiss them.

But when the youngest little girl died, her elder brother, still only in the early stages of convalescence, was so overcome with grief that his mother forgot all caution and endeavouring to comfort him, embraced him, with the result that she herself succumbed to the infection.

During those last days when hope and fear alternated, whilst everything that human love and medical skill was being done to save the much loved Princess, the people of her own country, as well as those in the land of her adoption, awaited with tense anxiety the publication of every bulletin reporting the condition of the patient, thus recalling the scenes witnessed at the time of King Edward's alarming illness when Prince of Wales, in 1870.

And so the news brought by the tolling of the great bell which I heard under such impressive surroundings, came to a people who listened to the tidings thus brought to them, in hushed and awed grief, and who showed by many spontaneous manifestations how the whole nation entered heart and soul into this fresh sorrow which had come to their widowed Queen in thus losing so loved and gifted a daughter who had indeed won "A PEOPLE'S BENEDICTION"—the words which concluded some striking lines in the first Marquis of Dufferin and Ava's Rectorial Address at St Andrews.

CHAPTER XIII

A GHOST STORY

One evening, at a country house, where a party of friends were staying, the hostess was informed that a gentleman had arrived and was waiting in the hall.

On going thither the hostess found her acquaintance. "Oh, Mr ——, how-do-you-do? I didn't know that you were in this part of the world."

"Didn't you get a letter from me?"

"No, it must surely have gone astray."

"Well," said the newcomer, "I just wrote to say that I would be passing quite near and I wondered if you could kindly put me up for the night."

"Well," said the lady, "we're pretty well filled up; but—yes—I think we can manage. Yes, I'm sure we can, and now come along in and have some supper, I'm sure you must be hungry after your journey."

After the meal, the hostess said, "Now, I'll show you your room." But before reaching the room she added, "It's rather curious, but some time after we had taken this house we were told that one of the rooms was supposed to be haunted: that was what the people round about said. Of course the particular room is mentioned, and somehow we have got into the way of not using it, but I am afraid that's the only room available for you to-night; but I hope you are not superstitious and that you won't mind?"

"Oh, well—no—" said the visitor, "I'm not fanciful about things of that sort; and I expect it will be all right."

"Ah," said the hostess, "I'm so glad you feel like that, and I was sure you would be sensible about it, and now here's the room, and I hope you will sleep well and have pleasant dreams. Good night!"

Left alone, the occupant surveyed the room and thought: "Well, it's rather a gaunt sort of place, and a bit chilly: doesn't seem to have been much used either, but of course Mrs —— explained about that; but how queer that such stories should be kept up. Well, one never knows, and I'm rather glad I've got my small revolver in my bag, and if there's any humbug on foot I'll be prepared."

He got to bed and slept, but not very restfully, and after a time he awoke. The dim light of early dawn was just beginning, but not enough to make

anything in the room clearly visible. The man felt chilly, and then, suddenly, he perceived the appearance of a hand upright at the foot of the bed. Not a sound—not a movement—and the vision seemed uncanny.

Then, very quietly, he reached for his weapon, cocked it, and said, aloud, “Now, I’m no coward, but, if that hand is not removed when I count three, I shall fire. One—two—*three*”—*bang*. “OH!!”

And ever since that night one of the toes of that man’s right foot has been missing.

CHAPTER XIV

TRAVELLERS' TALES

If there is any experience in life which requires a sense of humour more than another, in order to obtain its full benefit, it is surely that of travel.

With a sense of humour, mistakes, delays, unexpected happenings, and even uncongenial companions provide endless materials for enjoyment to the merry heart, without which any untoward incident becomes a grievance to the traveller who resents anything which upsets his programme.

So if those devoid of this saving grace were to ask advice as to undertaking a projected tour, one would be disposed to give advice equivalent to that which was proffered to myself once, when having a short time to spare before crossing the Channel from Dover I asked a chemist if he knew of any remedy for seasickness. "Yes," he replied: "there is one recommended by an old sea captain as the only cure with which he was acquainted." "Indeed," said I, putting my hand in my pocket with the intention of purchasing, if possible, so desirable a commodity. "What is it?" Answer: "Remain on dry land."

Lady Aberdeen and I have had the opportunity of travelling in many parts of the world, both in an official and in a private capacity, and have derived a vast amount of enjoyment out of experiences and scenes which are still vividly recalled: and perhaps a few specimens may not be out of place in this book.

A RIDE UP THE KHYBER PASS

In January 1887 we found ourselves enjoying the genial hospitality of Colonel Waterfield, the resident Commissioner at Peshawar, an attractive-looking place lying as it were in a saucer with high snow ranges all round.

Accompanying us were Captain John Sinclair (afterwards Lord Pentland) and our cousin Ally Gordon, now Lt.-Gen. Sir A. Hamilton-Gordon, K.C.B. We were very anxious to see the celebrated Khyber Pass—that far-famed wild and rocky defile, which during 2000 years must have been traversed by innumerable armed bands, bent on conquest or plunder, as well as by a constant stream of merchandise caravans. But the officials were disposed to shake their heads over the project. The country around was still in a somewhat disturbed state owing to some blood feud troubles being somewhat active amongst the Pathans and Afghans in the neighbourhood; and two young officers who had recently taken an imprudent evening walk outside Peshawar

had been murdered. Moreover, no women had been allowed as yet to ride up the Pass except H.R.H. the Duchess of Connaught.

However, we were able to enlist Colonel Waterfield's sympathies in our project and he was not one to be easily thwarted.

The only day of the week on which this expedition could be safely accomplished would be the following Friday because that was the day when the caravans passed through, and for their protection and that of other travellers on that day picquets were always posted at intervals along the heights from which they could command the road.

On Thursday I asked the Colonel if he had been able to arrange about the horses. He said he hoped it would be all right; but during dinner he was decidedly pensive. Of course, we discreetly abstained from any further questions. Next morning all was serene, however, and the Colonel's carriage was there with a pair of sturdy artillery horses with a gunner as postilion, and off we went.

By and by we came to a rather wide river which had to be forded. Without hesitation our gunner entered the river at the trot and was continuing at that pace. The carriage began to bounce up and down in a manner which was decidedly exhilarating but the Colonel very soon shouted out, "Hi! Ho! Halt! Walk! You will break the springs of my carriage." The gunner complied and we got through without mishap and at Jumrood found the horses prepared for our ride. Lady A.'s mount was Mrs Waterfield's thoroughbred mare "Tasmania," kindly lent for the occasion, and most delightful to ride. My steed was a dark bay belonging, as I afterwards learned, to the Bengal Lancers. To this day I recall the joy of riding that animal, so thoroughly trained and with perfect paces.

As we proceeded up the Pass I noticed that Colonel Waterfield seemed to be acknowledging salutes though there were no soldiers along the track. However, on looking up I perceived on various precipitous ledges of rock on the steep sides of the gorge, groups of uniformed Afridi soldiers who were presenting arms, and this striking sight was repeated time and again; and after a while we met a caravan coming down the valley. The aspect of this procession was indeed impressive and it seemed to have a pervading air of mystery. Not a sound was heard except that of the hoofs on the gravelly track, for the men who were in charge were as silent as the animals. There was a kind of strange resemblance in the expression of both, a sort of look implying that they could tell of wondrous things, but which nothing could induce them to utter. The expression of the dromedaries is especially remembered, very grim, but indicating at the same time a kind of sardonic humour. Altogether it was a

sight never seen before, never since, and never forgotten.

The road up to Ali Musjid was in quite good repair and we had a good gallop up a great part of the way, with our clattering escort of Bengal Lancers—a very fine looking body of men—splendidly mounted and looking very picturesque, with the sun flashing on their weapons, which they kept very much *en évidence*, Colonel Waterfield and an A.D.C. also carrying pistols in their hands.

We rode on as far as Ali Musjid, the farthest point guarded at that time by the “Khyber Levies,” and then returned by the way we came; and so ended this red-letter day.

On the following afternoon, we bade farewell to our most agreeable host and his pleasant home. He came to the station to see us off, and then, and then only, he divulged the meaning of the appearance of doubt as to securing horses for his carriage, and of the subsequent attainment—namely this: It was quite recognised that on any special occasion the commissioner could apply to the General in Command of the North-West district for the loan of horses for the use of British officials or ex-official visitors. But when the application was made on this occasion, the General replied that he regretted that on the date named there was to be a field day, for which all the horses would be required. Of course this did not suit Colonel Waterfield’s plan—and after deliberation, he decided to send a telegram to Lord William Beresford, the Viceroy’s Master of the Horse, at Calcutta—fifteen hundred miles away—asking for his intervention. And it was doubtless during the interval between the despatch of the telegram and the receipt of the reply that the aspect of pensiveness (already mentioned) was observable on the part of our host.

At Peshawar at that time there was a medical missionary who held a unique position amongst the surrounding native tribes. He had a dispensary where he was ready to treat all who came, whether suffering from disease or wounds, without asking any questions, and moreover he also kept a sort of guest-house open for those who came into Peshawar to attend fairs and markets, and where the attendants of the caravans were also welcome.

He had, therefore, secured the confidence of those unruly tribes in no ordinary degree, and would go in and out amongst them unharmed, although the officials always expected to hear of his coming to grief. The confidence felt in him, was, however, sorely tested when he was heard to assert that it was possible to speak to a person hundreds of miles away and to hear him reply. The doubters said this was too much, and showed he could not be trusted. He had to take drastic measures to restore trust and he asked the natives to select three of their number who had personal friends at Agra or Delhi to come with

him to the telephone station which was then being installed and to ask some questions of their own framing and to see if they would get an answer. When the reply really came through and they heard it themselves, they were thunderstruck and awed, and the missionary's influence became more firmly established than ever.

AN INDIAN OFFICER'S DEVOTION

At Roorkee, where we had a most interesting inspection of the wonderful engineering work in connection with the Ganges Canal, we took a ride down the stream on inflated deer-skins propelled by natives paddling with their feet. There we met Colonel Blood^[1] in command of the very smart native sapper force, which, at his request, I had the honour of inspecting, and on that occasion I heard a story concerning Colonel Blood which well deserves repeating.

He took a leading part in the Afghan Campaign, during which he had a most touching and significant experience. One evening, in a large room where various people were assembled, he, with three friends, was engaged in a game of whist. Suddenly a fusillade was opened upon them. There was a general stampede for shelter; the whist party, however, doubtless by soldierly instinct, did not hurry away; and after a moment or two the Colonel, looking round, observed that a native officer, who was attached to his regiment, had silently posted himself exactly between Colonel Blood and the direction whence the firing came.

A SCENE DURING THE CELEBRATION OF QUEEN VICTORIA'S JUBILEE, AT CALCUTTA, IN 1887

Because of the climate, Queen Victoria's Jubilee was celebrated in India in February, instead of during the summer, and we had the good fortune of being Lord and Lady Dufferin's guests on that occasion.

The great Review, the wonderful Durbar and presentation of addresses in the Maidan, attended by crowds of Princes and Chiefs in gorgeous apparel, the evening receptions and balls were all magnificent ceremonies and festivities to be remembered.

But to us the most impressive and memorable feature of the whole week's procedure was the illumination of Calcutta, on February 17th. During the afternoon we rode with Lord Dufferin to an official function. On our way home twilight was already softly falling; and then in various directions star-like lights began to twinkle, and presently the whole city, as if by magic, was undergoing an extraordinary transformation. In every direction the tiny stars appeared in myriads, and not only so, but stately buildings, traced by their

lights, seemed to arise into view, where none had been observed before dusk.

It transpired that this effect was no mere accident, but had been carefully prearranged by the Viceroy. The city already possessed many fine buildings; but others were proposed and designed, on the principles of the now familiar science of town-planning; and it was Lord Dufferin's idea to indicate, by means of numerous small lamps, arranged on slender temporary spars, etc., the outline of fine buildings, which it was hoped would some day take actual shape.

Later in the evening, when the whole scheme of illumination was completed, we all drove in procession through the city, to view the effect in all its aspects, and a marvellous sight it was. Wherever there were columns, these were swathed with twined wreaths of little lamps, with charming effect. Of all the illuminated buildings, perhaps the museum was the most striking.

The reception accorded to the Viceroy was everywhere enthusiastic.

Afterwards, when the whole scene was being discussed, Lord Dufferin remarked that its eminent success, both in comprehensiveness and in detail, was no doubt largely due to the fact that its carrying out was very much in accord with the native genius and instinct.

REMEMBRANCES OF A VISIT TO AUSTRALIA IN 1887

Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, will always be happily associated in our minds, not only with its own attractions, but with the happy feelings of relief experienced on landing there after a stormy voyage from Ceylon.

The Governor of South Australia at that time—the late Sir William Robinson—was not at that season living in Government House, but in a villa at the pleasant seaside resort, Glenelg, where he hospitably received us.

During our brief stay at Adelaide, we met many interesting people, including notably the late Bishop Kennion; Miss Spence, a lady of much ability, and widely recognised as an authority on education; also the late Chief Justice Way, who gave Lady Aberdeen a pair of those quaint birds, the laughing jackasses, which for many years proved an attraction at our Dollis Hill home, near London.

On the day after our arrival, the Governor took us for a call on a prominent and much esteemed member of the community—Sir William Milne—at his attractive place, Mount Lofty, in the hill country. The trip was made by special train, with a drive of seven miles from the nearest station.

I had observed that the Governor, when alluding to Sir William Milne,

pronounced the name, not in the usual Scottish style, which ignores the “n,” but with that letter prominently sounded. This led me in an unguarded moment to remark that in Scotland the name was pronounced as if it were spelt “Mill.” The Governor said nothing at the time, but the moment we arrived at our destination, and were met by the host, a fine looking elderly man, he (the Governor) exclaimed: “Sir William, Lord Aberdeen tells me that I pronounce your name wrongly.” This was rather an awkward introduction, and Sir William, who had doubtless become completely accustomed to hearing his name always pronounced in the non-Scottish fashion, evidently did not relish what doubtless appeared to him to have been some sort of criticism or chaff, on my part—and my reception seemed to be somewhat cold.

It was a reminder and a warning as to the sensitiveness of most people, even though Scottish, about their surnames. I remember, for instance, how, during a visit to an English city, I had occasion, at a meeting, to allude—appreciatively—to an excellent and much-liked Presbyterian minister—a Mr Menzies.

I had already observed that the members of his congregation and other friends always pronounced his name exactly as spelt; and so I remarked that I could not readily bring my Scottish tongue to pronounce my fellow-countryman’s name otherwise than as in our native land. This mild would-be pleasantry was evidently appreciated by none, and least of all by the bearer of the name: but our English friends cannot reasonably make fun of the quaint pronunciation (or the quaint spelling) of some Scottish names of persons or places, when there are such peculiar specimens in England as Cirencester (Cissister); Pontefract (Pomphret); and Belvoir (Beaver).

These most often have formed pitfalls for the uninitiated: and one recalls the well-worn old joke about an American, who had spent some time in England, on returning to his own country, remarking to a friend that many English names were pronounced in a strange manner: “For instance,” he said, “how do you think they pronounce a name spelt Cholmondeley?” “I certainly don’t know,” replied his friend. “Well,” said the other, “they call it Marchbanks!”^[2]

Notwithstanding the above little contretemps, the visit to Sir William Milne’s hillside home with its charming view, was much enjoyed.

Soon we were again on the railway, a striking example of bold engineering, with spider-like viaducts and sharp curves, and it was probably this or some similar line that suggested the quaint legend, that once a new engine-driver, when the train was on a curve, suddenly thought he descried a couple of red lights ahead and at once pulled up. The guard came along from

the rear of the train, and asked, "What's wrong?" "Danger lights ahead," replied the driver. "Why, you stupid," said the guard, "that's the tail lamps of our own train!"

When leaving Adelaide on the afternoon of March 29, 1887, we had an unexpected and interesting experience.

The morning had been rather much filled up, for it included an inspection of police: visits to the model school, the Y.M.C.A., and the Botanic Gardens: than a luncheon, given by the acting Premier—the Hon. J. C. Brady. Subsequently the University was visited, under the guidance of the Chancellor (Chief Justice Way), and family: the Town Hall, where we were met by the Mayor, and introduced to the Aldermen and members of the Council.

Of course, all, or nearly all, these functions involved "a few words": so there was not much margin of time when we arrived at the station for departure; but it was here that a surprise awaited us, namely, a gathering of about 2000 people having assembled. It then transpired that an address was to be presented on behalf of the Irish residents in Adelaide and the district, and others had joined the assembly in a friendly way.

I allude to this incident somewhat fully, partly because it was the first of a succession of similar manifestations which occurred throughout the remainder of our journey round the world, at various places where we happened to make any stay. We received also, and of course with much appreciation, various tokens of welcome, etc., from other sources, including many from our Scottish compatriots; but the Irish demonstrations had obviously a special significance which may possess at least a retrospective interest even now.

It should be borne in mind that the people who took the trouble to organise and attend these manifestations, which were carried out with every sign of warmth and sincerity, had no conceivable motive of self-interest. They were prompted solely by the desire for the attainment of the aspirations of their fellow-countrymen in the homeland, coupled with the conviction that this attainment would be for the benefit of all concerned. And, further, there was a generous desire to express appreciation and goodwill towards persons who were in sympathy with the movement, and who desired to do what they could in forwarding its fulfilment; and therefore it may be allowable to quote a few words from the Adelaide Address, which indicated this aspect of the matter, and which also were typical of the sentiments expressed in subsequent declarations elsewhere.

The Address began thus: "As Irishmen enjoying the advantages of Colonial Constitutional Government, we welcome you to South Australia, recalling as

we do with grateful enthusiasm the cordial sympathy which existed between you and our kindred at home during your recent official career as Viceroy of Ireland.” (Then followed an allusion to historic scenes on the occasion of our departure from Dublin, and also to the disappointment caused by the rejection of the Home Rule Bill, and the Address then proceeded.) “Owing to the efforts of a great Englishman, the vista of a happier future is opening out before the thoughtful gaze of all who wish for a just and liberal policy, and throughout the conflict for reform of Irish Government we look forward with confidence to the day when the note of conciliation will be caught up and re-echoed by a united British majority.”

The gentleman who handed over the Address—Mr P. Whelan—added a few cordial words, concluding with an apology for the fact that the Address was not illuminated, but intimated that another copy in that style would be forwarded to reach us at Sydney.

Another feature common to the various similar manifestations was their complete spontaneity. There was evidently no previous galvanising of interest, and no occasion for such, and the Adelaide procedure was typical of this as there had obviously been no time for more than very hasty preparation.

In order to finish off this representative episode, it may be convenient, even at the risk of seeming egotistical, to quote a portion of the reply (obviously of an impromptu sort) to the above-mentioned Address—as it too was more or less typical of what was said on subsequent occasions, though, of course, it sometimes seemed appropriate, and was expected, that the subject should be dealt with more fully.

After alluding to the representative and spontaneous character of the proceedings and the generous readiness of Irish people to recognise any honest efforts for their welfare: “I join with you in hoping that the difficult problem of dealing with Irish affairs will be speedily and satisfactorily settled in a practical way by a large British majority. Such a majority can only be attained by a persevering and patient adherence to those principles which you and I believe are calculated to promote the good of Ireland, and by such an exhibition of moderation and firmness on the part of individual representatives as shall entitle them to the respect and confidence of the Irish community as a whole, whether in Ireland or in Australia and elsewhere. I again thank you for the very kindly greeting you have given to us.” (Loud cheers.)

Our next halt was at Ballarat, the celebrated gold mining centre, when, even at that time, most of the alluvial gold-fields had been almost worked out, so that the industry was mainly in the form of mines in which gold is obtained by crushing reefs of quartz rock.

We were taken down one of the mines (the Albion)—1300 feet—and a very interesting trip it was, and there was a good deal of fun about the quaint garb in which we were all rigged out for the descent. Later in the day there was a large deputation of Irish residents and their friends with an Address of Welcome and, better still, a valuable token in the shape of a handsome gold nugget, exactly in the form in which it was originally found. Since then it has always had an honoured resting-place on our drawing-room table.

At the station, when we departed, there was a demonstration and then we came on to the great city of Melbourne. No wonder the citizens are proud of their city. On arrival at 10.30 P.M. we found a large crowd, but without delay we drove to Government House to be the guests of the Governor and his wife. Who having once seen Sir Henry and Lady Loch could ever forget them? And in their case the proverb, “Handsome is that handsome does,” was fulfilled both ways.

On the day after our arrival there was an expedition which, for me, was one of the most interesting of a lifetime. This was an official excursion to inspect the new and almost completed Yan Yean Works for the water supply for the city of Melbourne. Even apart from the remarkable engineering features of the whole scheme, the experience of spending a night “in the Bush” was quite enough to make the affair memorable.

The party consisted of the Governor and several members of the Victorian Government, including Mr Nimmo, the Minister of Public Works. The first part of the trip was made in carriages, and then when we got into the heights, by riding, excellent mounts being provided.

We passed through many picturesque bits, especially a ravine called “Jack’s Gulley,” where there were many magnificent tree ferns. The camping ground was by the Wellaby Creek, and the evening spent there is most vividly remembered. After supper we gathered round an immense bonfire. It was formed of huge logs built up in regular order, to the height of eight or nine feet, and it continued to burn brightly and steadily. Songs and recitations were the procedure, and here again there is one outstanding remembrance.

Mr Nimmo, a typical elderly Scot, was said to have learned how to recite some of the poems of Burns, from his grandfather, who, in turn, had received instruction from the illustrious Bard himself. So, of course, Mr Nimmo was called upon. And there he stood, a picturesque figure in the glow of the fire, wearing appropriately a “Tam-o’-Shanter,” and proceeded to recite the celebrated piece which bears that title. It was admirably rendered, and without any tendency to that exaggeration in delivery which may sometimes be met

with. And so, by and by, those ancient woods echoed to the sound of a voice uttering in tones loud and clear, the exclamation, "*Weel dune, Cutty Sark!*"

Next morning enjoyment was not the chief sensation, for there was a thick mist and no fire. However, the exhilaration of riding had effect, and soon the sun shone and all went well. During the forenoon Mr W. Anderson, the superintending engineer of the works, pointed out a tree, standing on the exact apex of the range (about 2600 feet above sea-level) so that rain falling on one side of the tree would naturally find its way to the Murray River, and that on the other side of the tree to the Yarra, but the collecting aqueducts were so arranged as to carry the water of both sides of the "divide" to the main reservoir, which, by the way, occupied an area of about 1200 acres.

During the remainder of our stay at Melbourne, there were various interesting and pleasant experiences, including a visit to Ormond College, an excellent institution, established by the munificence of Mr Francis Ormond, in connection with the Presbyterian Church, but open to students of any creed.

There was also a large and enthusiastic meeting for the presentation of an Address on behalf of Irish residents.

Our next experience was a delightful visit to our valued friends—Sir Robert and Lady Hamilton—at Government House, Hobart. Sir Robert had been sent out to Tasmania after the incoming of the Conservative Government after the defeat of Mr Gladstone's Home Rule Bill. It was an open secret that Sir Robert had had much to do with the drafting of that Bill and it was but natural that it should be thought well to relegate so able an exponent of Home Rule policy to the other side of the world.

He, however, ably abetted by Lady Hamilton, characteristically entered thoroughly into the interests of the people of Tasmania and the development of its industries.

The sail up the river to Launceston is delightful after the rough crossing on a mosquito-infected boat from Melbourne, and our reception at Launceston by Sir Lambert Dobson, the Chief Justice, and a number of leading men, was cordial in the extreme.

We found there were a Jerusalem and a Jericho in Tasmania, and we visited beautiful gardens, cheese factories, and many institutions as well as witnessing a review and sham fight.

We were extremely well treated by the townsfolk of Hobart where, in addition to addresses, a number of Scottish and Irish ladies combined in presenting us with tokens in the shape of furs, including a splendid brown

opossum rug, which continues to this day in perfect condition.

Before proceeding to our next objective, Sydney, New South Wales, I had an opportunity of visiting one of the large sheep farm stations, for which Australia is famous; and, accordingly, while Lady Aberdeen remained for a few days longer with our friends at Hobart, I returned to Melbourne, in order to go from there to Albury, the nearest railway station for access to the chief farm of Table Top, and as the distance was considerable, I decided to put up for the night at Albury Station.

I am alluding to this small episode because it unexpectedly furnished an example, in rather amusing shape, of that spontaneity, already mentioned, in regard to manifestation of welcome, etc. Having already had a somewhat ample experience of their gratifying demonstrations and with more in prospect, it occurred to me that in order to secure a place of quietude and privacy, I should proceed warily, and, therefore, instead of applying for access at the Albany Hotel by telegram in the ordinary way, I instructed my servant to do so, using his name, and merely mentioning that rooms were required for a visitor and his manservant.

Having taken this precaution, I travelled comfortably in the compartment which had been obligingly reserved, and doubtless enjoyed a nap or two, but, fortunately, I was awake when the train slowed down for Albury, where we were due at 11 P.M. While gathering together the usual small articles, I congratulated myself on the prospect of arriving in peace and without publicity, when suddenly, "Hark! 'tis beat of drum, 'tis blare of trumpet!"

In an instant I guess, or rather know, all, and resign myself to the inevitable; bidding farewell to dreams of incognito, so that when a moment later the train stops, and the Mayor enters, introducing first himself, and then a group of leading citizens, everything is accepted as if it had been arranged and fixed many days previously. We march down the platform to the station entrance, where there is a brake drawn by four horses; into this conveyance we enter, *i.e.*, four or five on the box-seat, any number inside, and others standing on the step, and then, following the Band, who are playing us into the town, we proceed to the hotel, where a short speech has to be made from the balcony, after which light refreshments are served inside, with toasts, etc.

Next morning the town and inhabitants were visited, and in the afternoon, in company with a group of citizens, there was a drive to the sheep-farming station—a very interesting and pleasant excursion.

It transpired that the discovery of my intended visit the previous evening was due to the fact that a district superintendent of the railway at Melbourne,

through whom a compartment had been engaged, happened to telegraph to Albury that I was on the evening train. This, of course, brings out the rapidity with which the welcome was arranged.

When our party re-united, we proceeded to Sydney, to be guests at Government House. All friends of Lord and Lady Lincolnshire (and that means a multitude) would know without being told, that his régime, as Governor of New South Wales, with the constant and winning aid of Lady Lincolnshire, was bound to be popular and distinguished.

There was, of course, a great deal to see and hear during our stay at Sydney, as to which no detailed description can be given here, but special allusion must be made to a very interesting personality, namely, that of Sir Henry Parkes, who was, for many years, the leading figure in the public life of the "Colony," and he was several times the Prime Minister thereof.

He was certainly a striking example of the "self-made" man, having begun life as a working lad in Warwickshire with very little education; but by indomitable energy and perseverance, he overcame this drawback.

Nevertheless, those who only met him in a casual way during his frequent visits to England, would probably have been surprised to learn that not only had he reached a position of great influence as a statesman, but also that he was in no small degree a man of literary attainment, especially in the line of poetry; for it is said that a volume of verse composed by him received the commendation of no less an authority than Lord Tennyson. Perhaps any surprise regarding this literary quality would have been due to the fact that he never quite got rid of the tendency to misplace that tiresome little aspirate which is apt to shift its position in an inconvenient manner.

I remember, for instance, during a conversation with him regarding a controversy in which he happened to be engaged, I remarked that his opponents did not seem to know very much about the subject of discussion; to which he assented, by saying, "Nothing what-ever."

He was a strong believer in the union of the different portions of Australia, and laboured so indefatigably for this object that, although he did not live to see its consummation, he has been, no doubt justly, described as the father of the Australian Federation.

Sir Henry was one in whom perhaps the *fortiter in re* was more to the front than the *suaviter in modo*. But though he often evoked strong opposition, he was regarded with widespread respect—all the more deserved because, notwithstanding his great ability, he was usually short of money, and sad to say, died absolutely poor.

We had a very pleasant time in New South Wales, under the thoughtful care of Lord and Lady Lincolnshire, making new friends with whom we have kept in touch ever since, and meeting many old country friends too, also paying a visit to the famed Blue Mountains, where Lady Aberdeen had an exciting experience whilst I was away inspecting the remarkable zig-zag railway by which the steep slopes of Mount Victoria are overcome.

She had gone out for a walk with Captain Sinclair, and was busily engaged making a sketch of the Orphan Rock and the Three Witches' Peaks, when one of the heavy mountain fogs common in that district came down suddenly, making the return to the hotel a matter of serious difficulty. After some groping about the only course open appeared to be to remain stationary until the fog should lift. After a long wait it cleared slightly when Lady Aberdeen found herself sitting almost at the edge of a steep precipice, over which she would inevitably have fallen had she taken a few further steps.

A NEW ZEALAND OFFER OF MARRIAGE

It was in Auckland that Lady A. received an unexpected offer of marriage. It happened thus:

Wishing to make the most of the time available after arrival before the usual functions began, she took a little tour of exploration through the town alone, while I was occupied with interviews at the hotel. After inspecting the outside of various places of resort, Lady A. eventually found herself at the substantial barracks of the Salvation Army. The main part of the corps were engaged in a march round the town, preparatory to the evening meeting.

Pending their return one of the officers was in attendance at the entrance to the building. He was a pleasant-looking, middle-aged man; and after Lady A. had asked a few general questions, a conversation ensued. After a while the S.A. officer began to describe his own position, namely, that of a market gardener, with a comfortable little house in the outskirts of the town, and doing well in his business, with a good balance at the bank; and then, having asked if his new acquaintance was a stranger in Auckland, and learned that she had only arrived in the morning of that day, he took time by the forelock and made the matrimonial proposal, promising to return to England and settle down in Sussex if this were desired.

Lady A. could not resist allowing the proposition to proceed thus far, but now felt it necessary to explain that (to adapt, though in an opposite sense, the words of the Scottish Bard) she already had "a husband and bairnies four." Her worthy acquaintance showed incredulity. However, Lady A. assured him that if he would come to the Town Hall on the following day, she would introduce

him to her husband. And so the episode ended, for we never heard if the good man turned up at the hall (where sundry addresses of welcome were delivered) next day to test the veracity of the newcomer's statement.

THE "BROTHER OF THE QUEEN"

This was the designation which we found had been attached to the ex-Viceroy of Ireland by the Maoris when we reached the King Country in the interior of New Zealand, near the famous Pink Terraces which had been destroyed by a volcanic eruption shortly before our visit.

And so a deputation of chief men came to explain sundry grievances which they wished to lay before the Queen.

It was in vain that we explained that their only course was to approach the Government.

They arranged an elaborate ceremony at which some twenty or thirty sat round a long table and in turn made a speech, sang a song, or presented us with feathers of the precious "huia" bird, greenstone ornaments, peacocks' feathers and the like.

They seemed kindly folk and were much pleased by being invited to take refreshments, and drank the Queen's health.

A VISIT TO TWO AMERICAN CATTLE RANCHES

On our way home across the United States from Australia Lady Aberdeen wished to visit her two brothers who were then living on their respective ranches in Texas and Dakota, which proved, however, to be a rather trying experience, owing to the extreme heat of the American summer, with the thermometer ranging between 80° and 90°. Nevertheless, the trip provided us with many amusing and novel experiences, including the celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee at Denver, where American citizens vied with the British residents of the city in celebrating the occasion with all possible cordiality and enthusiasm.

From Denver we proceeded to Kansas City, where we were hospitably entertained by friends of my brother-in-law, who treated us to a specially prepared delicacy in the shape of a dish of frogs' legs, which we then partook of for the first time and which we thought had a strong resemblance to very tender young chickens.

Our objective, the "Rocking Chair Ranch" (situated in the Panhandle district of Texas and run by a kind of family syndicate, Archie Marjoribanks and Mr Drew being co-managers), proved rather difficult of access, being

some hundred miles distant from the nearest railway station. However, the railway authorities undertook to send us on thirty miles beyond the end of the railway in what was termed a construction car on which our fellow-passengers were all either cow-boys or railway navvies, who treated us with a pleasing rough courtesy, seeing we could only be looked on as intruders. It was amusing to see two or three of our companions who were provided with guns, hop off the car at intervals, shoot one or two rabbits or chipmunks, and jump on again.

During the latter part of the railway phase, there were frequently tremendous jerks and jolts. During a talk with the conductor I alluded to this feature, on which he said, "Oh, we don't think much of that sort; I've seen that safe" (pointing to a very solid specimen) "chucked through the door at the end of the car."

Towards evening we stopped at Woodward Station for a meal placed on an improvised sort of table on the platform, where also a basin of water was placed at one end for ablutions.

There was some difficulty about opening a bottle of beverage, but the conductor offered assist, and I handed to him my knife with various fittings and the desired result was quickly secured, and everybody had a sip: but I am afraid the conductor in a moment of absent-mindedness must have allowed my knife to slip into his pocket, for I didn't see it again. I should have mentioned that the weather during the day had been exceedingly hot—about 95° in the cars—so that the halt and refreshments had been very welcome.

We reached the end of the track about midnight. Here we were met by my brother-in-law who had made all arrangements compatible with the circumstances. He and I had beds in a huge tent where there were scores of other men, but Lady A. was to have accommodation in a car with another lady. So, in due course, she was conducted to what was, in fact, an ordinary car, such as, in England, would be described as a covered goods waggon.

It then transpired that there was not only a hostess, but a host, in the shape of the lady's husband, who was the store-keeper of the construction train, and he it was that admitted Lady A. into the car; and she never saw the wife until the following morning. This was perturbing. However, her brother having thoughtfully provided two quilts, she placed one of these on the floor of the car and used the other as a covering. The store-keeper offered to lend her a pillow, which was declined with thanks, and he also said there was a tin utensil with water for washing in a corner.

The man returned to his bed at the other end of the car and Lady A.

“wished for the day”: and when that arrived she became aware that the wife also had been in the car, but she had retired before the arrival of the visitors.

It is only fair to explain that my brother-in-law had provided some better arrangements, at a point farther north, but we had telegraphed that we should leave Kansas City a day later than expected—and this meant that, with the rapidity of the “construction” of a pioneer prairie railroad, the extra twenty-four hours brought the “end of the track” to a still more primitive stop.

In the morning we commenced the drive of seventy miles to the ranch, in a buggy. Although the heat was great, the rarefied air prevented it from being really oppressive.

My brother-in-law was the driver, and he drove well along the track, which was sometimes all ridges, sometimes heavy sand, up and down steep little hillocks, through vast desolate prairie. Of course shirt-sleeves was the style for such conditions. But he was always very neat and natty in his arrangements, and never adopted a casual “outside” mode, and I noticed that when we were approaching Fort Elliot, where we were to stay with some friends of his, he carefully put on his coat.

This trip gave us some idea of the difficulties of ranch life, which is sometimes supposed to be a rather simple affair. For instance, we met a “bunch” of 1400 cattle being driven to market. This would involve taking them through a river called “Canadian River,” which we forded, with the guidance of two cow-boys riding ahead. The stream had a bad reputation, owing to its quicksands, which changed with every flood, and many were the stories of not only cattle and waggons, but men who had been swallowed up by the treacherous silt.

We were much pleased with the headquarters of the Ranch: everything very simple of course, but perfectly tidy, etc., and for this, too, Archie Marjoribanks’ methods were largely responsible.

Owing to an engagement at Kansas City, I had to leave a day sooner than Lady A. I was obligingly taken to the nearest railway station, seventy miles away, by Mr Drew, Archie’s senior co-manager. The conveyance was a “buckboard,” and I then learned (and made use of the knowledge at a later period) about the capabilities of that class of vehicle.

At one point of the drive we approached an ascent where the so-called road appeared to be, and indeed had become, a dry water-course. I wondered how the transit could possibly be made. But my companion merely shouted to the mules “Houp la!” and, urging them onward, we tore up the slope, bounding and bouncing over the boulders, but arriving at the top without damage to the

rig or to ourselves.

Most of the track, however, being mainly on the level and soft, was easy and comfortable enough; but between 1 and 2 A.M. I became so insufferably drowsy that I begged Mr Drew to make a halt. To this he agreed rather reluctantly.

It was a lovely, starlit, Texas summer night, and with one of the leather cushions of the buckboard as a pillow I had a most restful two hours or so of sleep. But my companion, as a good ranchman, had not been caught napping, and forced me up; and he had calculated well too, for we reached our destination, a place called Quanah, only ten minutes before the train started (7.30 A.M.) and no time for breakfast.

Here I parted from Mr Drew, and reached the next destination—Fort Worth, already quite an important place—about 4 P.M. On reaching the hotel I handed my small travelling bag (well filled with the usual odds and ends) to an attending coloured lad, but somehow the fastening gave way, and in an instant the contents were strewn all over the hall floor.

The long hot train journey, and also lack of food, had doubtless been detrimental to affability, and I let off my feelings rather emphatically, but instead of resenting this, the lad merely grinned, and said, “Now you’re a drummer, *aren’t* you?”

I had no idea then what he meant, but it was impossible to continue angry with so ingenuous looking a youth.

Of course I soon learned that “Drummer” is, in America, the semi-slang designation of “Commercial Traveller,” just as in the time of Dickens “Bagman” was the alternative description.

Remaining only one night at Fort Worth I arrived again at Kansas City, for the engagement referred to; and on the following day, Lady A. having arrived from Texas, we started for St Paul, to enable her to pay a visit to her second brother, Coutts Marjoribanks, at his ranch in M’Henry County, Dakota.

When our arrival at St Paul became known, the Irish residents decided to hold a banquet at the Hotel Ryan, and although arranged within twenty-four hours, it proved to be a really fine affair. About 300 attended and amongst these there were quite a number who occupied a prominent position in the city. The Governor of Minnesota was present, and spoke; and, above all, Bishop Ireland, soon to become and to remain for a long course of years, the revered and beloved Archbishop of St Paul.

Of course he was famed for eloquence, and his address on this occasion

was a notable piece of oratory from beginning to end.

In the course of his speech, Bishop Ireland took occasion to deal trenchantly with a sort of “Bugabee” (to use an American expression) which had been used for all it was worth in propaganda against Home Rule, whereby all Irish Americans who were described as the chief promoters of the movement were also depicted as typical, terrible ruffians.

Meanwhile, Lady Aberdeen was making the trip to her brother Coutts’s Horse Shoe Ranch in the M’Henry County, Dakota, and inspecting the pure-bred Aberdeen Angus cattle which had lately been imported from Lord Tweedmouth’s Home Farm at Guisachan, through which he hoped to do great things, especially as Mr James Hill—the railway magnate—President of St Paul and Manitoba Railway, was interested in the breed.

Mr Hill lent Lady Aberdeen his private car for the trip, which was a great comfort, in view of the excessive heat, the temperature at the ranch during her visit being 104° in the shade and 126° in the sun.

One result of this expedition was the christening of a town in Dakota by the name of Aberdeen.

The day on which Lady A. started for that trip was the 4th of July. There was the sound of tremendous cannonading throughout the day. During the evening I was conversing with a caller, in our sitting-room at the hotel, when suddenly there was a terrific explosion, as of a bomb, in front of the house. I hurried to the wide open window, to see what sort of accident had occurred, and if assistance could be given in attending any injured persons. But I could perceive nothing to cause concern. I then returned to my companion, who had not moved from his seat, and who then said: “It is a *ver-ry* large fire-cracker.”

NOTE TO PAGE 221

Since these pages reached the proof stage, it has been ascertained that the statement as to “Cholmondeley” and “Marjoribanks” (which might have been supposed to be more or less imaginary) is a matter of fact, though in a different form from that given above; for it has transpired that some years ago, when Lady Aberdeen’s cousin—Mr Dudley Marjoribanks—happened to be in a railway train in France, two French fellow-passengers—strangers to him—were discussing the difficulties of the English language. And by way of illustration, one of these passengers remarked to his companion that the name Cholmondeley (and here he gave the actual spelling) was pronounced Marchbanks. On this, Mr Dudley Marjoribanks could

not refrain from explaining to his fellow-travellers that as he happened to be a member of the Marjoribanks family he could assure them that the pronunciation was not what they had been led to suppose.

[1] General Sir Bindon Blood, G.C.B., etc., who, after serving with high distinction in many campaigns, retired from active service in the year 1907.

[2] See Note at end of chapter.

CHAPTER XV

SOME DEER-STALKING YARNS

In a volume such as this one would be naturally disposed to indulge in recalling stories drawn from personal experiences connected with golf, rowing, shooting and deer-stalking.

But as such reminiscences inevitably drift towards the garrulity of the sportsman's shop, I guard against this tendency by restricting myself to quoting briefly from narrative notes by a Highland stalker, with whom I have spent many a happy day on the hills in Inverness-shire, and a prince in his craft.

Duncan M'Lennan, for very many years head stalker, and valued friend of all members of the family circle in the old days at Guisachan, loves to recall his experiences in the deer forest with my brother-in-law—the late Lord Tweedmouth—whose prowess as an expert with the rifle and rod was well known to his contemporaries.

The following are the extracts referred to, written, as will be seen, in the language natural to a Gaelic-speaking Highlander:

“His lordship gave me a bad run one day in Corriegail.

“We left Affaric Lodge early in the morning and began at the east end of Glenfea: we went through Corrie Bervie and Corrie Culvie and came in sight of Corriegail. We began to spy, and noticed a big stag in the west end of Corriegail under a big rock. His lordship proposed to have lunch before beginning the stalk: the rocks above the stag were steep and dangerous, and there was only one narrow pass where we could get down. Before his lordship finished his lunch, the stag got up, looking towards a narrow bealach leading to Glencannich, and I noticed two vagrants^[1] coming over the hillock. I went to his lordship; he did not wait to say the grace.

“I proposed that his lordship would take the lead and run to the top of Corriegail to meet the stag; there was only the one pass where the stag could get up the rock: this pass would lead the stag into Glencannich.

“The stag was yet standing, looking at the unwelcome strangers: at last the stag began to walk up through the rock: at the same time his lordship began the race, the gillie and myself running after his lordship: he was going at an awful pace, and I thought twice of giving up the race, but by pride and bad temper I

followed him to the top. I noticed him kneeling down, and at the same time the gillie and me lay flat on the ground—at last we could see the top of the big horns. His lordship allowed the stag to come broadside—he fired at the stag running at an awful rate. He ran on for a hundred yards and rolled over dead, and then slid down about three hundred yards into Glencannich.^[2] It was a green steep slope, so the stag-horns were not spoiled.

“We were now in difficulties, as we did not know but that the shooters of Glencannich might be near us. The three of us went down, we gralloched the stag: he had a beautiful head and a heavy body. His lordship was afraid the Glencannich people might steal the head at night, so we cut the head off and sent the gillie home with it, and he killed another stag going back at the east end of Carochmore.

“Next day his lordship sent for our men to take out the big stag to the top: he weighed twenty-one stones.

“Next season his lordship came to Affaric before the deer-stalking season began; he spent the time fishing and duck-shooting. I have seen him killing nine dozen trout one day at the west end of Loch Affaric, he was a wonderful fisher.

“I got a fright about him one day, and thought he was drowned in the river at the west end of Loch Affaric. It was dreadful weather, and there was a big flood in the river; we were on the north side of the river, and he wanted to get to the south side: we could not cross the river, but he would go whatever. It was too much for a horse to ford. We had young James Miller with us and he proposed to take young James on his back to add more weight to him in the water. We were sure the two would be drowned; the water was up to his middle and the strength of the water took him a good bit down, but he managed to get to the other side.

“Another day he proposed to go to see Glomach Falls which is eight miles from Aultbeagh; he took Sandy Stewart, deer-stalker, Aultbeagh, with him—I was not with him. Glomach Falls is a dreadful wild place and the highest falls in Scotland. The river is going very rapid over the top of the falls between the two narrow rocks; on the south side right up above the falls there is growing out of the rock a rowan tree. He proposed to jump over the narrow place to put some name on the tree. No man ever ventured to jump the river above the falls and Stewart would not allow him to go. They had hot words and it near ended with a bad fight. Stewart was a big, strong man but he had to yield. He looked for a sudden death. His lordship jumped over above the falls, he got to the tree and cut some names on the tree with his stalking-knife, and the names are on the tree yet, but nobody can go where the tree is. Donald Kennedy used to say

that the water and the rocks refused to take his life. I am quite confident that he was the bravest gentleman of his day; he never used the word ‘impossible.’

“In the west side of the Pap Glen there is a narrow ridge between the top of Fraoch Corrie and the top of Cralick. It is dangerous to walk through this place—the ridge is about three hundred yards long and is quite narrow—nothing but broken rocks on the top. Looking down on each side it is quite perpendicular for half a mile below. There are only few gentlemen will have the nerve to go over this place. It was a regular pass with his lordship. I often had to crawl on my knees and stomach to get through. When the wind is high you can’t stand, for the wind would blow you over the rocks.

“The first stalk we had that season was in Corrie Gach. He was in a difficult place. We got in 300 yards to the deer. Glenaffaric was under sheep at the time and we had to guard the sheep as well as the deer. If the deer would see the sheep running they were off at once. We waited a long time to see if the sheep would feed away. His lordship had one of the old Purdy muzzle-loaders. He fired at the stag at 300 yards, the stag went on for a hundred yards and dropped dead. I put up a cairn of stones where his lordship fired, and another cairn where the stag was standing. The mark is on them still. I put several marks in Glenaffaric and Guisachan Forest where his lordship made long shots.

“When I could not get out with his lordship and had to stalk for the visitors, I felt very unhappy, for a number of the gentlemen were old and stout, and they would take a long time going up the top of a big mountain. Many of them knew very little about deer-stalking and they would not behave coming in to the deer, and after a big labour they would miss the stag. I was jealous at the other stalkers for having his lordship with them.

“I was kept this way all the season till the last week of the deer-stalking, when a gentleman came up from Guisachan, his name was Mr Hildyard, he had instructions to be with Miller. To my delight I got his lordship that week. Lord Tweedmouth’s valet and Mr Hildyard’s valet had a bet for a bottle of whisky (each servant backing his own master) who would kill the most stags. My intention was that my gentleman would easily beat Mr Hildyard.

“I was that keen that I did not get on so well. The week was dreadful stormy; his lordship was only getting one stag each day, and Mr Hildyard had two rifles with him. To my displeasure one day in the Pap Glen they put Mr Hildyard on a narrow pass, Miller and the men drove the deer to him, and he killed three stags on the pass. That was on the Friday and they had one stag over us. We had only Saturday to gain or lose.

“Saturday was dreadfully wild, high wind and snow and sleet from the north. We began at Corriegail; there were several stags in the corrie, but too many hinds. We could hardly open our eyes with the blinding sleet—we took the whole day moving slowly towards the stags. At last we got near them, his lordship killed two stags; it was late and we had only the one deer-pony; the deer would have to be home on the Saturday to be counted. His lordship offered his riding pony to take home the second stag, but the pony had never carried a deer and the riding saddle would not do. However, his lordship would not yield, he said he would hold the pony if we would put the stag on the saddle. We put a jacket on the pony’s head, and put up the stag, and tied it with cords on the little saddle. When we took the jacket off the pony’s head it was a hard fight between the pony and his lordship; at last the pony got tired and had to settle. His lordship led the pony to Affaric Lodge, a distance of seven miles. All the time I had a wicked thought towards Mr Hildyard and his party. We got to Affaric: we found the party did not get any stags, so Mr Hildyard’s servant had to pay for the bottle of whisky.”

“When I came to Guisachan House one Monday morning, I was told the Duke of Marlborough was going out deer-stalking with me. His grace killed two stags with me that day. His grace was a good shot; he had the habit of shooting off the stick. He was a very nice gentleman, quiet and sensible, just a perfect gentleman. For years I had the honour to stalk with his grace.

“In the forest one day we had a lot of fine round the stags the mist came down and covered the stags. We had to stay there for several hours. We put his grace in shelter by a big stone; the gillies and myself felt cold, and began to jump over a big bag to keep us warm. At last his grace came and joined us in the sport. He could jump wonderfully well; he was well in age at the time.”

“Lady Tweedmouth was a great walker in the forest. She was also a good rifle shot; very few gentlemen would beat her in the forest. I often seen her killing five stags in one day. Her ladyship was that strong, and I always felt tired the day I was with her ladyship in the forest. I could keep up with her ladyship on the hill, but not on the road.

“One day in Tom o’ Craskie Forest she killed a stag far away from the road, and by a mistake the ponies went to a wrong place. There was a big party in Guisachan House, and she had to be in time for dinner, so she proposed to walk home: she started, but I was unable to keep up with her. When I was left behind, I was running on the border of the road, so that her ladyship would not hear me running. The ponies overtook us at Cogie: I was very thankful to get quit of her ladyship.

“One day I was going home after stalking for one of the visitors and had two dogs and the doctor’s rifle: the day was dreadfully stormy and there was a big flood in the river. His lordship came down from the Glasha beat, and told me to walk with him. We went on and when we were near the Meadow Bridge we heard a stag roaring in the wood. His lordship asked me if I had anything in the rifle. I had two cartridges and he gave me the pony. He went towards the place where he heard the roar; at last I heard two shots, then I heard a voice saying, ‘Slip the dogs.’ I slipped the dogs, they followed his lordship’s track; then I heard the dogs barking west through Letterbeagh, and in a few minutes I heard the barking in the river. I went west the road and heard a voice saying, ‘Let go the pony.’ I let go the pony and found his lordship, the stag, and dogs in a deep pool of water, the dogs and stag swimming in the water. I could only see the head and shoulders of his lordship in the water. He had a big knife in his hand trying to stab the stag. I could do nothing for his lordship. The strong current would carry me down the river. Fortunately Major Dudley Marjoribanks^[3] came from Ceannacroc Forest, and his lordship called him down. The major came down, jumped into the deep water and got hold of the stag; he put his hand down in the water and killed him. I have never seen so plain the great difference between a strong man and a weak man. I could not give his lordship any help. When the major came he was better than five of me.

“After that we had a big job to get hold of the ponies; then a search for the rifle.”

“Their Majesties King George and Queen Mary, when Duke and Duchess of York, came to Guisachan House one year; there was a big party of ladies and gentlemen in Guisachan House at the time. Next day I had the honour to lead His Majesty to a stag. Lord Tweedmouth came out with His Majesty. We spied a lot of stags feeding towards the sanctuary. We got near the stags, His Majesty fired and killed a good stag. We had two drives in the forest during the Royal visit; in the forest drive we had, we moved about 400 stags in the one drive. The second drive was in the Long Glen, and we moved 1100 stags in one drive. The party killed 42 stags in four days. His Majesty killed 7 stags, Lord Tweedmouth killed 7 stags in one day. I had the honour to see His Majesty in his dressing-room the night before he left Guisachan and he gave me a watch and chain. His Majesty is a wonderful nice gentleman.”

In concluding this chapter I may add that I have many other recollections of Duncan M’Lennan of which I could speak, for he is a notable example of the versatile Scottish Highlander, and his comments on social, political and theological questions during the long waits which often take place in a deer

forest were always full of interest and originality, and through all communications with him the earnest Christian character of the man and his devotion to the Church of his fathers, of which he was a leading elder, always shone out clear and strong.

[1] “Vagrants” here means vagrant deer.

[2] Glencannich was a neighbouring forest, and if the stag’s body was found over the march the inference would be that it had been poached.

[3] The present Lord Tweedmouth.

CHAPTER XVI

A MIXED BAG

One of the loudest bursts of applause and laughter which I have ever heard at any public gathering was at a great political demonstration in the Bingley Hall, Birmingham.

Mr Gladstone was the principal speaker and Sir William Harcourt followed.

In the early part of his speech Mr Gladstone said, "The Liberal Party at present contains two wings."

Instantly a voice rapped out, sharp and clear, "One ain't got no feathers on it."

Of course, as will be inferred, the meeting was overwhelmingly composed of Mr Gladstone's supporters in the early days of the split in the Liberal Party on the Home Rule policy.

At the end of Mr Gladstone's speech on the above occasion there was a great display of enthusiasm, and then Sir William Harcourt rose to speak. With his great stature, and also somewhat portentous manner, he had a very imposing aspect as a speaker, this being enhanced by the sonorous tones of his voice. He began by saying: "After the magnificent oration to which we have listened——" but here again a voice interposed with "Do your best," and this evoked almost as much laughter as the previous interjection. And certainly there was something extremely comical in the offer of consolatory encouragement to one who was so completely the practised orator, and also "looked the part."

On the occasion of the Farewell Dinner given by "The Pilgrims" to Mr Kellogg on his retirement from his comparatively brief but highly successful tenure of the American Ambassadorship to take up the very important position of Secretary of State at Washington, there were, in addition to the Ambassador's eloquent and striking speech, as usual some highly humorous utterances, and especially in the speech of the Lord Chief Justice (proposing the health of the Chairman), in the course of which in referring to Lord Desborough's regular and always effective Chairmanship at The Pilgrims' dinners, he remarked that a former member of the British Embassy at Paris was so often called upon to act as chairman at various functions, that some

Frenchman suggested that he might be designated as *père-la-chaise*. This evoked much laughter. And in replying to the toast, Lord Desborough, as might have been expected, turned the point very neatly.

Another of Sir Harry Brooke's anecdotes must here be inserted.

In a country house where the party had been assembled for a few days of covert shooting the host remarked during the preceding evening that though woodcock on his ground were scarce he was keen about showing that they did exist; and in fact he would offer a prize of five shillings to the man who got the first woodcock next day.

Later in the evening one of the guests privately instructed his valet (who was to be his loader during the shoot) to go to the small town which was quite near, early in the morning, and buy, if possible, a woodcock, and to keep it in his pocket till told to produce it.

In due time next day, after the first drive had been accomplished, the host called out, "Well, no woodcock I am afraid as yet, but have any been seen?"

"Yes," answered one of the guns, "I've got one," and then turning to his valet he said, "Let's see that woodcock."

The bird was immediately produced from the pocket, but lo! alas, it was *plucked*!

Another shooting story belonging to a district with which I am associated will perhaps come home to some sportsmen.

It was the custom in that locality that towards the end of the season a sort of promiscuous drive should be organised by the local proprietors to which quite a number of the residents were invited, the number amounting sometimes to perhaps thirty guns; and as may be supposed the shooting was at times somewhat casual and uncertain. A feature of the proceedings was the driving of some rather large and thick woods for roe-deer.

On one such occasion at the completion of the first drive when the game (such as it was) had been brought forward to be counted one of the guns, coming up from where he had been posted, addressed the head keeper somewhat eagerly, saying, "Keeper, are yer beaters all out?"

"Ay," said the keeper.

The shooter: "Hae ye coonted them?"

"Na," said the keeper, "bit I'm sure they're a' here."

"Then," said the shooter in a tone of relief, "if they're a' here, and a' richt,

I've *shot a roe*."

For the above I am indebted to my friend Mr Charles Farquhar, Craiglarach, Aboyne, and also that which follows, namely, the tale of an old crofter who had adopted a cap with lappets which covered his ears and were fastened by a button under his chin—a very sensible arrangement for cold weather, but one which, being quite unusual, attracted some attention and probably some chaff from his friends and neighbours, especially when he was attending market.

One day, however, it was observed that the lappets were no longer in view.

"What's come o' the lappets?" he was asked, to which he replied:

"I'm no jest weel pleased wi' them. At the last market a man said something tae me, but I didna richtly hear fat he wis sayin' so I didna answer, but after a while, anither ane speired at me, 'Did ye no hear fat yon man wis sayin'?' an' I said, 'Na, fat said he?' an' then he tault me, he jist said, 'Will ye no tak' a dram?' and so I'm no well pleased wi' they lappets."

Here is an example of the local patriotism for which Aberdeenshire is supposed to be distinguished.

At the foot of the River Dee, just opposite the city of Aberdeen, there is a kind of suburb, appropriately described on the map as "Foot Dee"; but it has always been locally known as "Fittie" ("Fit" being the Aberdeenshire for "Foot").

There were two apprentice lads living there—one of whom obtained a job in London. After a while he wrote to his comrade who, meanwhile, had also found employment near at hand, suggesting that at the next summer holiday he should come up to the Metropolis and that he (the Londoner) would show him all the sights of the big city. The Northerner was not very keen about undertaking the journey; but at length he promised to do so, and in due time arrived in London.

His friend there at once took him round to see some of the most imposing of the buildings—the Houses of Parliament, the National Gallery, the Tower, and so forth. But the lad from the North did not manifest any particular surprise or admiration; he simply indicated assent to what was said or pointed out by that peculiar Scottish expression which is more a sound than a word, and is therefore difficult to put in print, though this is sometimes attempted, "Umph-m." However, to every Scot, at any rate in the northern part of the country, it is a perfectly familiar sign. But at last the man from the North was taken to St Paul's Cathedral. After a few moments' survey he exclaimed, in a

tone which implied a sort of reluctant conviction, “Weel, faith, that beats the Kirk o’ Fittie.”

Practical jokes do not seem to be so much in vogue now as they were at one time, and there seems no reason to regret the change, for there was not usually very much brain force in them, and very often somebody had to be more or less a victim. Sometimes, however, there was an effective example of “the biter bit.” This happened in an instance which was well authenticated.

Colonel Middleton, of that famous Regiment “The Bays,” was a very powerful man and also prominent in “society.” During a visit to a country house he observed that one of the other guests—a man of very quiet and rather retiring disposition—came to the smoking-room in the evening, in the same garb—*i.e.*, ordinary dress-coat, etc.—as that in which he had appeared at dinner, instead of changing to some sort of easy smoking-room suit. When the second evening came, the colonel observed to this guest that his procedure was unusual and that it would be much better if he were to change his clothes like other people before he came to the smoking-room, and that in fact he strongly recommended him to do so.

Next evening, however, the offending guest appeared again in evening-coat. Colonel Middleton then rose and taking out a pen-knife, said: “I warned you that it would be imprudent to appear again in that style.” And he then proceeded with the knife to slit the seam of the coat in several places (this can be much more easily done than might be imagined).

The victim didn’t seem to like the process, but he offered no active resistance. When the coat had been reduced to various detachments he looked up and said, “I hope you are pleased with the manner in which you have treated your coat, for it’s not mine; it’s yours; I took it out of your room after you came down to the smoking-room.”

Another somewhat similar case occurs to mind. I cannot give chapter and verse; but if it didn’t really happen it certainly might easily have occurred.

At another country house where there was a large party, one of the guests, who was very much to the front, said to the lady of the house, “What a queer recluse that fellow M—— is; he seems to spend all the morning in his room poring over books or something of that sort. Wouldn’t it be rather fun to draw him a bit? Supposing now, soon after breakfast, you were to go out to the lawn and call up to him, this will make him look out of his window to see what is wanted, and then I’ll be in the room above with a big jug of water, and the moment he puts his head out there will be a dowse.”

“Oh, certainly,” said the hostess, “that will be great fun; we’ll arrange that

for to-morrow morning.”

Accordingly, the hostess stepped out and called towards the window of the mild visitor. “Mr ——!”

He quickly responded, and at the window above the would-be joker carefully leaned out; but before he had time to adjust his jug, a whole pailful of water was emptied upon his head by a man (of course by the hostess’s instructions) who had taken up a position at the parapet of the roof above.

I shall now record what may be described as a practical joke, though of a totally different sort from those which have been described. And, moreover, this is certainly authentic—that is to say, it has always been fully accepted by the people living in the district where the incident occurred, and with which I have also been all my life well acquainted.

The minister of a certain rural parish in Scotland happened to fall ill and therefore wrote to the minister of a neighbouring parish asking him to conduct the service on the following Sunday. This was accordingly arranged; but when the neighbour minister arrived at the manse he went upstairs to see his invalid friend and told him that he had accidentally left his sermon behind.

“Oh,” said the sick man, “don’t let that trouble you; you’ll find a heap of sermons in my study below; just tak’ your pleasure o’ them.”

The visitor immediately repaired to the study, saw the pile of sermons, and took the first that he lighted upon. In due course he gave out the text from the pulpit. It was this, “Jacob was a plain man and dwelt in tents.”

As soon as he had given out the words the minister observed that members of the congregation were looking at one another with meaning glances, and he instantly inferred that he had got hold of the sermon which had been preached on the previous Sunday. However, not feeling prepared to deliver an impromptu discourse he went through the sermon as he found it.

On his way home he reflected upon the rather foolish position in which he had placed himself and he resolved that it should be shared by another preacher. He had taken the sermon home in his pocket, and on the following day he wrote to the person who, he had already learned, had been asked to take the service for the invalid minister on the following Sabbath, and mentioned that he happened to have a sermon which he thought would be very suitable for the congregation of the pastoral district whither he was going, and that if he cared to have the manuscript he would be happy to forward it.

The recipient of the letter who—though licensed as a preacher—had not yet obtained charge of a Church, replied that he certainly had been feeling

somewhat nervous as to the duty which he had undertaken, and that he would be particularly obliged by the carrying out of the kindly thought as to the loan of the sermon referred to.

This was done, and in due course the preacher gave out the text, "Jacob was a plain man and dwelt in tents." But immediately the village blacksmith started from his seat and exclaimed: "Deil tak' him; he's dwalt here three weeks and we canna thole him ony langer."

As to what followed tradition does not say; but there is a sort of indirect confirmation of the main incident in the statement that long afterwards when the unfortunate victim had become a settled minister and was attending a meeting of the Presbytery to which he belonged, a discussion happened to occur about some aspect of sermon delivery. And the presiding minister—a Doctor of Divinity—who was immensely liked and had a most excellent influence, said, with a twinkle (he was full of humour), "Some of us *have* heard of sermons being preached more than once."

The minister above mentioned said, somewhat reproachfully, "I think, Doctor, we'd better change the subject."

Every railway traveller has had experience of the annoying jerk made by trams when stopping.

On a certain occasion a gentleman, when the train was approaching the station at which he was to alight, stood up and got together his belongings in the manner that people often do before the train stops. When the halt was made the jerk was so sudden and vehement that the passenger was thrown off his balance on to a lady who had been seated exactly opposite to him.

The lady, startled, was also indignant, and not understanding the cause of the mishap, exclaimed, "I am surprised at your conduct, sir; do you consider yourself an English gentleman?"

To this the passenger neatly replied, "Indeed, madam, I think I am more like a Laplander just now."

From time to time there has been evidence that learning does not always bring or imply knowledge of music. Thus it is said that a former well-known Head of Christ Church, Oxford, when it was reported to him that some of the college servants who, by the way, are at Oxford called "Scouts," were through age or infirmity becoming unequal to their work, used to say, "Could we not put them into the Cathedral Choir?"

Another indication of the lack of musical perception on the part of the Dean was indicated by the fact that on the 15th day of the month when the

appointed Psalms include a descriptive allusion to a thunderstorm, and when, therefore, Dr Corfe, for many years the talented organist at Christ Church, generally used the powerful thirty-two feet pedal stop, this produced a tremor and vibration in the carved woodwork of the Dean's stall, which was just below the organ, and it was observed that on such occasions if the Dean happened to meet the organist after the service he would be apt to say, "That was a fine tune which you gave us to-day, Dr Corfe."

There was another famed ecclesiastic whose many attractive qualities did not include that of music, namely, Canon Charles Kingsley, and there is a tradition that after attending a concert given by Jenny Lind, he said, when meeting her afterwards, "I never heard 'Rule Britannia' so well sung before." But it wasn't really "Rule Britannia," though we may be pretty sure that the renowned songstress would not correct the Canon. Yes, renowned, and for all time; and perhaps a peculiar tribute to her incomparable gift is to be found that the period during which her lasting fame was established comprised the comparatively short space of a few years.

And perhaps it was owing to a feeling on the part of the public that they had somehow been as it were prematurely deprived of the privilege of listening to that exquisite voice, that a rumour was more or less prevalent to the effect that Jenny Lind, who had become Madame Goldschmidt, was somewhat tyrannically treated by her husband. I am sure there was never a more unfounded notion. I was acquainted with Mr Goldschmidt, and one could hardly imagine a more mild and gentle mannered person; and indeed one would have surmised that if either of the couple had a tendency to peremptoriness it was not on the part of the husband. He was also an accomplished musician and used to conduct the Bach Choir in which Madame Goldschmidt used to sing in her later years.

I once had the luxury of being accompanied by Mr Goldschmidt in singing some bits of Handel—one evening when he had dined with us—Madame Goldschmidt was not with him on that occasion, but I learnt afterwards that she had remarked to an aunt of mine who was a particular friend that if Lord Aberdeen had stuck to music he might have had a career; but alas! I fear the illustrious singer took for granted too much with regard to capacity for continuous and unsparing study and concentration.

Here is an ecclesiastical incident.

A divinity professor was asked to preside at the baptism of the last arrived infant in the already crowded home of the minister of the parish. The professor gave out for congregational singing one of the paraphrases often used on such occasions in Scotland:

“Let us,” he said, “sing from the second verse, ‘As sparks in close succession rise.’”

To his consternation he observed that the congregation seemed unable to repress a tendency to giggle.

Afterwards, asking the minister’s man what had been wrong, the reply was, “You see, sir, the minister’s name is Sparks, and yonder is his tenth bairn.”

On the occasion of a large evening party at the National Liberal Club not long ago, when the guests were beginning to depart, one of them said to me, “Lord Aberdeen, I have often wished to ask you about a story which I have heard concerning yourself. It was that once during a night railway journey”—but here I intervened by saying, “I think I know the story you mean; was it not like this? In a sleeping-car, in America, a man roused me and asked if I would tell him approximately the amount of my income. After some demur, I mentioned, according to the story, a certain sum, on which the questioner said, ‘Would it not be advisable that you should hire a special car and thus avoid disturbing other passengers by snoring?’ Isn’t that the story you mean?”

“Yes,” said the inquirer, perhaps a little surprised, “that’s exactly it.”

“Well,” I then said, “it doesn’t happen to be true, and there are three reasons why it couldn’t be true: *First*, if any stranger were to presume to ask me about my income I should certainly tell him that if he would mind his own business, I would endeavour to do likewise. *Two*, when travelling in America during the time when the story was coined we had, through the kindness and hospitality of railway magnates, the great benefit of the use of private cars, and during our official stay in Canada we invariably travelled in the private car provided for the Governor-General. *Thirdly*, and lastly, I don’t snore.”

My acquaintance thanked me for the information; but added that he proposed to continue telling the story.

I may as well add a sort of railway story which is in a manner against myself and which is *true*.

Some years ago, during a day journey from Scotland to London, on arriving at an important station in the north of England where I expected a telegram from Lady Aberdeen, I said to the first porter whom I saw, “Will you please go to the stationmaster’s office, and see if there is a telegram for me?”

On which he at once replied, “I don’t think there is, sir, for I was at the office a few minutes ago and there’s only one telegram there, and that’s for Lord Aberdeen.”

At this moment the stationmaster, who knew me quite well, came up and asked if he could do anything for me, and I replied, "Well, yes, I think you can; I don't think this young man"—indicating the porter—"is quite sure about me; but I'm expecting a telegram."

The stationmaster sent the porter off for the telegram, and I then said (just for fun), "I am afraid I don't look the part."

On which the stationmaster replied, "Oh, well, never mind, my lord, if you don't look it, you fill it."

A good many years ago I asked Mr Webb, the late well-known and extremely able Chief Locomotive Superintendent of the then London and North-Western Railway, to give me an opportunity of going over the celebrated works at Crewe. Mr Webb had to go to Newcastle that afternoon but kindly arranged for one of his assistants to take me over the works, and needless to say it was a highly interesting experience.

I was going up to London that evening, and asked for a pass on the engine, and this was at once arranged. It was a rather misty evening and the rails were not in extra good condition for running. However, the rising gradient from Crewe was easily taken, but after a while the driver—a rather short, stout man—named James—said to the fireman, "I wish it 'ud start and rain" (he was alluding to the improvement in the condition of the rails which would be produced by a smart shower instead of the slight mizzle which was going on). To this the fireman—a tall, lithe figure—answered, in a cultured voice, "So do I."

I had some talk with him as we rushed along: and he gave me a lesson in firing, showing how the proper method is to make sure of depositing coal in the corners of the fire-box, as well as some in the centre, because of the tendency, caused by the movement of the engine, for the fuel to be shaken towards the centre of the fire-box, thus losing some of the full effect of the heat. And, by the way, if any person thinks that firing a locomotive travelling at fifty or sixty miles an hour is a very easy and light job, he has something yet to learn.

On arrival at Euston, of course there was a token for the driver, but how about the fireman with his educated voice and manner? He was already busily engaged at the turn-table, which in those days was still used, at the end of the platform.

Eventually, as I did not like on the one hand to ask questions, and on the other hand to appear unappreciative, I handed some coins to him, which he pleasantly accepted. However, after about two days I received a letter from

him explaining that he was the son of a Lincolnshire clergyman; also that he was one of Mr Webb's pupils, and that his trip on the engine when we travelled together was part of his training; and, further, that when I offered him a money present he felt rather awkward, but considered it best to accept it without remark, and that he intended to attach one of the coins to his watch-chain. Some time later I heard of his promotion to the position of Locomotive Foreman at Stafford, which, as he wrote to me, he hoped would lead to something better. And so it did, for before very long he was appointed as Locomotive Superintendent on the Great Northern Railway, of course one of the plums of the profession. Some time afterwards remembering what he told me about his watch-chain, I designed a small medallion with an enamelled device, showing a railway signal in the "proceed" position, and this was sent to him as a memento of our original locomotive trip; and very cordial was the response which I received.

Reverting now to a Scottish item. The late Dr Lindsay, Principal of the United Free Church Divinity Hall at Glasgow, father of the present Master of Balliol College, who had a constant fund of humour, told me of an old farmer who had become a widower. A neighbour called to express condolence. The old man in gratefully accepting the assurance, said that he would like to tell his visitor the circumstances of the loss he had sustained.

"A whilie ago I wasna feelin' verra weel, an' I sent word to the druggist telling him what like the trouble was, an' he said he wid sen' me some pouthers; but by the time the pouthers cam, I wis feelin' a good piece better; so I jist put them past, thinkin' they micht be o' some e'es anither time; an' then soon efter, the wife took ill, so I thocht she wad be the better for the pouthers, so I gied them till her, but she didna improve ony; and sune she jist slippit awa."

"Dear me," said the visitor, "how very sad."

"Ay," said the other, "it's terrible: but, man, isna it a maircy I didna tak' they pouthers masel'?"

At one of our always enjoyable visits to Government House, Halifax, N.S., during the Lieutenant-Governorship of our valued friend—the late Sir Malachy Daly—I remember that on the occasion of some public function he gave the following quaint illustration of some point to which he was alluding.

During a special Church service, in which the music formed a prominent feature, the organist, when completing—with full force—a fine piece on the organ, was disgusted by finding that the wind had been allowed to fall short, and the disastrous effect can be imagined.

In those days hand-blowing for pipe-organs was the usual method; and the organist seizing a slip of paper, wrote something on it with a pencil hurriedly, folded it up, and then beckoning to a verger who happened to be near, whispered rapidly a request as to the delivery of the note.

The verger did not hear distinctly what was said, but as the preacher for the occasion was just then ascending the pulpit he (the verger) assumed that, as often happened, he was intended to deliver to the preacher a request that some intimation might be given from the pulpit. Accordingly he succeeded in handing to the minister the little slip of paper.

The minister at once unfolded it and was astonished to find that it contained the following message:

“When once you begin to blow, keep on blowing till I tell you to stop.”

This may recall another somewhat similar mishap, though, in a sense, in the opposite direction.

It is said that once a young wife, having gone to Church, suddenly remembered with dismay that she had left the gas of the cooking stove at home full on, and that, therefore, unless this was put right, the dinner would inevitably be ruined. Her husband happened to be one of the Church “Ushers”: and as the service had not actually commenced, he was still busy with the duties in another part of the building; so she scribbled a few words on a bit of paper, writing on the back of it her husband’s name very indistinctly, and then asked a Church official who was near to take the note.

He too assumed that the missive was intended for the minister, and, therefore, as there was no time to lose, carried it to him without even attempting to read the name which was on the slip of paper. But he was surprised to observe that after receiving it, the minister frowned: and no wonder, for this was what he read, “Get home as quickly as possible, and turn off the gas.”

A certain man received from some friends in the East the present of a monkey, who had been well trained to perform various tricks, one of which was further developed by his owner, namely, the animal was taught to go to the front door when the bell rang, and when the plan was convenient, to lift the latch with his paws and open the door.

In due course the owner and his family happened to arrange to spend a summer at a place in the Scottish Highlands; and in order to get a little extra

fun from the monkey, they dressed up the animal in a kilt. Soon after arrival in the new quarters, one of the neighbours called. The occupants, in order to see what would happen, sent the monkey to the door while they meanwhile took up a position where they could see what happened without being observed. The door having been opened the caller surveyed the small kilt-clad figure with surprise, and then taking out of his pocket a card, he handed it to the monkey, saying, "Will you give this to your father?"

The following little railway tale was, like another already mentioned, told to me by the late Sheriff Crawford.

At a junction on one of the far North Scottish Railways, the station-master observed that in the small branch train which was standing in the siding in readiness for the arrival of the main line train, a crofter, whom he knew quite well, had taken his seat in one of the first-class compartments.

Looking in through the open window, the station-master inquired, "What gar'd ye loup in here, Wullie?"

To which William replied, "I didna loup; I wis pitten."

"Weel," replied the station-master, "loupit or pitten, ye'll need tae come oot o' that; ye canna defraud the Railway Company wie a semblance o' simpleecity."

The following was told to me by Sir Harry Lauder, and I daresay it is included in his regular repertoire. However, I am sure he will not object to have it quoted here.

It happened that in a certain small village a concert had been organised for some charitable purpose; and a well-known singer had kindly complied with an urgent request that he would help forward the object in view by contributing a song on the occasion. This he consented to do, and travelled to the village from a considerable distance, arriving some hours before the hour appointed for the concert. Meanwhile, it transpired that his principal song would be "The Village Blacksmith."

While the vocalist was quietly resting at the little hotel he was told that a man wished to see him. He asked what the subject was regarding which an interview was desired, and in reply to this inquiry he was told that the caller stated that he did not care to mention the topic to anyone else so he hoped that the visitor would kindly see him, and this accordingly was agreed to.

On entering the room the caller said, "I understand, sir, that you are going to sing at the concert to-night?"

“Yes,” said the other.

“And,” continued the caller, “that you propose to sing ‘The Village Blacksmith’?”

“That is so,” replied the singer.

“Well,” said the caller, “I just came to say that I am the village blacksmith here, and I would take it very kindly if you could introduce into the song a few words which would let the folk know that I also repair bicycles.”

It is said that an American, visiting Scotland for the first time, was somewhat puzzled by the dialect of a railway porter, and taking him for a foreigner, asked what country he came from.

“I belong to Scotland, bonnie Scotland,” said the porter, and then added, “And far d’ye cam frae?”

To which the American replied, “I come from the greatest country the world has ever known.”

On which the porter exclaimed, “Man, what an awfa peety ye’ve lost your accent.”

Two Scotties arriving in Dublin to see a “Fit-Baa” match, hailed a cab, and asked to be driven to some place where they could stay. The cabman, thinking that the proper place for strangers (and also not too near the Station, as to fare) would be the Shelbourne, drove thither.

On reaching the hotel the visitors inquired as to the cost of a night’s lodging. When informed that the rooms on the first floor would be two guineas: on the second floor one guinea: on the third floor 10s., and on the top floor 5s., they were much taken aback, and on being politely asked if rooms could be booked for them, exclaimed, “Na, na, mister, ye’ve a fine hoose, but it’s nae near heich eneuch.”

MEDICAL STORIES

I feel somewhat shy in venturing upon this ground. The medical profession must undoubtedly have a vast store of anecdotes; but doubtless many of these are reserved for use within the faculty; for one thing, if freely circulated, there might sometimes be the risk that, although of course no actual clue would be given, individuals referred to might suspect that the cap fitted them. Still, of course, there are plenty of stories belonging or attributed to members of both branches of the profession.

A good many of these seem to be rather at the expense of the fair sex: and

perhaps this is not surprising considering that the vast majority of the profession belong to what someone indicated as “the unfair sex.” At anyrate, here are some specimens:

Doctor: “What your husband wants is complete rest; and so I have prescribed a sleeping draught.”

Wife: “Very well, doctor, and when shall I give it to him?”

Doctor: “Oh, don’t give it to *him*; take it yourself.”

Here is another: A doctor is supposed to be describing an incident to a comrade, “I was prescribing for a patient, but she kept on talking so much that it was really difficult to write, so I said, ‘Now, will you let me see your tongue?’ and I then resumed the pen as if I had forgotten that the tongue was extended and silent. When I had finished I folded the paper, on which the patient drew in her tongue and said, ‘But, doctor, you haven’t looked at my tongue.’ To which I replied, ‘Well—no—but I think I quite understand the symptoms.’ ”

Here is a pithy Scottish item told me by my friend—Dr Cran—so well known and well liked in the Deeside district.

An elderly woman whose kitchen fire by the way was a habitual smoker, had suffered from rheumatism in the shoulder, as an alleviation for which the doctor had sent a bottle of liniment.

On his next call the woman declared that the liniment had proved useless (nae e’ese ava), but she further stated that she had obtained from a neighbour the loan of a bottle of liniment which had been most beneficial, in fact she felt sure that it would cure “ae’thing” (anything).

The doctor made no reply to this at the moment; but when leaving very soon afterwards, and observing a big puff of smoke emanating from the kitchen grate, he turned and said, “Gie yer lum a lick.”

This seems to be one of those simple tales which grow upon one.

Of course there are stories from the opposite side intended to have a genial fling at the doctors: but one specimen may suffice.

There was a noted surgeon in Edinburgh—a very tall man—who became known as “Lang Sandy Wood.” He was evidently of a genial disposition, for having occasion very often on his way home to meet a tailor with whom he was acquainted, and who always carried a small bag of materials connected

with his business, Dr Wood always greeted him with the remark, “Weel, Tammas, gaen hame wi’ ye’er day’s wark?”

But the tailor was apparently a grumpy sort of person, for on one occasion, when a funeral was passing, with Dr Wood amongst the attending company, the tailor, knowing, or assuming, that the deceased had been one of the doctor’s patients, exclaimed, “Weel, doctor, gaen hame wi’ ye’er day’s wark?”

But it may seem rather like a waste of time and space to be quoting anecdotes when the thought of the medical profession (beginning with that of Scotland) brings to mind some of the splendid specimens, true benefactors of those amongst whom they worked and of humanity in general, whom one has known or heard of—men of the type immortalised by Ian MacLaren in *The Bonnie Brier Bush* where he portrays Dr McClure. And naturally one’s thoughts apply to one whose field of beneficent toil was the district in which our present home is situated, for the late Dr Alexander Cran was for forty-four years established at Tarland. In those days the difficulties which had to be overcome were enormous. Happily, his mantle descended on a son worthy thereof, who has just retired after fifty years of splendid work in the district of which Banchory is the headquarters, which is also the home of his well-known and highly esteemed contemporary, Dr McHardy, for many years Provost of Banchory, who has also just retired from active medical service.

It will be observed that I am refraining from offering further appreciative allusion to medical friends who are still, fortunately, exercising their experience and skill for the benefit of their neighbours.

EPILOGUE

In the Preface, allusion was made, somewhat vaguely, to certain features which the writer hoped would characterise the contents of this book, but which he abstained from mentioning at that stage.

The reason for this reserve was simply the apprehension that any more specific allusion might give to some intending readers a mistaken impression.

But having now reached the end of this little enterprise, there is no further need for caution or camouflage. And the hope may now be expressed that nothing in these pages has trenched either upon charity or manners.

As to charity, the reference of course is to records of satire or sarcasm which might possibly be unwelcome to friends of those who were made the subjects of such shafts, amusing as these might be.

In regard to manners—or, to be more accurate—good taste, it is more difficult to adumbrate.

But it would be mere affectation for anyone to ignore the fact that there is a very prevalent notion—a sort of superstition—that when the comic element is prominent it must in some degree be infected with what is often indicated in British talk, as “a trifle broad,” or in American “a little off colour,” or in French, “un peu risqué.” And if the symposium of this small book can, even in a fractional degree, help to abolish that idea, the writer will have cause to be thankful.

At the same time, as to the production as a whole, there may be ground for an apology. Contrary to expectation and hope, it has not been in the ingle-neuk of a library, or the sequestered retreat of a garden, that its contents have been concocted, but rather to the accompaniment of stir and pressure, and partly under the conditions incident to a month of travel in America.

And so there is reason to fear that there may be signs of a lack of cohesion and of due proportion in the adjustment of topics. Thus, the Chapter on Irish Wit is obviously too much restricted. I would fain have utilised the work of some well known Irish friends, including, amongst others, that of Mrs Katharine Tynan Hinkson, who has provided a most attractive and helpful example of how humour and sympathy can be, and so often are, companion qualities.

But now the hour has struck when the indulgent Publisher can wait no

longer, so my fledgling must now go forth to meet its fate without further preparation.

The motto of the City of Aberdeen is “Bon Accord,” which is always translated at the close of any social function as:

“Happy to meet, sorry to part, hope to meet again.”

I am glad to have met with this bit of work, and sorry (in a way) to part from it. As to the last portion of the sentiment, to hope for a further meeting would be sanguine over much: but at any rate one may trust that there will be no interruption to

BON ACCORD.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected or standardised.

Inconsistency in hyphenation has been retained.

Inconsistency in accents has been corrected or standardised.

When nested quoting was encountered, nested double quotes were changed to single quotes.

Space between paragraphs varied greatly. The thought-breaks which have been inserted attempt to agree with the larger paragraph spacing, but it is quite possible that this was simply the methodology used by the typesetter, and that there should be no thought-breaks.

[The end of *Tell Me Another* by John Campbell Hamilton-Gordon]