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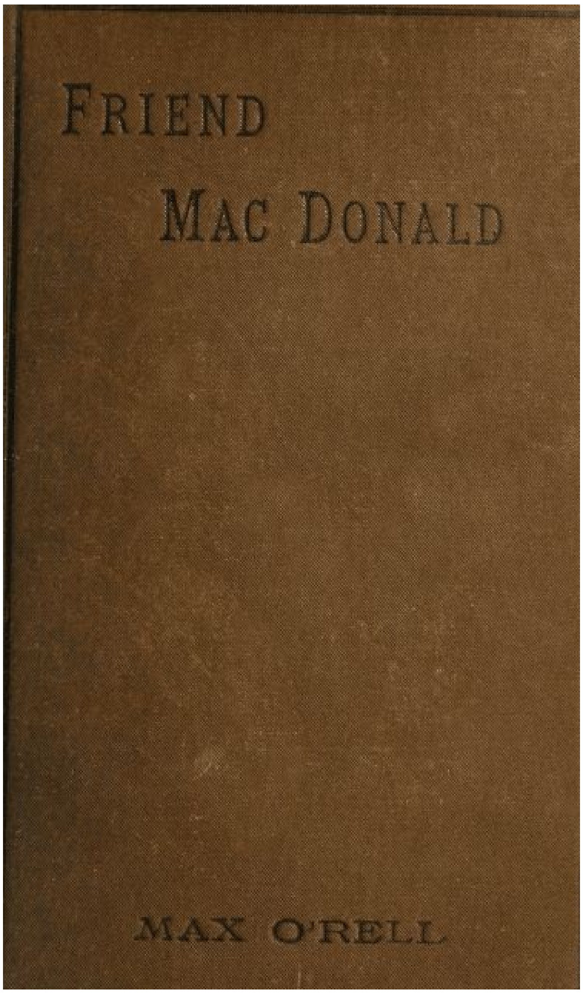

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Friend Mac Donald

BY

MAX O'RELL

AUTHOR OF
"JOHN BULL AND HIS ISLAND," ETC

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PRINTING OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER

[Pg 1]

Friend Mac Donald.

CHAPTER I.

A Word to Donald.—The Scotch Anecdote and its Character.—The Scotch painted by Themselves.

Ah! my dear Donald, what good stories you told me in the few months that I had the pleasure of passing with you! How you stuffed and saturated me with them!

And the English pretend that nobody laughs in Scotland!

Don't they though! and with the right sort of laughter, too: a laugh that is frank, and full of *finesse* and good-humour.

You will be astonished, perhaps, that a three or four months' sojourn in Scotland should permit me to write a little volume on your dear country, and you will, may be, accuse me of having visited you with the idea of seeking two hundred pages for the printer.

You would be very wrong in your impression, if you thought so.

To tell the truth, I did not take a single note in Scotland; but, on my return home, all those delicious anecdotes came back to my memory, and I could not resist the temptation of telling a few of them to my compatriots. [Pg 2]

After all, Scotland is almost a closed letter to the French; and I thought I might make myself useful and agreeable in offering French readers a picture of the manners and character of the Caledonians.

If, in order to be a success, a book of travels must be full of the strange and the horrible, it is all up with this one. But such is not the case; and he who advanced this opinion calumniated the public.

I have as much right as anyone to contradict such an assertion; for the public has been pleased to give the kindest reception to my books on England, and I certainly never had any other aim or ambition than that of telling the truth according to Horace's principle, *Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat*?

Scotland is perhaps the only country whose anecdotes alone would suffice to give an exact idea of her inhabitants.

Irish anecdotes are exceedingly droll; but they only tend to show the thoughtless side of the Irish character. They are very amusing bulls; but while they divert, they do not instruct.

In Scotland, on the contrary, you find in the anecdotes a picture of the Scotch manners and character, as complete as it is faithful.

The Scot has kept the characteristics of his ancestors; but his manners have been toned down, [Pg 3] and the language he speaks is growing more and more English: he is a changed man, and, in good society, you might be puzzled to tell him from an Englishman.

This is not a compliment, for he has no desire to pass for other than Scotch.

Among those characteristics, there are two which he has preserved intact to the present day: *finesse* and matter-of-fact good-humour. You will find these two traits in every grade of Scotch life—in tradesman, mechanic, and peasant.

This is why, setting aside the upper classes, the Scotch differ essentially from the English.

It is because of that good-humour that the Scot is more communicative than the Englishman. He knows his failings, and does not mind talking about them; in fact, he will give you anecdotes to illustrate them, and this because they are national, and he loves to dwell on anything which reminds him that Scotland is a nation.

I might have entitled this volume, "The Scotch painted by themselves," for I do but write down what I saw and heard. I owe the scenes of life I describe to the Scotch who enacted them before me, and the anecdotes to those who were kind enough to tell them to me. [Pg 4]

CHAPTER II.

Donald, a British subject, but no Englishman.—Opinion of the greatest English Wit on the Scotch, and the worth of that Opinion.—The Wit of Donald and the Wit of the Cockney.—Intelligence and Intellectuality.—Donald's Exterior.—Donald's Interior.—Help yourself and Heaven will help you.—An Irish and a Scotch Servant facing a Difficulty.—How a small Scotchman may make himself useful in the Hour of Danger.—Characteristics.—Donald on Train Journeys.—One Way of avoiding Tolls.

In the eyes of the French, the Scot is a British subject—in other words, an Englishman—dressed in a Tam-o'-Shanter, a plaid, and kilt of red and green tartan, and playing the bagpipes; for the rest, speaking English, eating roast beef, and swearing by the Bible.

For that matter, many English people are pleased to entertain the same illusions on the subject of the dwellers in the north of Great Britain.

Yet, never were two nations[A] so near on the map, and so far removed in their ways and character.

The Scots English! Well, just advance that opinion in the presence of one, and you will see how it will be received. [Pg 5]

The Scotchman is a British subject; but if you take him for an Englishman, he draws himself up, and says:

"No, Sir; I am not English. I am a Scotchman."

He is Scotch, and he intends to remain Scotch. He is proud of his nationality, and I quite understand it.

Of all the inhabitants of the more-or-less-United Kingdom, Friend Donald is the most keen, sturdy, matter-of-fact, persevering, industrious, and witty.

The most witty! Now I have said something.

Yes, the most witty, with all due respect to the shade of Sydney Smith.

So little do the English know the Scotch, that when I spoke to them of my intention to lecture in Scotland, they laughed at me.

"But don't you know, my dear fellow," they exclaimed, "that it is only by means of a pickaxe that you can get a joke into the skull of a Scotchman?"

And the fact is, that since the day when Sydney Smith, of jovial memory, pronounced his famous dictum, that it required a surgical operation to make a Scotchman understand a joke, poor Donald has been powerless to prevent past and present generations from repeating the phrase of the celebrated wit.

[Pg 6] All in vain did Scotland produce Smollett, Robert Burns, Walter Scott, and Thomas Carlyle, in the eyes of the English, the Scotchman has remained the personification of slow-wittedness—a poor fellow incapable of making much beyond prayers and money, and the Londoner who has never travelled—the poor Cockney who still firmly believes that the French are feeble creatures, living on snails and frogs—this Londoner, the most stupid animal in the world (after the Paris *badaud*, perhaps), goes about repeating to all who will listen to such nonsense:

"Dull and heavy as a Scotchman!"

Give a few minutes' start to a hoax, and you will never be able to overtake it.

To tell the truth, the wit of, I will not say, an Englishman, but a Cockney, is not within the reach of the Scot. Jokes, play upon words, and bantering are not in his line. A pun will floor him completely; but I hope to be able to prove, by means of a few anecdotes, that Donald has real wit, and humour above all—humour of the light, subtle kind, that would pass by a Cockney without making the least impression.

I do not wish to say that there is more intelligence in Scotland than in England; but I can in all security say there is more intellectuality.

The Cockney must have his puns and small jokes. On the stage, he delights in jigs; and to really please him, the best of actors have to become rivals of the mountebanks at a fair. A hornpipe delights his heart. An actor who, for an hour together, pretends not to be able to keep on his hat, [Pg 7] sends him into the seventh heaven of delight; and I have seen the tenants of the stalls applaud these things. Such performances make the Scotch smile, but with pity. The Cockney! When you have said that you have said everything: it is a being who will find fault with the opera of *Faust*, because up to the present time no manager has given the Kermess scene the attraction of an acrobat turning a wheel or standing on his head.

No, no; the Scotchman has no wit of this sort. In the matter of wit, he is an epicure, and only appreciates dainty food. A smart repartee will tickle his sides agreeably; he understands *demi-mots*; he is good-tempered, and can take a joke as well as see through one. His quick-wittedness and the subtlety of his character make him full of quaint remarks and funny and unexpected comparisons. He is a stranger to affectation—that dangerous rock to the would-be wit; he is natural, and is witty without trying to be a wit.

Yes, Donald is witty; but he possesses more solid qualities as well.

We will make acquaintance with his intellectual qualities presently.

As to his exterior—look at him: he is as strong as his own granite, and cut out for work.

A head well planted on a pair of broad shoulders; a strong-knit, sinewy frame; small, keen eyes; iron muscles; a hand that almost crushes your own as he shakes it; [Pg 8] and large flat feet that only advance cautiously and after having tried the ground: such is Donald.

Needless to say that he generally lives to a good old age.

I never knew a Christian so confident of going to Paradise, or less eager to set out.

Why does the Scotchman succeed everywhere? Why, in Australia, New Zealand, and all the other British Colonies, do you find him landowner, director of companies, at the head of enterprises of all kinds? Again, why do you find in almost all the factories of Great Britain that the foreman is Scotch?

Ah! it is very simple.

Success is very rarely due to extraordinary circumstances, or to chance, as the social failures are fond of saying.

The Scot is economical, frugal, matter-of-fact, exact, thoroughly to be depended upon, persevering, and hard-working.

He is an early riser; when he earns but half-a-crown a day, he puts by sixpence or a shilling; he minds his own business, and does not meddle with other people's.

Add to these qualities the body that I was speaking of—a body healthy, bony, robust, and rendered impervious to fatigue by the practice of every healthful exercise—and you will understand why the Scotch succeed everywhere. [Pg 9]

His religion teaches him to trust in God, and to rely upon his own resources—an eminently practical religion, whose device is:

Help yourself and Heaven will help you.

If a Scotchman were wrecked near an outlandish island in Oceania, I guarantee that you will find him, a few years later, installed as a landed proprietor, exacting rents and taxes from the natives.

Where the English, the Irish especially, will starve, the Scotch will exist; where the English can exist, the Scotch will dine.

The following little scene, which took place in my house, enlightened me very much as to why one finds the Scotch farming their own land in the colonies, while the Irish are doing labourers' work.

I had an Irish cook, an honest woman if ever there was one, faithful, and of a religion as sincere as it was unpractical.

The housemaid, a true-born Scotch girl, came down one morning to find the poor cook on her knees in the act of imploring Heaven to make her fire burn.

"But your wood is damp," she exclaimed; "how can ye expect it to burn? Pray, if ye will, but the Lord has a muckle to mind; and ye'd do weel to pit your wood in the oven o' nights, instead of bothering Him wi' such trifles."

"It was faith, nevertheless," said a worthy lady, to whom I told the matter. [Pg 10]

It was idleness, thought I, or very much like it.

Doctor Norman Macleod tells how he was once in a boat, on a Highland lake, when a storm came on, which menaced him and his companions with the most serious danger. The doctor, a tall, strong man, had with him a Scotch minister, who was small and delicate. The latter addressed himself to the boatman, and, drawing his attention to the danger they were in, proposed that they should all pray.

"Na, na," said the boatman; "let the little ane gang to pray, but first the big ane maun tak' an oar, or we shall be drouned."

Donald is the most practical man on earth.

He is a man who takes life seriously, and whom nothing will divert from the road that leads to the goal.

He is a man who monopolises all the good places in this world and the next; who keeps the Commandments, and everything else worth keeping; who swears by the Bible—and as hard[B] as a Norman carter; who serves God every Sabbath day and Mammon all the week; who has a talent for keeping a great many things, it is true, but especially his word, when he gives it you.

He is not a man of brilliant qualities, but he is a man of solid ones, who can only be appreciated [Pg 11] at his true worth when you have known him some time. He does not jump at you with demonstrations of love, nor does he swear you an eternal friendship; but if you know how to win his esteem, you may rely upon him thoroughly.

He is a man who pays prompt cash, but will have the value of his money.

If ever you travel with a Scotchman from Edinburgh to London, you may observe that he does not take his eyes off the country the train goes through. He looks out of the window all the time, so as not to miss a pennyworth of the money he has paid for his place. Remark to him, as you yawn and stretch yourself, that it's a long, tiring, tiresome journey, and he will probably exclaim:

"Long, indeed, long! I should think so, sir; and so it ought to be for £2 17s. 6d.!"

I know of a Scot, who, rather than pay the toll of a bridge in Australia, takes off his coat, which he rolls and straps on his back, in order to swim across the stream.

He is not a miser; on the contrary, his generosity is well known in his own neighbourhood. He is simply an eccentric Scot, who does not see why he should pay for crossing a river that he can cross for nothing. [Pg 12]

CHAPTER III.

All Scots know how to reckon.—Rabelais in Scotland.—How Donald made two pence halfpenny by going to the Lock-up.—Difference between buying and stealing.—Scotch Honesty.—Last words of a Father to his Son.—Abraham in Scotland.—How Donald outdid Jonathan.—Circumspection, Insinuations, and Negations.—Delicious Declarations of Love.—Laconism.—Conversation reduced to *its simplest Expression.—A, e, i, o, u.—A visit to Thomas Carlyle.—The Silent Academy of Hamadan.—With the Author's Compliments.*

All the Scotch know how to read, write, and reckon.

Especially reckon.

The following adventure happened but the other day.

A wily Caledonian, accused of having insulted a policeman, was condemned by the Bailie of his village to pay a fine of half-a-crown, with the alternative of six days' imprisonment.

As there are few Scots who have not half-a-crown in their pockets, you will perhaps imagine that Friend Donald paid the money, glad to get out of the scrape so cheaply.

Not at all: when you are born in Scotland, you do not part with your cash without a little reflection. [Pg 13]

So Donald reflected a moment.

Will he pay or go to jail? His heart wavers.

"I will go to jail," he exclaims, suddenly struck with a luminous idea.

Now the prison was in the chief town of his county, and it so happened that he had a little business to arrange there, but the railway fare was two shillings and eight pence halfpenny.

He passes the night in the lock-up, and in the morning is taken off by train to the prison.

Once safely there, Donald pulls half-a-crown from his purse, and demands a receipt of the governor, who has no choice but to give it him and set him at liberty. Our hero, proud as a king at the success of his plan, and the two pence halfpenny clear profit it has brought him, steers for the town and arranges his business.

Rabelais was not more cunning when he hit upon his stratagem for getting carried to Paris.

* * *

The Scotch themselves are fond of telling the following:

Dugald—"Did ye hear that Sandy McNab was ta'en up for stealin' a coo?"

Donald—"Hoot, toot, the stipit body! Could he no bocht it, and no paid for 't."

This explains why the Scotch prisons are relatively empty. Donald is often in the county court, but seldom in the police-court. [Pg 14]

A good Scot begins the day with the following prayer:

"O Lord! grant that I may take no one in this day, and that no one may take me in. If Thou canst grant me but one of these favours, O Lord, grant that no one may take me in."

* * *

He would be a clever fellow, however, who could take in Donald.

There is no country where compacts are more faithfully kept than in Scotland. When you have the signature of a Scotchman in your pocket, you may make your mind easy; but, if you sign an agreement with him, you may be certain that he runs no risk of repenting of the transaction.

He is rarely at fault in his reckoning; but if, by chance, an error escapes him, it is not he who suffers by it.

I must hasten, however, to say that the honesty of the Scotch in England is proverbial. I have always heard the English say they liked doing business with Scotch firms, because they had the very qualities desirable in a customer: straight-forwardness and solvency.

Donald's honesty is all the more admirable, because he is firmly convinced in his heart, that he will go straight to Paradise whatever he may do. You will confess that there is danger about a Christian who feels sure that many things shall be forgiven him. [Pg 15]

Perhaps his honesty may be the result of reflection, if the following little anecdote that was told me in Scotland is any criterion:

A worthy father, feeling death at hand, sends for his son to hear his last counsels.

"Donald," he says to him, "listen to the last words of your old father. If you want to get on in the world, be honest. Never forget that, in all business, honesty is the best policy. You may take my word for it, my son,—*I hae tried baith*."

This worthy Scot deserved an epitaph in the style of that one which the late Count Beust speaks of having seen on a tombstone at Highclere:

"Here lies Donald, who was as honest a man as it is possible to be in this world."

The Jews never got a footing in Scotland: they would have starved there.

They came; but they saw ... and gave it up.

You may find one or two in Glasgow, but they are in partnership with Scotchmen, and do not form a band apart. They do not do much local business: they are exporters and importers.

The Aberdonians tell of a Jew who once came to their city and set up in business; but it was not long before he packed up his traps and decamped from that centre of Scotch 'cuteness.

"Why are you going?" they asked him. "Is it because there are no Jews in Aberdeen?" [Pg 16]

"Oh, no," he replied; "I am going because you are all Jews here."

An American was so ill-inspired as to try his hand there where even a Jew had been beaten.

The good folk of Aberdeen are very proud of telling the following anecdote, which dates from only a few months back, and was in everyone's mouth at the time of my visit to the city of granite:

An American lecturer had signed an agreement with an Aberdonian, by which he undertook to go and lecture in Aberdeen for a fee of twenty pounds.

Dazzled by the success of his lectures, which were drawing full houses in all parts of England, the American bethought himself that he might have made better terms with Donald. Acting on this idea, he soon sent him a telegram, running thus:

"Enormous success. Invitations numerous. Cannot do Aberdeen for less than thirty pounds. Reply prepaid."

The Scot was not born to be taken in.

On the contrary.

Donald, armed with the treaty in his pocket, goes calmly to the telegraph office and wires:

"All right. Come on."

Jonathan, encouraged by the success of this first venture, rubs his hands, and, two days later, sends a second telegram, as follows:

"Invitations more and more numerous. Impossible to do Aberdeen for less than forty pounds." [Pg 17]

Donald thinks the thing very natural, and laughs in his sleeve. He bids the messenger wait, and without hesitation he scribbles:

"All right. Come on."

Jonathan doubtless rubbed his hands harder than ever, and might have been very surprised if he had been told that Donald was rubbing his too.

However, he arrived in Aberdeen radiant, gave his lecture, and at the end was presented by Donald with a cheque for twenty pounds.

"Twenty pounds—but it is forty pounds you owe me!"

"You make a mistake," replied Donald, quietly: "here is our treaty, signed and registered."

"But I sent you a telegram to tell you that I could not possibly come for less than forty pounds."

"Quite so," replied Donald, unmoved.

"And you answered—'All right. Come on.'"

"That is true."

"Well then?"

"Well, my dear sir, it is all right: you have come—now, you may go."

Like the crow in La Fontaine's fable, Jonathan registered a vow ... but a little late.

"Ah!" cried the Aberdonian who told me the story, "Jonathan will not go back to America to tell his compatriots that he took in a Scotchman." And his eyes gleamed with national pride as he added: "It was no harm to try." [Pg 18]

He considered the conduct of the American quite natural, it was clear.

As for me, I thought that "All right—come on," a magnificent example of Scotch diplomacy and humour.

Donald has a still cooler head than his neighbour John Bull, and that is saying a good deal. In business, in love even, he never loses his head. He is circumspect. He proceeds by insinuations, still oftener by negations, and that even in the most trifling matters. He does not commit himself: he *doubts*, he goes as far as to *believe*; but he will never push temerity so far as to be *perfectly sure*. Ask a Scotchman how he is. He will never reply that he is well, but that he is *no bad ava*.

I heard a Scotchman tell the butler to fill his guests' glasses in the following words:

"John, if you were to fill our glasses, we wadna be the waur for 't."

Remark to a Highlander that the weather is very warm, and he will reply:

"I don't doubt but it may be; but that's your opinion."

This manner of expressing themselves in hints and negations must have greatly sharpened the wits of the Scotch.

Here, for instance, is a delicious way of making a young girl understand that you love her, and wish to marry her. I borrow it from Dr. Ramsay's *Reminiscences*. [Pg 19]

Donald proposes to Mary a little walk.

They go out, and in their ramble they pass through the churchyard.

Pointing with his finger to one of the graves, this lover says:

"My folk lie there, Mary; wad ye like to lie there?"

Mary took the grave hint, says the Doctor, and became his wife, but does not yet *lie there*.

Much in the same vein is an anecdote that was told me in an Edinburgh house one day at dessert:

Jamie and Janet have long loved each other, but neither has spoken word to the other of this flame.

At last Donald one day makes up his mind to break the ice.

"Janet," he says, "it must be verra sad to lie on your death bed and hae no ane to houd your han' in your last moments?"

"That is what I often say to mysel, Jamie. It must be a pleasant thing to feel that a frien's han' is there to close your ee when a' is ower."

"Ay, ay, Janet; and that is what mak's me sometimes think o' marriage. After all, we war na made to live alone."

"For my pairt, I am no thinkin' o' matrimony. But still, the thoucht of livin' wi' a mon that I could care for is no disagreeable to me," says Janet. "Unfortunately, I have not come across him yet." [Pg 20]

"I believe I hae met wi' the woman I loe," responds Jamie; "but I dinna ken whether she lo'es me."

"Why dinna ye ask her, Jamie?"

"Janet," says Jamie, without accompanying his words with the slightest chalorous movement, "wad ye be that woman I was speakin' of?"

"If I died before you, Jamie, I wad like your han' to close my een."

The engagement was completed with a kiss to seal the compact.

The Scot, in his quality of a man of action, talks little; all the less, perhaps, because he knows that he will have to give an account of every idle word in the Last Day.

He has reduced conversation to its simplest expression. Sometimes even he will restrain himself, much to the despair of foreigners, so far as to only pronounce the accentuated syllable of each word. What do I say? The syllable? He will often sound but the vowel of that syllable.

Here is a specimen of Scotch conversation, given by Dr. Ramsay:

A Scot, feeling the warp of a plaid hanging at a tailor's door, enquires:

"Oo?" (Wool?)

Shopkeeper—"Ay, oo." (Yes, wool.) [Pg 21]

Customer—"A' oo?" (All wool?)

Shopkeeper—"Ay, a' oo." (Yes, all wool.)

Customer—"A' ae oo?" (All one wool?)

Shopkeeper—"Ay, a' ae oo." (Yes, all one wool.)

These are two who will not have much to fear on the Day of Judgment—eh?"

You may, perhaps, imagine that laconism could no further go.

But you are mistaken; I have something better still to give you.

Alfred Tennyson at one time often paid a visit to Thomas Carlyle at Chelsea.

On one of those occasions, these two great men, having gone to Carlyle's library to have a quiet chat together, seated themselves one on each side of the fireplace, and lit their pipes.

And there for two hours they sat, plunged in profound meditation, the silence being unbroken save for the little dry regular sound that the lips of the smokers made as they sent puffs of smoke soaring to the ceiling. Not one single word broke the silence.

After two hours of this strange converse between two great souls that understood each other without speech, Tennyson rose to take leave of his host. Carlyle went with him to the door, and then, grasping his hand, uttered these words:

"Eh, Alfred, we've had a grand nicht! Come back again soon."

If Thomas Carlyle had lived at Hamadan, he would have been worthy to fill the first seat in the [Pg 22] Silent Academy, the chief statute of which was, as you may remember, worded thus:

"The Academicians must think much, write little, and speak as seldom as possible."

Another Scot very worthy of a place in the Silent Academy was the late Christopher North.

A professor of the Edinburgh University, having asked him for the hand of his daughter Jane, Christopher North fixed a small ticket to Miss Jane's chest, and announced his decision by thus presenting the young lady to the professor, who read with glad eyes:

"With the Author's compliments."

CHAPTER IV.

The traditional Hospitality of the Highlands.—One more fond Belief gone.—Highland Bills.—Donald's Two Trinities.—Never trust Donald on Saturdays or Mondays.—The Game he prefers.—A well-informed Man.—Ask no Questions and you will be told no Tales.—How Donald showed prodigious Things to a Cockney in the Highlands.—There is no Man so dumb as he who will not be heard.

Ever since the French first heard Boïeldieu's opera, *La Dame Blanche*, and were charmed with the chorus, "Chez les montagnards écossais l'hospitalité se donne," the Highlander [Pg 23] has enjoyed a tremendous reputation for hospitality on the other side of the Channel.

I am ready to acknowledge that the Scotch, as a nation, are most hospitable; but do not talk to me of the hospitality of the Highlander.

The hospitality of the mountains, like that of the valleys, is extinct in almost every place where modern civilisation has penetrated; the real old-fashioned article is scarcely to be found except among the savages.

Donald has made the acquaintance of railways and mail coaches, he has transformed his Highlands into a kind of little Switzerland; in fact, the man is no longer recognisable.

The Highlander of the year of grace 1887 is a wideawake dog, who lies in wait for the innocent tourist, and knows how to tot you up a bill worthy of a Parisian boarding-house keeper at Exhibition time. Woe to you if you fall into his clutches; before you come out of them you will be plucked, veritably flayed.

The Highlander worships two trinities: the holy one on Sundays, and a metallic one all the week. £. s. d. is the base of his language. Though Gaelic should be the veriest Hebrew to you, you have but to learn the meaning and pronunciation of the three magic words, and you will have no difficulty in getting along in the Highlands.

Every Sabbath he goes in for a thorough spiritual cleaning; therefore trust him not on Saturday or Monday—on Saturday, because he says to himself, "Oh! one transgression more or less whilst I [Pg 24] am at it, what does it matter? it is Sunday to-morrow;" on Monday, because he is all fresh washed, and ready to begin the week worthily.

He has a way of giving you your change which seems to say, "Is it the full change you expect?" If you keep your hand held out, and appear to examine what he gives you, his look says: "You are one of the wideawake sort; we understand each other."

Needless to say that the Highlander is glad to see the tourist, as the hunter is glad to see game.

Frenchmen, Germans, Russians, Englishmen, Americans, all are sure of a welcome—he loves them all alike.

Still, perhaps of all the foreign tourists who visit his hunting-grounds, it is the Americans who have found the royal road to his heart.

"The Americans are a great people," said a Highland innkeeper to me one day. "When you present an Englishman with his bill, he looks it over to see that it is all right. He will often dispute and haggle. The American is a gentleman; he would think it beneath him to descend to such trifles. When you bring him his account, he will wave your hand away and tell you he does not want your bill; he wants to know how much he owes you, and that's the end of it."

His idea of a perfect gentleman is an innocent who pays his bills without looking at them. [Pg 25]

When he recognises a tourist as a compatriot, you may imagine what a wry face he makes.

Just as the hotel-keeper of Interlaken or Chamounix relegates all his Swiss customers to the fifth floor rooms, so Donald gives the cold shoulder to all the Scotch who come his way. With them he is obliged to submit his bills to the elementary rules of arithmetic, and be careful that two and two make only four.

It is said that of all the inhabitants of the earth, the Paris *badaud* is the most easy to amuse. I think, for my part, that his London equivalent runs him very close. However this may be, the native of London is an easy prey to the wily Scot.

They are fond of telling, in Scotland, how friend Donald one day showed a Cockney really prodigious things in the Isle of Arran.

A Londoner, wishing to astonish his friends with the account of his adventures in Scotland, resolved to make the ascent of the Goatfell without the aid of a guide. Arrived at the foot of the mountain, he informed the guides, who came to offer him their services, of his intention. You may imagine if Donald, who had sniffed a good day's work, meant to give up his bread and butter without a struggle.

"Your project is a mad one," our tourist is told. "You will miss many splendid points of view, and you will run a thousand risks." [Pg 26]

The ascension of the Goatfell is about as difficult as that of the Monument; but our hero, who knew nothing about it, began to turn pale.

However, he appeared determined to keep to his resolution; and Donald, who considers he is being robbed every time anyone climbs his hills without a guide, begins to grumble.

Besides, when one is a Highlander, one does not give up a point so easily as all that. Our Caledonian resorts to diplomacy. A brilliant idea occurs to him.

"Since you will not have a guide," says he, pretending to withdraw, "good luck to you on your journey! Mind you don't miss the mysterious stone."

"What mysterious stone?" demands the Cockney.

"Oh, on the top of the Goatfell," replies Donald, "there is a stone that might well be called *enchanted*. When you stand upon that stone, no sound, no matter how close or how loud, can reach your ears."

"Really?" says the tourist, gaping.

"A thunderstorm might burst just above your head, and you would never hear it," added Donald, who saw that his bait was beginning to take.

"Prodigious!" cried the Londoner. "How shall I know the stone? Do tell me."

"Not easily," insinuated Donald slyly; "it is scarcely known except to guides. However, I will try to describe its position to you." [Pg 27]

Here the Scot entered into explanations which threw the Cockney's brain into a complete muddle.

"I had better take you, after all, I think," said the bewildered tourist. "Come along."

I need not tell you that they were soon at the wonderful stone.

The Londoner took up his position on it, and begged the guide to stand a few steps off and to shout at the top of his voice.

Out Scot fell to making all sorts of contortions, placing his hands to his mouth as if to carry the sound; but not a murmur reached the ears of the tourist.

"Take a rest," he said to Donald; "you will make yourself hoarse.... It is a fact that I have not heard a sound. It is prodigious! Now you go and stand on the stone, and I will shout."

They changed places.

The Cockney began to rave with all his might.

Donald did not move a muscle.

The dear Londoner made the hills ring with the sound of his voice, but his guide gazed at him as calmly as Nature that surrounded them.

"Don't you hear anything?" cried the poor tourist.

Donald was not so silly as to fall into the trap. He feigned not to hear, and kept up his impassive expression.

The Cockney continued to howl.

"Shout louder," cried Donald; "I can hear nothing." [Pg 28]

"It's wonderful; it is enough to take one's breath away. I never saw anything so remarkable in my life!"

And putting his hand in his pocket, he drew out a golden coin, and slipped it into Donald's hand.

This done, they left the marvel behind, and climbed to the summit of the Goatfell, the clever guide carefully picking out all the roughest paths, and doing his best to give his patient plenty of dangers for his money.

That night, after having made a note of all his day's adventures, the proud tourist added, as a future caution to his friends:

"Be sure and take a guide for the Goatfell!"

CHAPTER V.

Resemblance of Donald to the Norman.—Donald marketing.—Bearding a Barber.—Norman Replies.—Cant.—Why the Whisky was not marked on the Hotel Bill.—New Use for the Old and New Testaments.—You should love your Enemies and not swallow them.—A modest Wish.

Friend Donald resembles the Norman very closely.

Like him, he is cunning and circumspect, with the composed exterior of Puss taking a doze. [Pg 29]

We say in France, "Answering like a Norman." That means, "to give an evasive, ambiguous answer—neither *yes* nor *no*."

They might say in England, "Answering like a Scot," to express the same idea.

Look at Donald, with the corners of his mouth drawn back, and his eyes twinkling as he nods at you and answers *Ay*, or shakes his head as he says *Na, na*; and you will be convinced that he is compromised neither by the one nor the other.

At market the resemblance is perfect.

He strolls into the stall as if he did not want anything more than a look round. He examines the goods with a most indifferent eye, turns them over and over, and finds fault with them. He seems to say to the stall-keeper:

"You certainly could not have the impudence to ask a good price for such stuff as this."

If he buys, he pays with a protest.

When he pockets cash, on the contrary, admire the rapidity of the proceeding.

I one day heard a Norman, who had just been profiting by being in town on market-day to get shaved, say to the barber, with the most innocent air in the world:

"My word, I'm very sorry not to have a penny to give you, but my wife and I have spent all our money; I have only a halfpenny left.... I will owe you till next time."

Compare this Norman with the hero of the following little anecdote which the Scotch tell. [Pg 30]

A Scot, who sold brooms, went into a Glasgow barber's shop to get shaved.

The barber bought a broom of Donald, and, after having shaved him, asked what he owed him for the broom.

"Two pence," said Donald.

"No, no," said the barber; "it's too dear. I will give you a penny, and if you are not satisfied, you can take your broom again."

Donald pocketed the penny, and asked what he had to pay for being shaved.

"A penny," replied the barber.

"Na, na," said Donald; "I will give ye a bawbee, an' if ye are no satisfied, ye can pit my beard back again."

This is Norman to the life.

The Scot pays when he has given his signature, or when there is no help for it.

It has been said that the farthing was introduced to allow the Scotch to be generous. This is calumny; for the Scot is charitable: but if collections in Scotch churches were made in bags, there might be rather a run on the small copper coin.

If you would see still another point of resemblance between the Scot and the Norman, look at them as they indulge in their little pet transgression. [Pg 31]

When Donald orders his glass of whisky, he is always careful to say:

"Waiter, a *small* whisky."

The Irishman asks for a "strong whisky," straight out, like a man.

Donald is modest, he asks for his *small*. That is the allowance of sober folks, and the dear fellow is one of them. But just add up at the end of the evening the number of *wee draps* that he has on his conscience, and you will find they make a very respectable total.

Now look at the Norman taking his cups of *café tricolore* after dinner.

Do not imagine that he is going to take up the three bottles of brandy, rum, and kirschwasser, and pour himself out some of their contents. No, no; he would be too much afraid of exceeding the dose. He measures it into his spoon, which he holds horizontally; and, to see the precautions he takes, you would think he was a chemist preparing a doctor's prescription.

"A teaspoonful of each," he says to you; "that is my quantity."

But how they brim over, those spoonfuls! When the overflow has fallen into the cup, he shows you the full spoon, with the remark:

"One of each kind, no more."

[Pg 32] Scotch shrewdness expresses itself in a phraseology all its own, and of which Donald alone possesses the secret. He handles the English language with the talent of the most wily diplomatist. He has a happy knack of combining irony and humour, as the following story shows:

An English author had sent his latest production to several men of letters, requesting them to kindly give him their opinion of his book. A Scotchman replied:

"Many thanks for the book which you did me the honour to send me. I will lose no time in reading it."

Quite a Norman response, only more delicate.

Scotch shrewdness has occasionally a certain smack of mild hypocrisy, which, however, does no harm to anyone.

Here are two examples of it that rather diverted me:

I was in the smoking-room of the Grand Hotel at Glasgow one evening.

Near me, sitting at a little table, were two gentlemen—unmistakably Scotch, as their accent proclaimed.

One of them calls the waiter, and orders a glass of whisky.

"What is the number of your room, sir?" asks the waiter, having put the whisky and water-jug on the table.

"No matter, waiter; don't put it on the bill. Here is the money."

[Pg 33] "Very clever, that Caledonian," said I to myself, as I noted the wink to the waiter and the glance thrown to the other occupant of the table.

True it is, *Scripta manent*!

If his wife accidentally puts her hand on his hotel bill in the pocket of his coat, there is no harm done—no sign of any but the most innocent articles.

Another time I was in a Scotchman's library.

While waiting for my host, who was to rejoin me there, I had a look at his books, most of which treated of theology.

Two volumes, admirably bound, attracted my gaze. They were marked on the back—one, *Old Testament*, the other, *New Testament*. I tried to take down the first volume; but, to my surprise, the second moved with it. Were the two volumes fixed together? or were they stuck by accident? Not suspecting any mystery, I pulled hard. The Old Testament and the New Testament were in one, and came together. The handsome binding was nothing but the cover of a box of cigars. No more Testament than there is on the palm of my hand: cigars—first-rate cigars—nothing but cigars, placed there under the protection of the holy patriarchs.

I had time to put all in place again before my host came; but I was not at my ease. I was quite innocent, of course; but—I don't know why—when one has discovered a secret, one feels guilty of having taken something that belongs to another. [Pg 34]

At last my host entered, closed the door, and, rubbing his hands, said:

"Now I am at your service. Excuse me for leaving you alone a few moments. I have settled my business, and we will have a cigar together, if you like."

So saying, he opened the door of a small cupboard made in the wall, and cleverly hidden by a picture of "John Knox imploring Mary Stuart to abjure the Catholic faith." It was, as you see, rather a mysterious library. From this cupboard he took some glasses—and something to fill them agreeably withal. Then, without betraying the slightest embarrassment, without a smile or a glance, he brought the twin volumes which had so astonished me, and laid them on the table. I had the pleasure of making closer acquaintance with the cigars, that seemed to bring a recommendation from Moses and the prophets.

An anecdote on the ready wit of Donald:

He meets his pastor, who remonstrates with him upon the subject of his intemperate habits.

"You are too fond of whisky, Donald; you ought to know very well that whisky is your enemy."

"But, minister, have you not often told us that we ought to love our enemies?" says Donald, slyly. [Pg 35]

"Yes, Donald; but I never told you that you should swallow them," replies the pastor, who was as witty as his parishioner.

What anecdotes I heard in Scotland on the subject of whisky, to be sure!

Here is a good one for the last. I owe it to a learned professor of the Aberdeen University.

Donald feels the approach of death.

The minister of his village is at his bedside, preparing him by pious exhortations for the great journey.

"Have you anything on your mind, Donald? Is there any question you would like to ask me?" And the minister bent down to listen to the dying man's reply.

"Na, meenister, I'm na afeard.... I wad like to ken whether there'll be whisky in heaven?"

Upon his spiritual counsellor remonstrating with him upon such a thought at such a moment, he hastened to add, with a knowing look:

"Oh! it's no that I mind, meenister; I only thoucht I'd like to see it on the table!" [Pg 36]

CHAPTER VI.

Democratic Spirit in Scotland.—One Scot as good as another.—Amiable Beggars.—Familiarity of Servants.—Shout all together!—A Scotchman who does not admire his Wife.—Donald's Pride.—The Queen and her Scotch People.—Little Presents keep alive Friendship.

The Scotch are an essentially democratic people. I take the word in its social, not its political, sense; although it might be asserted without hesitation, that if ever there was a nation formed for living under a republic, it is the Scotch—serious, calm, wise, law-abiding, and ever ready to respect the opinions of others. Yet the Scotch are perhaps the most devoted subjects of the English crown.

The English and Scotch are republicans, with democratic institutions, living under a monarchy.

When I say that the Scotch are a democratic people, I mean that in Scotland, still more than in

England, one man is as good as another.

The Scot does not admit the existence of demigods. In his eyes, the robes of the priest or judge cover a man, not an oracle.

Always ready for a bit of argument, he criticises an order, a sermon, a verdict even. [Pg 37]

Religious as he is, yet he will weigh every utterance of his pastor before accepting it. He respects the law; but if his bailie inflicts on him a fine that he thinks unjust, he does not scruple to tell him a piece of his mind; and if ever you wish to be told your daily duty at home, you have but to engage a Scotch servant.

Donald knows how to accept social inferiority; he may perhaps envy his betters, but he does not hate them. He never abdicates his manhood's dignity: an obsequious Scotchman is unknown.

In Scotland, even a beggar has none of those abject manners that denote his class elsewhere. His look seems to say:—

"Come, my fine fellow, listen to me a minute: you have money and I have none; you might give me a penny."

I remember one in Edinburgh, who stopped me politely, yet without touching his cap, and said:

"You look as if you had had a good dinner, sir; won't you give me something to buy a meal with?"

I took him to a cook-shop and bought him a pork pie.

"If you don't mind," said he, "I'll have veal."

Why certainly! everyone to his taste, to be sure.

I acquiesced with alacrity. He was near shaking hands with me. [Pg 38]

Donald is plain spoken with everyone. In Scotland, as in France, there are still to be found old servants whose familiarity would horrify an Englishman, but whom the *bonhomie* of Scotch masters tolerates without a murmur, in consideration of the fidelity and devotion of these honest servants.

Like every man who is conscious of his strength, the Scot is good-humoured; he rarely loses his temper.

The familiarity of the servant and good-humour of the master, in Scotland, are delightfully illustrated in the two following anecdotes, which were told me in Scotland.

Donald is serving at table. Several guests claim his attention at once: one wants bread, another wine, another vegetables. Donald does not know which way to turn. Presently, losing patience, he apostrophises the company thus:

"That's it; cry a'together—that's the way to be served!"

A laird, in the county of Aberdeen, had a well-stocked fowl yard, but could never get any new-laid eggs for breakfast.

He wanted to penetrate the mystery. So he lay in ambush, and discovered that his gardener's wife went to the hen-roost every morning, filled her basket with the eggs, and made straight for the market to sell them. [Pg 39]

The first time he met his gardener, he said to him:

"James, I like you very weel, for I think you serve me faithfully; but, between oursels, I canna say that I hae muckle admiration for your wife."

"I'm no surprised at that, laird," replied James, "for I dinna muckle admire her mysel!"

What could the poor laird say? This fresh union of sympathies united them only more closely.

"Proud as a Highlander" is a common saying. His gait tells you what he is. He walks with head thrown back, and shoulders squared; his step is firm and springy. It is a man who says to himself twenty times a day:

"I am a Scotchman."

Such an exalted opinion has he of his race that when Queen Victoria gave Princess Louise to the Marquis of Lorne in marriage, the general feeling in the Highlands was, as everybody knows, "The Queen maun be a prood leddy the day!"

The English were astonished at the Queen's consenting to give her daughter to one of her subjects. They looked upon it as a *mésalliance*. The Scotch were not far from doing the same—a Campbell marry a simple Brunswick!

It is in the Highlands that this national pride is preserved intact. Mountainous countries always keep their characteristics longer than others.

Everyone knows that the Queen of England passes a great part of the year in her Castle of [Pg 40] Balmoral, in the heart of the Highlands, among her worthy Scotch people, whom she appears to prefer to all her other subjects. She visits the humblest cottages, and sends delicacies to the sick and aged.

The good folk do not accept the bounty of their Queen without making her a return for it in kind. Yes—in kind. The women knit her a pair of stockings or a shawl, and the Queen delights them by accepting their presents.

CHAPTER VII.

Scottish Perseverance.—Thomas Carlyle, David Livingstone, and General Gordon. —Literary Exploits of a Scotchman.—Scottish Students.—All the Students study.— A useful Library.—A Family of three.—Coming, sir, coming!—Killed in Action.— Scotchmen at Oxford.—Balliol College.

It is not in business alone that the Scotchman shows that obstinate perseverance which so characterises his nation. Thomas Carlyle would have passed a whole year searching out the exact date of the most insignificant incident. That is why his *Frederick the Great* is the finest historical monument of the century.

It is this same Scotch perseverance which makes Watts, Livingstones, and Gordons. Never were there brighter illustrations of what can be done by power of mind united to power of [Pg 41] endurance.

I have seen them at work, those resolute, indomitable Scots. I have known some whose performances were nothing short of feats of valour.

Here is one that I have fresh in my memory.

A young Scotchman, on leaving Oxford, had been appointed master in one of the great public schools of England. He began with the elementary classes. At that time he intended to devote himself to the study of science.

He told the head master of his intention, and asked his advice.

"If I were you," said the head master, "I would do nothing of the kind. I feel sure you have very special aptitude for Greek, and that if you will but direct your attention to that, you have a brilliant future before you. Let me trace you out a programme?"

This programme was enough to frighten the most enterprising of men. A Scotchman alone could undertake to carry it out.

Our young master accepted the task.

He took an apartment in the Temple, turned his back on his friends, and became an inaccessible hermit.

For three years he lived only for his books, consecrating to them that which, at his age, is generally consecrated to pleasure and comfort.

Nothing could turn him from the end he had in view. [Pg 42]

One after another he read all the Greek authors. Nothing that had been written by poet, philosopher, historian, or grammarian, escaped him.

At the end of three years, he reappeared, wasted by the vigils and privations of this life of study; but the last touches had been put to the manuscript of a book, which, when it appeared three months later, was pronounced a masterpiece of scholarship, and made quite a revolution in the Greek world.

To-day this young Scotchman is one of the brightest lights in the higher walks of literature in Great Britain.

The students of the great Universities of Scotland offer, perhaps, the most striking proofs of perseverance to be found.

At Oxford and Cambridge, you find all sorts of students, especially students who do not study.

In Scotland, all students study.

To be able to have the luxury of studying, or rather "residing" (such is the less pretentious name in use), at Oxford or Cambridge, you must be well-to-do.

In Scotland, as in Germany, Greece, Switzerland, and America, the poorest young men may aspire to university honours; but often at the cost of what privations!

[Pg 43] Here are a few incidents of students' life in Scotland. They struck me as being very interesting, very touching. I borrow them, for the most part, from a writer who published them in a Scotch *Review* during my stay in Edinburgh.

He mentions one young man, of fine manners and aristocratic appearance, who dined but three times a week, and then upon a hot two-penny pie. On the other days he lived on dry bread.

Another had an ingenious way of turning his scanty resources to account. Spreading out his books where the hearthrug would naturally have been, he would lie there, learning his task by the light of a fire, made from the roots of decayed trees, which he had dug in a wood near Edinburgh, and carried to his lodgings.

Three Scotchmen, now occupying high positions, shared a room containing one bed; and for a year at least, while attending Aberdeen University, they had no other lodging. The bed was a very narrow one, and quite incapable of holding two persons at once; so two worked while the other slept, and when they went to bed, he rose.

Two other students excited a great deal of curiosity for some time. One carried his books before him just as if they had been a tray, while he glided noiselessly to his place. This mystery was explained when it was learned that he had been a hotel waiter. During the winter he pursued his studies; and when summer returned, it found him, with serviette across his arm, earning the necessary fees for his next winter's course of study. [Pg 44]

He never could quite throw off the waiter. If a professor called his name suddenly, he would start up and answer, "Coming, sir—coming!"

The other was more mysterious still. As soon as recitation was over, he would start away from the class-room and make for the environs of the town as fast as he could run. It was at last discovered that he kept a little book shop at some distance from the University, and, being too poor to hire an assistant, had to close his door to customers while he went to recite his lessons.

Professor Blackie tells of one young student, who lived for a whole session on red herrings and a barrel of potatoes, sent him from home. The poor fellow's health so gave way under this meagre diet, that he died before his course of study was finished.

The learned Professor mentions also another very touching case of a young student who fell a victim to his thirst for knowledge. The poor fellow had so weakened his stomach by privation, that he died from eating a good meal given him by a kind friend.

I said just now that little work was done at the University of Oxford. Exception must, however, be made in the case of the famous Balliol College.

But whom do we find there?

[Pg 45] This college is full of Scotch students, who succeed in keeping themselves at Oxford, thanks to their frugality and industry. It is not unfrequent to find them giving lessons to the undergraduates of other colleges!

And what lessons the Scotch can give the English!

CHAPTER VIII.

Good old Times.—A Trick.—Untying Cravats.—Bible and Whisky.—Evenings in Scotland.—The Dining-room.—Scots of the Old School.—Departure of the Whisky and Arrival of the Bible.—The Nightcap in Scotland.—Five hours' Rest.—The Gong and its Effects.—Fresh as Larks.—Iron Stomachs.

Scotchmen still drink hard; but where are the joyous days when the Scotch host broke the glasses off at the stem, so that his guests should drink nothing but bumpers?

Scotchmen still drink hard; but where are the good old times, when it was thought a slight to your host to go to bed without the help of a couple of servants?

Scotchmen still drink hard; but where is the time when people recommended a *protégé*, who was a candidate for a vacant post, by adding at the foot of his petition, "He is a trustworthy man—capable, hard-working, and a fine drinker"?

Lord Cockburn, who was a sober man, mentions how he was once dining in a friend's house, and towards the end of the dinner was surprised to see the number of guests around the table [Pg 46] diminishing, although no one had left the room. He set himself to solve the mystery, and soon discovered that they had rolled under the table, one after the other. A bright idea occurred to him. There was a bit of ground free near his feet; he would secure it, and escape from the drink without drawing down on himself the displeasure of his host.

Feigning to be helplessly drunk, he slid under the table.

Scarcely had he taken his place among the victims of this Scot's hospitality, when he felt a pair of hands at his throat.

"What is it?" asked he, alarmed.

"All right, sir," said a voice at his ear; "I am the boy as looses the cravats!"

He submitted to the treatment, and then lay patiently waiting till the servants came and carried him to bed.

Scotchmen still drink hard; but where is the time when, about eleven in the evening, the ladies of the house withdrew to their rooms and locked themselves in, to escape from the drunken humours of the men who, the next morning, would treat them with all the respect due to their sex?

Yes, Scotchmen still drink hard; and if they only consecrated to Venus half—nay, one tenth—of the time that they consecrate to Bacchus, Scotchwomen would be the most envied women in the world. [Pg 47]

Donald is theological in his cups: that is to say, the Bible, which every true Scot is full of, comes up as the whisky goes down; so that when the said whisky has floated the Bible, the Scotchman begins to discuss the most subtle biblical questions.

This is how the evening is passed in Scotland.

Dinner is served about seven. After dessert, the ladies retire to the drawing-room while the gentlemen finish their wine, smoke, and take coffee. This done, they join the ladies in the drawing-room, where tea is served, and an hour or so passed in conversation and music. At eleven, the gentlemen return to the dining-room or go to the library. Whisky and cigars are brought, and the fête begins. Several times, when the master of the house beckoned to me to follow him from the drawing-room, I tried to make him understand that I was very contented in the company of the ladies; but it was useless. He would generally take my arm and say:

"Come along!"

As who should say:

"Enough of that; you are a man, are you not? Come and pass the evening in manly fashion."

There was nothing to do but follow.

I pleaded all kinds of excuses to avoid this part of the entertainment.

[Pg 48] "The doctor has forbidden me to drink," I mildly suggested once or twice, "or I should be very happy, I assure you."

Occasionally I tried to bring to bear more serious reasons—business reasons—such as:

"Excuse me, I have to lecture almost every day, and I am a little afraid for my voice."

Much use this! Such an excuse came near rendering me ridiculous in the eyes of those lusty Scots. They were ready to exclaim,

"What milksops those Frenchmen are!"

For the honour of the French flag, I would mix myself a glass of toddy; and by just taking a sip every quarter of an hour, make it last out the sitting, which seldom ended before two in the morning.

By a little after midnight, the tongues seem to tire, and conversation flags. At regular intervals come the solemn puff, puff, puff, from the smokers' lips, and the long spiral columns of smoke float noiselessly upwards. The faces grow long and solemn to match: it is the Bible rising to the surface. Soon it floats—as I explained just now—and conversation starts again on theology. Each has his own manner of interpreting the Scriptures, and burns to explain it to his neighbour. Then follow the subtlest arguments, the most interminable discussions. I listen. If I have not many talents, I have at least one—that of being able to hold my tongue in English, Scotch, and all imaginable languages.

[Pg 49] The whisky continues to pass from the bottle to the glasses, and from the glasses to the throats of the company. The Bible comes up faster than ever. When the guests are well emptied of theology, everyone takes his nightcap—the signal for breaking up. The nightcap is generally the little whisky left in the decanter; to do it honour, it is taken neat. All get up, shake hands, and say Good-night. As you leave your host, you ask him at what time breakfast is served, and he replies:

"At eight."

At eight! Can he mean it? Deducting the necessary time for undressing, and for getting through your morning toilet, there remain scarcely five hours for sleep. The thought that you must make haste and get to sleep, in order to have a chance of being able to wake between seven and half-past, is just enough to prevent you from closing your eyes for the night. Thank goodness, your host, in his solicitude, has foreseen the difficulty. At seven o'clock, a horrible din makes you start up in bed and tremble from head to foot. It is a servant sounding the gong—a sort of tam-tam of Chinese invention—which fills the house with a noise fit to make you reproduce all the contortions that manufacturers of porcelain attribute to the Celestials. You rise, and dress as fast as you can. Your features look drawn; your head feels upside down; your eyes seem coming out of your head; you have the hairache: but you console yourself with the thought of the others. What [Pg 50] will they be like? What a figure they will cut at table!

You were never more mistaken. In they come, the lusty rascals, looking as bright as the lark. Nothing on their faces betray the libations of over night, or the scanty measure of sleep they have been able to get.

"What an iron race, these Scots!" I have often exclaimed to myself. "Who could hope to compete with them?"

CHAPTER IX.

Religion and Churches in Scotland.—Why Scotch Bishops cut a poor Figure.—Companies for insuring against the Accidents of the Life to come.—Religious Lecture-Rooms.—No one can serve two Masters.—How the Gospel Camel was able to pass through the Eye of a Needle.—Incense and Common Sense.—I understand, therefore I believe.—Conversions at Home.—Conversions in open Air.—A modest Preacher.—A well-filled Week.—Touching Piety.—Donald recommends John Bull and Paddy to the Lord.

Great Britain boasts two State Churches: the Anglican, or Episcopal, Church in England and Wales, and the Presbyterian Church in Scotland.

The Presbyterian Church is not under the jurisdiction of a bishop, but of a General Assembly, composed of lay and ecclesiastical deputies elected by the towns and universities, and presided over by a Moderator, elected by the Assembly, and a Lord [Pg 51] High Commissioner, appointed every year by the Queen, and requited for this arduous task with two thousand pounds.

The Scotch Presbyterian Church was established in 1560; but the Stuarts re-established the Episcopalian Church in 1662. The Revolution of 1688, followed by the accession of the Prince of Orange to the throne of England, made Presbyterianism flourish again, and its ministers still receive emoluments from the State.

The Episcopalian Church still exists in Scotland, governed by seven bishops; but, by the irony of fate, she has become, as it were, a sort of dissenting Church.

Scotland has many Catholics. Two archbishops and four bishops watch over the spiritual health of this flock.

In 1843, many Scotchmen, having discovered that it was contrary to Scripture to have ministers appointed by the State, founded the Free Church, which at the present time rivals the Presbyterian in importance.

The religious zeal of the Scotch may be judged from the fact that, in the year of the separation, a sum of nearly £400,000 was contributed by the faithful desirous of founding a Free Church. This Church has eleven hundred pastors, receiving salaries of about £200 a year. Not less than £560,000 were sent, in 1882, to the Chief Moderator, to help meet the expenses of this free faith. [Pg 52]

Such are the large centres of religious activity. Besides these, there are, as in England, nearly two hundred dissenting sects.

You may imagine whether the Devil has a hard time of it in Scotland.

All these spiritual insurance companies live in perfect harmony, and are flourishing.

It is only the Scotch bishops who cut a rather pitiable figure. To be a lord bishop, and not to be able to lord it a little, is hard. When I was in the North of Scotland, I saw one arrive at Buckie station, on his way to inspect the church of the town. The clergyman had come to meet him. They took the road to the vicarage, *pedibus cum jambis*, and my lord bishop's gaiters attracted no more attention from the good Buckie folk than did the ulster of your humble servant.

In Catholic countries, where religion exacts a life of sacrifice and abnegation from its ministers, the priesthood is a vocation. In Protestant countries, where religion imposes but few restrictions on those who serve about the altar, the Church is a profession.

Scotch places of worship are much alike inside and out. Outside, the roofs are more or less pointed; inside, the singing is more or less out of tune. [Pg 53]

Let us go into the first we come to.

Four whitewashed walls, with a ceiling to match, or a roof supported by bare rafters; no pictures, no statues; just straight-backed benches, and a high desk or pulpit: it is a lecture-room. Not a single outer sign of fervour: no kneeling, no clasped hands, or other sign of supplication. The faces are cross-looking and forbidding, or else apathetic.

It is curious to reflect that these unmoved faces belong to people who would die to defend their liberty of conscience.

Drawling hymns, psalms and canticles sung in the twelve different semi-tones of the chromatic scale; sermons full of theological subtleties, objections raised and explained away.

The preacher does not seek to appeal to the soul by eloquence, to the heart by tenderness and grace, or to the taste by style. He addresses himself to the reason alone.

Some preachers read their sermons, some recite them, others give them *ex tempore*. These latter are the most interesting.

Here and there I heard sermons that were enough to send one to sleep on one's feet; you can imagine the effect upon an audience who had to hear them in a sitting posture. But Scotland has not the monopoly of this kind of eloquence; from time immemorial it has been the custom of a certain proportion of church-goers to shut their eyes to listen to the sermon. [Pg 54]

Religion is still sterner in Scotland than in England. It is arid, like the soil of the country; angular, like the bodies of the inhabitants; thorny, like the national emblem of Scotland.

One Sunday I went to a church in Glasgow. The preacher chose for his text the passage from St. Matthew's Gospel commencing with "No man can serve two masters," and ending "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

About three thousand worshippers, careworn and devoured by the thirst for lucre, listened unmoved to the diatribes of the worthy pastor, and were preparing, by a day of rest, for the headlong race after wealth that they were going to resume on the morrow.

What a never-ending theme is the contempt for riches! What sermons in the desert, preached by bishops with princely pay, or poor curates who treat fortune as Master Reynard treated certain grapes that hung out of reach.

I was never more edified than on that Sunday in Glasgow, especially when the assembly struck up—

"O Paradise, O Paradise!
  'Tis weary waiting here;
I long to be where Jesus is,
  To feel, to see him near.
O Paradise, O Paradise!
  I greatly long to see
The special place my dearest Lord
  In love prepares for me!"

"Ah! my dear Caledonians," thought I, seeing them in such a hurry, "it is better to suffer, even in Glasgow, than to die!" [Pg 55]

Mieux vaut souffrir que mourir
C'est la devise des hommes.

By the bye, dear reader, how do you like the expression *special place*? Did I exaggerate when I told you the Scotch expect to find places specially reserved for them in Heaven?

This is how I learned by experience never to enter into theological discussions with the Scotch.

I had been to morning service in an Edinburgh church with a Scotchman, and there again had heard a sermon on the worthlessness of riches. The minister had preached from the text, "And again I say unto you: it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

In my innocence, or rather in my ignorance, I had always seen in these words of our Lord a condemnation of riches—a condemnation without appeal, and looked upon the man who sought to be rich, and the man who did not scatter his wealth, as persons who willingly forfeited all chance of entering Heaven.

On leaving the church, my companion and I began to talk of the sermon. The Scotch discuss a sermon on their way home from church, as we French people discuss the merits of a new play [Pg 56] that we have just seen at the theatre. As we went along, I communicated my views to my friend. He turned on me a glance full of compassion.

"It is easy to see, my dear sir," he said, "that you have been brought up in a religion that does not encourage discussion. The result is that you swallow without resistance theories which would make our children start with indignation. If Christ's phrase could be interpreted in your fashion, it would be neither more nor less than an absurdity. He meant to say that it was more difficult for a rich man than a poor one to be saved, but not that it was impossible."

"But," I began, "it is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle."

Here my companion's smile became more sarcastic. I foresaw that his explanation was going to stagger me, and so it did.

"You seem to be in earnest," said he; "let me enlighten you. There existed at Jerusalem, in our Saviour's time, a gateway called the *Needle's Eye*. Although one of the principal entrances to the city, this gateway was so narrow that a camel could only get through it with difficulty. So Christ meant to say——"

"Enough," I cried, "my ignorance is terrible. I never felt it so much as at this moment."

"You see," he added in a rather bantering tone, "in Scotch churches there is no incense ... but there is common sense." [Pg 57]

Nothing mystic in the religion of the Scotch. The Old and New Testaments are submitted to the finest sifting. Every passage is explained. They are served up as an intellectual food.

Here people do not see because they believe; they believe because they see. Faith is based upon reason.

It is easy to understand why the Scotchman, still more than the Englishman, is common sense personified.

You will see young fellows, scarcely come to manhood, meet together, and discuss the most subtle questions of theology with all the earnestness of doctors of divinity.

It is a powerful school. Reason ripens in the open air of discussion.

Very practical this religion of the Scotch!

I extract the following passage from the letter of a young Scotchman, magistrate in India:—

"Time passes tolerably here. For that matter, we are too busy to be much bored. Week follows week, and each is rather like the one that went before; but all are well filled up. Last Monday, I condemned an Indian to six months' imprisonment and held three inquests. On Tuesday, I presided at a meeting called for the purpose of hearing the report of the Zanana Missions. On Wednesday, I went to races and won £25. Everyone had bet on Mignonne, who was backed at two to one; but seeing that the ground was damp and slippery, I chose Phœbus, a heavier horse, [Pg 58] backed at ten to one. I was lucky in my choice. On Thursday, after the work of the day, I went to see the Nautch girls dance. It is a little *risqué*; but I have often heard you say that a man should see everything, so as to be able to judge between good and evil. There was a regatta on Friday. I went in for one race, but only came in second. On Saturday, I had to make out over a hundred summonses, and try several petty offences. An uninteresting day. It is with a feeling of apprehension that I always await Saturday. I have one more examination to pass before I can sentence the natives to more than one year's imprisonment, and two before I can send them to the gibbet. On Sunday, I read the lessons in church. In the afternoon I addressed a congregation out of doors. They seemed greatly impressed, and I count on several conversions."

You must admit that this was a well-filled week. I thought the mixture of sacred and profane quite delicious.

In Scotland, as in England, open-air services are very common. They are conducted by good folks, not over afflicted with modesty, who believe that they were chosen by Heaven to go and convert their fellow creatures—would-be St. Paul's, operating in the Athens of the North, and elsewhere. [Pg 59]

Following the advice of Horace, these apostles plunge straight into their subject. They will attack you with the question, whether you are not too fond of the things of this world? or else, whether you have made your peace with God?

The utter conceit of these amateur clergy is matchless. They are either hypocrites of the worst stamp, or fanatics of the first water, "airing their self-righteousness at the corners of the streets." The monotony of their tunes, the commonplaces of their would-be sermons, their long visages, and their grimaces as they pray—all this is the reverse of attractive.

I prefer the soldiers of the Salvation Army. They are rough, but they do not banish cheerfulness from their services. They are lively, and break the awful silence of the British Sabbath. Their services at first struck everyone as blasphemous; but one gets used to everything in this country.

I must not pass over the open-air orator, who, to excuse his faults of grammar, said to his hearers, of whom I was one: "My dear friends, I have had no education, and I know very well I am not a gentleman; but that does not prevent me from accepting the mission that I have received from Heaven to come and preach the Gospel to you. Jesus Christ was not a gentleman—He was a carpenter. The Apostles were not gentlemen either—they were fishermen."

Modest, is it not? [Pg 60]

There are Scots so sure of their salvation that they pray but to thank God that they are not as other men are. These Christians, whom Burns has named the *unco' guid*, are charitable: they pray for their neighbours. There are, on the west of Scotland, two small islands inhabited by a race whose piety is really touching. Every Sunday, in their churches, they commend to God's care the poor inhabitants of the adjacent islands of England, Scotland, and Ireland!

They have their own future safety assured, and, in their charity, think of their neighbours.

Donald presenting Paddy and John Bull to the Lord! The scene is as touching as it is amusing.

CHAPTER X.

Donald's Relations with the Divinity.—Prayers and Sermons.—Signification of the Word "Receptivity."—Requests and Thanksgivings.—"Repose in Peace."—"Thou Excelledst them all."—Explanation of Miracles.—Pulpit Advertisements.—Pictures of the Last Judgment.—One of the Elect Belated.—An Urchin Preacher.—A Considerate Beggar.

Donald is still more religious than John Bull—that is to say, he is still more theological and church-going; but the fashion in which he keeps up relations with the Divinity is very different.

The Englishman entertains the Jewish notion of God—a Deity terrible and avenging, whose very [Pg 61] name strikes awe, and is not to be lightly pronounced without drawing down celestial vengeance.

The Scot has a way of treating his Creator very much as if He were the next-door neighbour. He tells Him all his little needs, and will go so far as to gently reproach Him if they are not supplied.

If he has dined well, he is lavish in returning thanks to the Lord for His infinite favours; his gratitude is boundless. If he has had a meagre repast, he thanks Him for the least of His mercies. The thanks are not omitted, but at the same time Donald gives the Lord to understand that he has made a poor dinner.

The following anecdote was told me in Scotland. The first part of it is given by Dr. Ramsay in his *Reminiscences*, I find. As to the second, I leave the responsibility of it to my host who related the story to me. *Se non e vera, e ben trovata.*

A Presbyterian minister had just cut his hay, and the weather not being very propitious for making it, he knelt near his open window and addressed to Heaven the following prayer:

"O Lord, send us wind for the hay; no a rantin', tantin', tearin' wind, but a noughin', soughin', winnin' wind...."

His prayer was here interrupted by a puff of wind that made the panes rattle, and scattered in all directions the papers lying on his table. [Pg 62]

The minister straightway got up and closed his window, exclaiming:

"Now, Lord, that's ridik'lous!"

If this ending of the anecdote is not authentic, I feel quite sure that none but a Scotchman could have invented it.

Donald's prayers are sermons, just as the sermons of his ministers are prayers.

In these daily litanies the Scotchman enters into the most trifling details with careful forethought: the list of favours he has received, and for which he has to return thanks; the list of the blessings he wishes for, and will certainly receive, for God cannot refuse him anything,—all this is present to his prodigious memory. He dots his i's, as we say in France; and if by chance he should happen to employ a rather far-fetched expression, he explains it to the Lord, so that there shall be no danger of misunderstanding, no pretext for not according him what he asks for—he corners Him.

Thus I was one day present at evening prayers in a Scotch family, and heard the master of the house, among a thousand other supplications, make the following:

"O Lord, give us receptivity; that is to say, O Lord, the power of receiving impressions."

The entire Scotch character is there.

What forethought! what cleverness! what a business-like talent! To explain to God the signification of the far-fetched word *receptivity*, so that He should not be able to say: "There is a worthy Scotchman who uses outlandish words; I do not know what it is he wants." [Pg 63]

Would not one think that this excellent Caledonian imagined that God had been made in his image?

As gratitude is pretty generally everywhere—but especially in Great Britain—a sense of favours to come, this same Scot, before making known to the Lord the blessings which he expected from Him, had been careful to thank Him for past favours. Here, too, he had been sublime. Judge for yourself.

With the lady who was his third wife in the room, he thus expressed himself:

"Lord, I thank Thee for the pleasure and the comfort that I derived from the company of Jane" (his first wife); "I thank Thee also for the pleasure and comfort that I derived from the company of Mary" (his second wife).

The third wife was there, at the other end of the table, silent and solemn, apparently plunged in profound meditation, and thanking Heaven for the pleasure and comfort that the society of Jane and Mary had given her husband.

When would her turn come to play her part in these thanksgivings?

Her husband is but sixty-five, and I can assure you has no idea of going yet. [Pg 64]

Another episode of the same kind came under my notice in a Catholic family; but in this case the same Scotch characteristic showed itself under a different form—a form suggested by belief in purgatory.

Here, too, the master of the house was a widower remarried, but who had only got as far as his second wife. Before this dutiful lady and the rest of his family, which was composed of several big sons and three grown-up daughters, he prayed for the repose of the soul of his first wife, reminding the Lord, in case He should have forgotten it, what an angel on earth this incomparable spouse had been.

"Remember, O Lord," he cried, "how discreet, faithful, wise, careful, and obedient she was!"

This prayer, in my opinion, was meant to serve two ends, for the Scotchman never loses sight of the practical side of things. While it solicited the admission of the first wife into Paradise, it reminded the second of her duty towards her husband and the virtues he expected of her.

Upstairs I saw that which confirmed me in my little theory.

In the bedroom I occupied hung a portrait of Mrs. X. (No. 1). Underneath the portrait a card, illuminated with a garland of roses and foliage, and bearing the inscription "Rest in Peace," announced to the stranger that the original was no longer of this world.

One evening, on opening a drawer of the dressing-table, I beheld a card exactly similar to that underneath the portrait, but with the inscription: [Pg 65]

> "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excelledst them all."

There it was, all ready to replace the other card, should Mrs. X. (No. 2) cease to be "discreet, wise, careful, and obedient." I wonder if it has seen the light yet!

No liturgy, no formulas for Donald, when he prays. He will not be dictated to as to what he shall say. He knows his own wants, and communicates them to his Maker without reserve or restraint.

The Scotch tell of a Presbyterian minister, of the time of George III., who used to officiate in a church in Edinburgh, and prayed for the Town Council thus:

"O Lord, have mercy on all fools and idiots, and the members of the Town Council of Edinburgh."

What a pity that in Paris churches it is not possible to put up a similar petition!

Here is a prayer of an old farmer who lived in the North of Scotland, and was well known for his long and forcible addresses to Heaven.

"We thank Thee, Lord, for Thy great goodness to Meg, and that it ever cam into thy heid to tak' ony thocht o' sic a useless baw-waw as her. For Thy mercy's sake, and for the sake o' Thy poor [Pg 66] sinfu' servants that are now addressin' Thee in their ain shilly-shally way, hae mercy on Rob. Ye ken yersel' he is a wild, mischievous callant, and thinks nae mair o' committing sin than a dog does o' lickin' a dish; but put Thy hook in his nose, an' Thy bridle in his gab, an' gar him come back to Thee with a jerk that he'll ne'er forget the langest day he has to leeve.

"We're a' like hawks, we're a' like snails, we're a' like sloggie riddles: like hawks to do evil, like snails to do guid, and like sloggie riddles that let through a' the guid and keep a' the bad.

"Bring doon the tyrant and his lang neb, for he has done muckle ill the year; gie him a cup o' Thy wraith, an' 'gin he winna tak that, gie him *kelty*" (two cups, a double dose).

The finest and most characteristic prayer that it has been my good luck to come across is the following, which I have kept for a *bonne bouche*. The good folks of Dumbarton used it in the year 1804, when the inhabitants of Scotland firmly believed that Napoleon had resolved to invade Great Britain:

"Lord, bless this house and a' that's in this house, and a' within twa miles ilka side this house. O bless the coo and the meal and the kail-yard and the muckle toun o' Dumbarton.

"O Lord, preserve us frae a' witches and warlocks, and a' lang nebbet beasties that gang through the heather. [Pg 67]

"O build a strong dyke between us and the muckle French. Put a pair o' branks about the neck of the French Emperor; gie me the helter in my ain hand, that I may lead him about when I like: for Thy name's sake. Amen."

To this day you will hear, in any country church in Scotland, these interminable litanies. It is the minister's work to watch over the interests of his flock; he knows their wants and their wishes, and he expresses them in his prayers. That does not prevent Donald from going through the same process again at home; it is always well to know how to conduct one's own affairs.

Every Scot is a born preacher. Even his conversation has a certain smack of the pulpit. By dint of preaching and listening to preachers, his conversation gets a sermonising turn.

That familiarity with which Donald keeps up his relations with his Maker—a familiarity which comes from the good-humoured frankness of the Scotch character—shows itself above all in the ministers of the various religious sects of the country.

Thus a pastor of the Free Church, wishing to explain how Jesus had performed a miracle in walking across the waves to join His disciples, hit upon this forcible way of bringing it home to his hearers:

[Pg 68] "My dear brethren, to walk on the sea is a very wonderful thing: you would find it just as difficult as to walk across this ceiling with your head downwards."

Another, wishing to illustrate how God is everywhere and sees everything, told his congregation:

"The Lord is like a moose in a dry stane dyke, aye keekin' out at us frae holes and crannies, and we canna see Him."

The Scotch preachers of the old school knew how to recommend their parishioners to the care of Heaven—and occasionally to the shop of a friend.

A Scotchman told me that he remembered to have heard, when a boy, a Free Church minister thus express himself in the pulpit:

"Lord, protect us from the cholera, at this time making such terrible ravages in Glasgow; endow the doctors of this town with wisdom; give them also health, especially to James Macpherson, who is getting old and cannot afford to pay a substitute. And you, my dear friends, be prudent: keep yourselves warm, that is the essential thing; wear flannel clothing. If you have none at home, lose no time in going to Donald Anderson. He has just received from London a large stock of the best flannels, which he is selling very cheap. I bought some of him at a shilling a yard, and I am perfectly satisfied with it. Donald Anderson lives at 22 Lanark Street; don't go elsewhere." [Pg 69]

If the Englishman has, as I said elsewhere, knocked down to himself the kingdom of Heaven, which he looks upon as a British possession, the Scotchman has discerned to himself all the best places therein.

A few months ago an amiable Scotchman offered me his hospitality in the environs of Edinburgh. On entering my bedroom, I saw a picture of the Last Judgment. It quite took my breath away, the sight of that picture. And no wonder! At God's right hand came—first, John Knox; next, Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott; then an immense crowd of good folk, who, if they had been in complete attire, would have had kilts and plaids; and then next, but at some distance, John Wesley and a number of other well-known English divines; and beyond them—no one. But that is not all. On the left hand were a good sprinkling of popes, among people of all sorts and conditions, but all foreigners.

I called my host quickly.

"Well," I said, "what have you been up to in this country? What! Without giving anybody warning, without a 'by your leave,' you install yourselves in the best seats to the exclusion of the poor outside world! My dear sir, it looks to me as if, when all your Britannic subjects are supplied with places, there will be room for no one else."

It was enough to make a Frenchman cry, "Stop thief!" [Pg 70]

I was fain to console myself, however, with the thought that in France we can draw pictures of the Last Judgment too, but with a decided improvement on this arrangement of figures. To look for John Knox in ours would be sheer waste of time.

As to Robert Burns, who certainly was no saint, far from it, I do not remember to have seen him, but I guarantee that he is to be found in the midst of the angels, beside Beethoven, Shakespeare, Raphael, Victor Hugo, and kindred spirits.

The following anecdote, told me in Scotland, will perhaps tend to prove that even the libations of overnight do not hinder a true-born Scot from believing himself in Paradise the following morning.

Donald had imbibed whisky freely in the house of a friend, and towards two in the morning set out for home, describing wonderful zigzags as he went.

It suddenly occurred to him, in one of those lucid moments which the tipsiest man will occasionally have, that the cemetery of Kirkcaldy formed a short cut to his house. He steered for the place, but had not gone far when an open grave arrested his progress. He tried to jump, his foot caught, he slipped, and the next moment was lying full length in the improvised bed. Here he soon fell fast asleep. About six in the morning the Kirkcaldy coach came speeding past, the [Pg 71] coachman making the air ring with a shrill trumpet blast. Donald awakes, rubs his eyes, and, taking it to be the Last Trump calling the elect from their tombs, arises awe-stricken. He looks around him. No one; not a soul!

"Weel, weel," cries Donald; "weel, weel, this is a fery puir show for Kirkcaldy!!!"

The French beggar accosts one with a "God bless you." If he is blind, he plays the flute. The Scotch beggar's stock-in-trade is generally a Bible. For a penny he will recite you a chapter; Old and New Testament are equally familiar to him. If he is blind, he does the same as his English *confrère*: he reads aloud from a Bible printed in raised characters.

Those who can get enough to invest in an organ or a *discordeon* abandon the Bible business, which is not lucrative. Besides, turning the handle is easy work; whereas learning the Bible by heart demands study.

The beggar reciting the Bible to fill his pocket is very well; but he does not come up to the preaching street arab.

A learned professor at the University of Aberdeen told me, last February, that he was one day accosted by a beggar-boy of about ten, who asked him for a penny. [Pg 72]

"A penny! What are you going to do to earn it?" asked the professor.

"Shall I sing?" replied the boy.

"No."

"Shall I dance?"

"No."

"Shall I preach?"

The professor pulled out his penny without "asking for further change."

I cannot take leave of performing beggars without relating a little incident that I was a witness of in Edinburgh:

A beggar came up to me, asking for alms.

"You have a violin there," I said to him; "but you do not play it. How is that?"

"Oh, sir!" he replied; "give me a penny, and don't make me play. I assure you you won't regret it."

I understood his delicacy, and to show him that I appreciated it launched out my penny.

"But," I added, "do you never use your violin?"

"Yes, sir, sometimes," he said, lowering his voice, "as a threat."

I lost my penny, but saved my ears. [Pg 73]

CHAPTER XI.

The Scotch Sabbath.—The Saviour in the Cornfield.—A good Advertisement.—Difference between the Inside and the Outside of a Tramcar.—How useful it is to be able to speak Scotch in Scotland.—Sermon and Lesson on Balistics at Edinburgh.—If you do Evil on the Sabbath, do it well.

The Lord's day is not called Sunday in Scotland, but the Sabbath, which is more biblical.

The Scotch Sabbath beats the English Sunday into fits.

I thought, in my innocence, that the English Sunday was not to be matched.

Delusion on my part.

How hope to give a description of the Scotch Sabbath? It is an undertaking that might frighten a far more clever pen than mine.

Happily, in this also, the Scotch anecdote comes to my rescue.

Here is one, to begin with, which will show once more how difficult it is to trip up a Scotchman. Nothing is sacred for him when he wants to get himself out of a difficulty.

A Free Kirk minister met a member of his congregation, and thus addressed her:

"Mary, I am glad to have met you; for I have something on my mind that I have been anxious to speak to you of for a long while. I have heard—but it surely cannot be—I have heard that you sometimes go for a walk on the blessed Sabbath." [Pg 74]

"Ay, meenister, it is quite true; but I read in the Bible that Our Lord walked through the cornfields on the Sabbath day."

"I do not deny it," replied the good man, a little disconcerted; "but," he added, recovering his self-possession, "let me tell you that if the Saviour did take a walk on the Sabbath, I dinna think the more of Him for 't."

I one day read, in an Edinburgh paper, the following letter, addressed to the editor of the paper by a Scotch minister. This minister had been accused by his antagonist of having been seen taking a walk through one of the parks on the Sabbath.

What an advertisement that letter was!

This is how it ran:

> "Certain malevolent and unscrupulous persons have dared to set afloat the rumour that I was seen in the Queen's Park on the Sabbath. I utterly deny the accusation. I never take walks on the Sabbath. Allow me also to add that, though by going through the park I should considerably shorten the walk from my house to the church, I avoid doing so. Let my enemies watch me, if they feel inclined, and they will see that I go round."

It seems impossible to beat that; but what do you think of the following, which at all events runs it close? [Pg 75]

The little scene happened at Edinburgh one Sunday.

My host and I were going to hear a preacher at some distance from the centre of the town.

In Princes Street we hailed an omnibus.

I, in my simplicity, prepared to mount on the top, when I felt someone pulling at my coat-tails. It was my companion, who was going inside, and who made a sign to me to follow.

"What! you ride inside on such a lovely day!" I exclaimed, taking my seat at his side.

"On week-days it is all very well to go outside, but on the Sabbath the interior is more respectable."

The following little anecdote, which was told me in the north of Scotland, proves that the Highlander knows how to reconcile his scruples with his interests, even on the Holy Sabbath day:

My friend, walking one day in the neighbourhood of Braemar, all at once perceived that he had lost his way.

Meeting a peasant, he asked him to put him on the right track.

"Eh!" said the rustic, "you are breaking the Sawbath, and you are served richt. The Lord is punishin' ye...."

This little sermon bid fair to last some time. My friend slipped a shilling into the peasant's hand. [Pg 76]

The effect was magical.

"Straight on till ye come to the crossroads, then the second turnin' to the richt, and there ye are."

There is nothing like knowing how to speak Scotch when you go to Scotland.

Yet, the real old Scotch Sabbath is almost passing away.

Some lament it, others rejoice at it; but all the Scotch admit that their forefathers would be horrified at the things that pass in these days.

And indeed things must have greatly changed.

Now there are those who take walks on the Sabbath. What do I say, walks? There are those who ride velocipedes—Heaven forgive them! There are to be seen—no offence to my worthy host—there are to be seen poor harmless folk degenerate enough to go and sniff the fresh air on the top of an omnibus. They are not the *unco' guid*, but still they are Scotch.

Where is the time when Scotch cooks refused to use a roasting-jack on Sunday because it worked and made a noise?

Where is the time when a Scotchman almost found fault with his hens for laying eggs on the Sabbath?

Where are the days when Donald considered it shocking to introduce music into divine service? [Pg 77]

The following little scene, of which I was a witness, proved to me that in the Scotchman the practical spirit is bound to assert itself. No matter whether it is Sunday: if he does evil on the Sabbath, he must do it well.

It was one Sunday afternoon in Edinburgh.

Several children were amusing themselves (*proh pudor!*), in a corner of Calton Hill Park, by piling up a heap of stones.

When the heap was a few inches high, the children retreated two or three yards and, each armed with a stone, began to try and knock down their little construction.

Up came a gentleman, indignant.

"Little scamps!" he began, "are you not ashamed of yourselves? Don't you know you are breaking the Sabbath?"

This impressive exhortation produced small effect upon the little arabs, who went on aiming at the heap, but without success, however.

By the movements of the man every time a stone missed its aim, I could see that if the worthy Scot was indignant at the scandalous conduct of the boys, their awkwardness inspired him with the most profound contempt.

Stone followed stone, but the heap remained intact.

The Scotchman could bear it no longer.

"Duffers!" he cried.

And picking up a stone, he aimed it at the heap, scattering it in all directions; then, with a last pitying glance at the young admiring troop, quietly resumed his walk. [Pg 78]

Scotch moral.—Don't play at knocking down stones on the blessed Sabbath, it is a sin; however, if you do not fear to commit this sin, knock down the stones. Don't miss your aim, it is a crime.

This practical spirit shows itself on Sundays in many of the large towns in Great Britain.

In London, for instance, certain tramway companies double the tram-fares on Sundays. The Pharisees at the head of these companies say to themselves:

"We commit a sin in working on Sundays; let the sin be at least a remunerative one."

In France, our public gardens, such as the *Jardin d'Acclimation* and many others, reduce the price of admission on Sundays, in order to allow the working-people and their children to take a day of cheap and healthful recreation.

For a penny, I can any day of the week get taken by tram close to the magnificent Kew Gardens. The poor workman, who would like to go there on Sunday, is obliged to pay twopence to the company—one penny for his place, and another to appease the consciences of the shareholders. [Pg 79]

CHAPTER XII.

Scotch Bonhomie.—Humour and Quick-Wittedness.—Reminiscences of a Lecturer.—How the Author was once taken for an Englishman.

It seems strange that in this country, so religious as it is, most of the anecdotes which the people are fond of relating should refer to religion, and that the hero of them should generally be the minister. All that joking at the Scriptures, that parodying of the Bible, those little comic scenes at the poor minister's expense, seem at first sight to be in direct opposition with the national character. It is nothing of the kind, however. These anecdotes, which after all have in reality nothing irreverent in them, prove but one thing to us, and that is, that the Scotch are steeped over head and ears in Bible, and are not sorry to get a laugh out of it now and then: it does them good, it is a little relief to them, and—if I may believe Dean Ramsay, the great authority on Scotch anecdotes—the ministers are the first to set the example.

Those anecdotes, I repeat, are not irreverent: I have heard them told by Scotchmen who would not think of shaving on a Sunday for fear of giving the cook extra work to boil water early. (And do not smile if I add that in the evening, after supper, there was hot water on the table for the [Pg 80] *toddy*. At that hour the water had had time to boil without occasioning any extra labour. At all events, this is how I accounted for the phenomenon.)

Their anecdotes, in a word, prove that the Scotch see a subtle, pithy point more easily than the English, whatever these latter may say, and that they are not so intolerant in matters religious as they are often represented to be.

The further north you go in Great Britain, the more quick-wittedness and humour you find. For quickness in seizing the signification of a gesture, a glance, a tone, I do not hesitate, if my opinion have the slightest value, to give the palm to the Scotch.

When, for instance, in lecturing, I remind my audience that the English have given the British Isles the name of "*United* Kingdom," the Scotch shake with laughter: the little point of sarcasm does not escape their intelligence. In England, I am generally obliged to pause on it and give them time to reflect; and once or twice, in the south, I was seized with a great temptation to cry out, *à la* Mark Twain, "Ladies and gentlemen, this is a joke."

I have found all my audiences sympathetic and indulgent; but that which provokes a laugh in the north, often leaves the south indifferent. In Birmingham, Yorkshire, Lancashire, in all these great centres of British activity, and in Scotland, that which is appreciated in a humorous lecture is a [Pg 81] bit of covert satire—a pleasantry accompanied by an imperturble look: the kind of fun that the English themselves call "dry and quiet." In the south, you often regret to see that a broad joke brings you a roar of applause; while some of your pet points, those that you are proudest of, will pass almost unnoticed.

Let me give you an idea of that which the lecturer has to swallow sometimes.

In a room, a few miles out of London, I had just given a lecture to the members of a literary Society.

In this lecture, wishing to show to my audience that enlightened and intelligent French people know how to appreciate British virtues, I had recited almost in its entirety that scene in the *Prise de Pèkin*, in which the hero, a *Times* correspondent, walks to execution with a firm step, defying the Emperor of China and his mandarins with the words, "La Hangleterre il était le première nation du monde."

The lecture over, I had retired with the chairman to the committee-room. Immediately after, a lady presented herself at the door and asked the chairman to introduce me to her.

After the usual salutations and compliments, the worthy lady said to me pointblank:

"You are not a Frenchman; I knew you were an Englishman."

"I am afraid the compliment is a little exaggerated," I responded; "certainly you cannot make me [Pg 82] believe that I speak English so well as to pass for an Englishman."

"Oh! that is not it," she said; "but at the end of your lecture you gave us a French quotation with a very strong English accent."

I begged the lady to excuse me, as "I had a train to catch."

CHAPTER XIII.

Drollery of Scotch Phraseology.—A Scotchman who Lost his Head.—Two Severe Wounds.—Premature Death.—A Neat Comparison.—Cold Comfort.

I have spoken in a preceding chapter of the picturesque manner in which the Scotch people of the old school express themselves. Here are two or three examples which will well illustrate what I mean.

I one day made the acquaintance of an old Scotch soldier. He had been present at the battle of Waterloo, and was fond of talking about the Napoleonic wars.

I started his favourite topic.

He described the battle of Waterloo to me with the most remarkable clearness. It was even touching to hear him give the details of the death of one of his comrades whose head had been shot off by a cannon-ball.

"Poor fellow," he added, "he will have to appear at the Last Day with his head under his arm." [Pg 83]

"Were you ever wounded, yourself?" I asked.

"Yes," replied the old Scot with an imperturbable seriousness which made it impossible to suppose that he intended a joke; "I received two wounds—one at Quatre-Bras and the other in the right leg."

I once had a long conversation with an old lady of eighty-two, whose grandfather had served, in his youth, under Bonnie Prince Charlie. She related to me all the wonderful adventures of her ancestor, and when she had come to the end, added, with a gravity that was sublime:

"He's deed noo."

The conversation of these Scots of the old school is full of surprises. You must be ready for anything. In the very middle of the most pathetic story, out will come a remark that will make you shake with laughter. This drollery has all the more hold over you, because it is natural. The Scot is too natural to aim at being amusing, and it is just this simplicity, this *naturalness*, which disarms and overcomes you.

Donald has a way of looking at things which gives his remarks a piquancy that is irresistible: it almost takes your breath away sometimes, you feel quite floored.

A Scotch pastor was trying to give a farmer of his parish an idea of the delights which await us in Paradise. [Pg 84]

"Yes, Donald," he cried, "it is a perpetual concert. There's Raphael singing, Gabriel accompanying him on the harp, and all the angels flapping their wings to express their joy. Oh, Donald, what a sublime sight! You cannot imagine anything like it."

"Ay, ay, but I can," interrupted Donald. "It is just like the geese flap their wings when we have had a lang droot, an' they see the rain a comin'."

In making this remark, nothing is further from Donald's intention than to make a joke, or be irreverent. He says it in all seriousness. It is in this that a great charm of the Scotch phraseology lies.

A friend of mine told me that he was once walking through a churchyard with a Scotchman, and feeling a fit of sneezing coming on, he remarked to his companion that he feared he had taken a cold.

"That's bad," replied the Scotchman, "but there's mony a ane here who wad be glad o 't." [Pg 85]

CHAPTER XIV.

Family Life—"Can I assist you?"—"No, I will assist myself, thank you."—Hospitality in good Society.—The Friends of Friends are Friends.—When the Visitors come to an End there are more to follow.—Good Society.—Women.—Men.—Conversation in Scotland.—A Touching little Scene.

The hospitality of the Scotch, the simplicity of their manners, and the authority which the father wields, give Scotch family life quite a patriarchal aspect.

The existence which the Scotch lead is a little morose in its austerity, but it becomes these cool, calm people, brought up in a religion that is the enemy of joyousness, and in a climate that induces sadness. Gaiety is produced by an agreeable sense of existence; it is the reflection of a generous sun in temperate climates.

Austerity banishes familiarity from family life and engenders constraint. I have seen Scotch homes where laughter is considered ill-bred, and the joyous shouts of children are repressed. I felt ill at ease there; that reserve inspired by an overdrawn sense of propriety paralysed my tongue, and I could only answer in monosyllables the monosyllabic remarks of my host and hostess. Happily nothing more elaborate was expected of me. [Pg 86]

"Is this your first visit to Scotland?"

"No, I have had the pleasure of visiting Scotland several times."

"Our country must seem very dull to you after France."

"A little ... but I live in England."

"Which do you like best, England or Scotland?"

"Oh! Scotland, certainly."

"It is very cold to-day."

"Yes, but not colder than usual."

Heaven be thanked! dinner is announced, and I offer my arm to the lady of the house.

It is a family dinner. My host has before him a fine joint of beef, there are two chicken in front of my hostess, and I am placed opposite a boiled ham. A pair of carvers, laid with my cover, tell me that I shall have to carve the ham which is here eaten with the chicken. The idea is excellent; but all at once, down go the heads almost to the tablecloth. My host looks at the chicken, at the ham, and lastly at the ribs of beef. His face clouds and, bending over the beef, he growls a few inarticulate words at it. It is not, as Mark Twain would say, that there is anything the matter with it, Scotch beef is the best in the world. These words, that I was unable to catch the sense of, were meant to invoke the blessing of Heaven on the repast: it was Grace before meat. Very right. I like the idea of thanking Heaven for its favours, but why the frown? [Pg 87]

A servant stands behind his master's chair, another behind my hostess.

My host arms himself with his carving knife and fork and, without relaxing a muscle of his face, says to me:

"Can I assist you to a little beef?"

"No, thank you, I think I will take a little chicken."

"Can I assist you, my dear?" he said looking at his wife.

"No, thank you, I will assist myself," replies that lady.

"May I assist you to a slice of ham?" I ask, seeing her put the wing of a chicken on her plate.

"A very small piece, please."

When everyone is *assisted*, conversation resumes its little monosyllabic jog-trot, until the arrival of the puddings and sweets, when each of us again begins to propose to assist the other, and to think "We will take a little of this or that."

The sensation of needles and pins in your legs, the phraseology that consists in expressing one's thoughts by *I think I will take a little tart, I do not think I will take any cheese, very little of this, a very small piece of that*, when one feels hungry, those few moments of solemn suspense during which the company look at one another waiting for the hostess to rise—all these things give you cold shivers. [Pg 88]

At last the ladies withdraw, the men are left to themselves, and you feel a little less restrained.

I had already been present at many little scenes of this kind in England, not in high society where one finds much ease and liveliness, but in a few middle-class houses among straight-laced people. The little scene which I have attempted to describe passed in a country mansion. Yet I cannot enumerate all the delicate attentions with which those kind Scotch people surrounded me during my short stay among them. In most of the Scotch houses where I had the honour of being entertained, I found a generous and considerate hospitality, a hospitality which was all the more agreeable for not being overpowering. No fuss, no noise, no frivolous politeness. On my arrival the master of the house explained to me the geography of his habitation.

"This is the smoking-room, this the library, here is the drawing-room, and there is your bedroom. And now, my dear sir, be at home, or get home."

That is the best kind of hospitality. The Scotchman puts all the resources of his house at your disposition and, in a really hospitable spirit, leaves you to use them according to your taste.

Several families I know of keep open house all the year round. The friends of friends are friends, and are always well received no matter at what hour they may make their appearance. Some will arrive in time for dinner, play a game of billiards and retire. At the breakfast table, the mistress of the house enquires of her husband how many guests he has, and he often finds it very difficult to answer her question. [Pg 89]

I was very much amused one Sunday morning in one of these houses. The breakfast was on the table from nine to half-past twelve. The guests took as much sleep as they liked and came down when they pleased. When I thought they were all down there were more to come. They helped themselves to tea or coffee, and having boiled an egg over the fire, set down comfortably to their breakfast. Some had gone to church, others to the library to smoke, or to the park to take the air. Two only turned up at two o'clock to luncheon. I should not wonder if one or two stayed in bed all day, for I think I remember that, at dinner-time, I saw a face or two that looked to me like fresh acquaintances.

Good society is the same everywhere—like hotels, as Edmond About said. It is only a question of more or less manners in the first, and more or less fleas in the second.

In Scotland fleas are rare. They would starve on the skin of the Scotch men and are too well-mannered to attack that of the Scotch ladies.

As to good society it is no exception to the rule here.

To study the manners of the Scotch, as well as to study the manners of any other nation, you must mix with the middle classes, with the people above all, for they are the real repository of the traditions of the country. You must travel third-class; there is nothing to be learnt in first. For that matter, there is nothing alarming about that in Scotland, their third-class carriages are superior to our French seconds.

The Scotchwoman is pretty.

She has not the sparkling, piquant physiognomy of the Frenchwoman; she has not the beautiful clear grey eyes—those eyes so dreamy and tender—of the Irishwoman. But she looks more simple and reserved than her English sisters, although her manner is just as frank.

I have often admired Scotchwomen of a pronounced Celtic type. They have large eyes, dark and well shaped, with long lashes; their features are admirably regular, they are generally rather under middle height, with broad shoulders and perfectly proportioned sculptural lines.

Red hair is common in Scotland. One sees more of it in Edinburgh and Glasgow than in the whole of England; but the skin is so fine, the features are so delicate, the complexion so clear, that the little defect passes unperceived or forgiven.

The men are hard and sinewy.

In point of appearance I prefer the English and Irish men. Scotchmen are well fitted for the battle of life. They are useful to their country but hardly ornamental.

The Scotchman is absorbed in business. In his leisure moments he goes into politics or theology; he studies or takes outdoor exercise. He has little time to consecrate to women. He prefers the company of men.

The women are timid, the men reserved, and if you feel ready to undertake the burden of the conversation, you will be listened to in Scotland; but I cannot guarantee that you will be appreciated. Your words are criticised, examined, and sifted, and when you flatter yourself with the sweet thought that you have given your host a high idea of your conversational powers, you will often only have succeeded in making a fool of yourself in their eyes.

Never try to entertain the Scotch. Rather hear what they have to say. Reply to their questions; but if you would inspire them with respect, be sober in your speech, and above all avoid dogmatising. Leave the door of discussion always open, so that each member of the company may enter easily. Many Frenchmen have the bad habit of dogmatising, as if their verdicts were without appeal. This habit is an outcome of our frank, impulsive character; but the Scotch would be slow in appreciating it.

When a Scotchman asked me—which he invariably did—what were my political opinions, I answered him that a monarchy has its good points, and a republic has incontestable advantages. That allowed each one to express himself freely upon the two forms of government, and instead of entertaining them, I listened, which was infinitely more prudent, and perhaps also more profitable for me.

I have several times been a witness of very touching little scenes in Scotland, which proved to me that there are hearts of gold to be found under the rough surfaces of Scotchmen.

Here is one among many; it is a reminiscence of my visit in a country seat not far from Edinburgh.

"I want to introduce you to an old lady, who wishes very much to make your acquaintance," said my host to me one day.

"Who is the lady?" I asked.

"It is an old servant who has been in the family more than eighty years. It was she who brought up my father, myself, and my children. She is ninety-eight years old to-day, and with our care we hope to see her live to a hundred."

We went upstairs, and on the third floor we entered a little suite of apartments, consisting of two most comfortable rooms, a bedroom and a little parlour. There we found the *old lady*, sitting in an [Pg 93] arm-chair, and having a chat with one of the young ladies of the house.

"Janet," said my host, "I bring you our friend who wishes to present his respects to you."

"I am no as active as I was," said the good old soul to me, "but I am wonderfu' weel for my age. I shall soon be a hundred years of age."

"Nonsense," said my host kissing his old nurse, "who told you that? You have forgotten how to count, Janet; don't get absurd ideas into your head."

"We never leave her alone," he said to me; "my wife and daughters take it in turn to pass the day with her and amuse her. They bring their needlework and help poor old Janet to forget time."

I looked around me. The walls were covered with drawings and a thousand ornaments that only the heart of woman knows how to invent. Never a good dish came on the table without Janet having her share. At night all the family met in her little parlour for prayers and Bible reading.

I shook hands with the old servant and went away greatly touched.

"She is no longer a servant," said my host to me; "she has property, and all the household call her *the old lady*. She will be buried with us. I have already seen to the carrying out of her wishes on this subject. She wants to lie at the feet of the family, and has begged to have her grave made across the foot of ours. So I have bought a piece of ground next to our vault, and Janet's desire is [Pg 94] to be carried out. We hope to keep her many years yet; we shall all miss her when she is gone."

All this was said without apparent emotion, without the least ostentation.

"Well," I said to myself, "in Scotland more than anywhere one must not judge people by their exterior."

CHAPTER XV.

Little Sketches of Family Life in Scotland.—The Scotchman of "John Bull and his Island."—Painful Explanations.—As a Father I love you, as a Customer I take you in.—A Good Investment.—Killing two Birds with one Stone.—A Young Man in a Hurry.

What letters of recrimination I received on the subject of a certain Scotchman presented to the readers of *John Bull and His Island*! What downpours!

Some accused me of caricaturing, some of imposture. Others, with more delicacy, hinted that I should do better at novel writing than at *impressions de voyage*.

For a month my letter-box was besieged, and at each *rat-tat* of the postman I used to say to myself: "One more indignant Scotchman."

After all, what had I done to draw down such thunders?

Here is the offending passage:

"A young literary Scotchman of my acquaintance generally passes a month once a year in the [Pg 95] house of his father on the outskirts of Edinburgh. His father is a Presbyterian minister in a very enviable position. On the day of his departure, my friend invariably finds beside his plate at breakfast, a little paper carefully folded: it is the detailed account of the repasts he has taken during his stay under the paternal roof; in other words, his bill."

I never pretended to say that this kind of father was common in Scotland. I did not say I knew of two such fathers, I said I knew of one.

The Scotch have not yet digested my delicious Papa. In all parts of Scotland I was taken to task in the same manner.

"Come, come, my dear sir, own that it was not true, confess that it was a little bit of your own invention."

"His name, what is his name?" cried a few indiscreet ones.

I convinced a few, a few remained undecided; I even saw two or three go away still firmly believing the story was a creation of my brain.

I can only say that my friend did not appear to grumble at his father's treatment, for he finished by adding:

"On the whole, I do not complain, the bill is always very reasonable."

For that matter, I have come across a better case still.

I know of a Scotch father who bought a house for a thousand pounds and sold it to his son, six [Pg 96]
months later, for twelve hundred.

That is not all.

The son had not the money in hand, and it was the father who advanced the cash—at five per cent.

Considering the price money is at nowadays, it was an investment to be proud of.

Do not imagine that the father ran the least risk of losing the capital: he took a mortgage on the house.

The son, seeing that the money had been advanced to him at high interest, paid off his father as quickly as he could. He is now his own landlord, and Papa is on the look-out for another good investment.

I should pity the reader, even were he a Scotchman as seen through Sydney Smith's spectacles, if he took this Caledonian for a typical portrait of the Scotch father.

At the beginning of this volume, I compared the Scot to the Norman, and I may say that I have witnessed, in Normandy, little scenes of family life which are quite a match for those I have just described. But the actors in them were peasants.

I am indebted to a doctor in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen for the following anecdote:

"I was one day called to the bedside of an old farmer who was dangerously ill," said the doctor to [Pg 97]
me. "On leaving the patient's room, I took his son aside and told him that it was useless for me to deceive him as to the state of his father, and that I very much feared he had not an hour to live, or, at the best, could not outlast the day."

"'Are you quite sure?' said the son, scrutinising me keenly.

"'I am only too sure,' I replied.

"I shook the young man's hands and drove away. I had scarcely been at home an hour, when a little cart drew up before my door. I saw the young farmer alight from it and, a minute later, he entered my consulting room. He held his cap in his hand, twisting it uneasily.

"'Is your father worse?' I asked.

"'No, doctor, just the same. I have come, because I had a little business in town ... and I wanted to ask you at the same time.... Well, I thought that perhaps you wouldn't mind giving me Father's certificate of death now.... As you say it is certain he won't pull through the day, I suppose you don't mind whether it is to-day or to-morrow that you give it me, and it will save me the trouble of coming in again on purpose.'

"It was all I could do to make the young fellow understand that I could not sign the certificate of death of a man who was still alive.

"The old farmer died next morning at nine o'clock.

"At ten, the son came to announce the news and to ask me for the certificate." [Pg 98]

CHAPTER XVI.

Matrimonial Ceremonies.—Sweethearts.—"Un Serrement de main vaut dix serments de bouche."—"Jack's kisses were nicer than that."—A Platonic Lover.—"Excuse me, I'm married."—A wicked Trick.

In Scotland, matrimonial ceremonies are as simple as they are practical. No priest, no mayor brought into requisition; you take God and your friends to witness. You present your choice to these latter, and say: "I take Mary for my wife." The girl on her part says: "I take Donald for my husband," and there is an end of the matter. I need not say that you can go to Church if you prefer it.

Elementary as the ceremony is, the Scotchman holds it none the less sacred for that. It is not without long reflection that he enters into the holy estate; and the law, which knows the sagacity and constancy of the Scot, has not hesitated to sanction such alliances.

This matrimony made easy in nowise lures the Scot into rushing at it headlong. Young couples sometimes remain engaged for years before they think of taking the great step. This is often because the man's resources are not sufficient for housekeeping, but oftener still because the
young people want to know each other thoroughly. [Pg 99]

I appreciate their prudence in the first case as much as I blame it in the second.

How can two affianced people know each other, even if for years they try ever so hard?

Love easily lives on trifles, flirtation, sentimental walks, *billets doux*, and so on. The sky is serene, the lovers sail on a smooth sea. How can they know if they are really good sailors before they have encountered a storm?

When cares or misfortunes come, to say nothing of the price of butter and the length of the butcher's bill, then they make acquaintance. True love resists these shocks and comes out triumphant, but the *other* kind succumbs.

Let lovers see each other every week, every day, if you will, their main pastime is the repetition of their vows: they learn nothing of married life. The apprenticeship has to begin all over again the day after the wedding. Lovers may see each other every day, it is true, but *every day* is not *all day*. Lovers are always on their guard; they put a bridle on their tongues; before they meet, they are careful to look in the glass and see that nothing is amiss with their toilet; but when they are one each side of the bedroom fireplace, he in slippers and smoking-cap and she in curl-papers, then comes the test.

Familiarity breeds contempt, says the English proverb. The love that is not based on deep-rooted friendship, on solid virtues, on an amiable philosophy, and careful diplomacy, will not survive two [Pg 100] years of matrimonial life. Scarcely any of these things are called into requisition during the courtship, and this is how *mariages de convenance* often turn out better than love-matches. Matrimony is a huge lottery in both cases.

I prefer the love-making and matrimonial processes of England and Scotland to our own French ones; but if I had a marriageable daughter, I should be sorry to see her give her heart to a man who could not marry her for several years.

The danger with long engagements is that they often do not end in matrimony, and in such a case a young girl's future is blighted.

I do not know if you are of my opinion, dear Reader, but, according to my taste, making love to a girl who has been engaged five or six years, is like sitting down to a dish of *réchauffé*. Seeing the liberty that British usage accords to engaged couples, I maintain that pure as the lady may be and is, she is none the less a flower that has been breathed upon and has lost some of its value. For my part, I should always be afraid to give her a kiss, for fear she should pout and seem to say:

"Jack's kisses were far nicer than that!"

I extract the following anecdote from the Memoirs of Doctor John Brown, a well-known Scotch divine.

[Pg 101] The doctor, it appears, had for six years and a half been engaged to be married to a certain lady, when it occurred to him that matters were no further advanced than on the day when he had asked her for her heart and its dependencies. The position became intolerable: the doctor had not yet ventured on anything less ceremonious than shaking hands with his lady-love. To touch her hand was something, and perhaps the reverend gentleman thought, with our French poet:

> *Ce gage d'amitié plus qu'un autre me touche:*
> *Un serrement de main vaut dix serments de bouche.*

However, one day, he summoned up all his courage, and, as they sat in solemn silence, said suddenly:

"Janet, we've been acquainted noo six years an' mair, and I've ne'er gotten a kiss yet. D' ye think I might take one, my bonnie lass?"

"What, noo, at once?" cried Janet rather taken by surprise.

"Yes, noo."

"Just as you like, John; only be becoming and proper wi' it."

"Surely, Janet, and we'll ask a blessing first," said the young doctor.

The blessing was asked, the kiss was taken, and the worthy divine, perfectly overcome with the blissful sensation, rapturously exclaimed:

"Eh, lass, but it is guid. We'll return thanks."

This they did, and the biographer adds that, six months later, this pious couple were made one flesh and lived a long life of happy usefulness. [Pg 102]

The following little scene, of which a friend was witness in Scotland, will show that if Scotch people in general can see through a joke, there are also a few who belong to the type described by Sydney Smith, and for whom the *surgical operation* is a sad necessity.

Several persons had met together in a Scotch drawing-room, and were passing the evening in playing at simple games. One of these games consisted in each person going out of the room in turn, while the company agreed upon a word to be guessed at by the absent member on his or her return.

A young lady had just gone out of the room.

During her absence the word *passionately* was chosen.

The young lady having been recalled, each member of the party in turn went through a little performance that should lead her to guess the word, addressing her in passionate language, while expressing with the features as much love, despair, or anger, as possible.

A Scotchman, who looked ill at ease, whispered in my friend's ear:

"What must I do?"

"Try to look madly in love," said my friend, ready to burst out laughing at the sight of the long serious face of his neighbour.

"Couldn't you suggest me something to say?"

"Why, make the young lady a declaration of love. Say: 'It is useless to hide my feelings from you [Pg 103] any longer; I love you, I adore you,' and then throw yourself at her feet and——"

"Excuse me," said the poor fellow quite upset, "but I'm married."

When the young lady came to him, he begged her politely to excuse him, and thought himself safe; unhappily he was not at the end of his troubles yet.

My friend, whose turn came next, threw himself on his knees, and, with haggard eyes and ruffled hair, thus addressed her:

"Dear young lady, this gentleman, whom you see at my side, is nervous and shy; he loves you and dares not to tell his love."

"But, excuse me," cried the Scotchman.

"Listen not to him, he is dying of love. If you do not return his flame, I know him, he will do something desperate. Have pity on him, dear lady, have pity."

"*Passionately!*" cried the young girl.

The worthy Scot, who had not been able to screw up his courage to play the part of a passionate lover, was soon after missed from the company. [Pg 104]

CHAPTER XVII.

Donald is not easily knocked down.—He calmly contemplates Death, especially other People's.—A thoughtful Wife.—A very natural Request.—A Consolable Father.—"Job," 1st Chapter, 21st Verse.—Merry Funerals.—They manage Things better in Ireland.—Gone just in Time.—Touching Funeral Orations.

If folks do not laugh much at a wedding in Scotland, they make up for it at a funeral.

Let me hasten to say, that I am sure it would be insulting the reader's intelligence to tell him that this applies only to the lower classes.

As a good Christian and a man who has led a busy and useful life, Donald calmly contemplates the approach of death—especially other people's.

Death is always near, he says to himself, and a wise man should not be alarmed at its approach.

Thus fortified with wisdom, he calmly looks the evil in the face, and lets it not disturb his little jog-trot existence. This does not imply that he is wanting in affection, it only means that he accepts the inevitable without murmuring, and that in him reason has the mastery over sentiment.

A *guid* wife would say to her husband in the most natural way in the world:

"Donald, I do not think you have long to live. Have you any special request to make me? Whom [Pg 105] would you like invited to your funeral? Do you wish Jamie to be chief mourner?" and so on.

An Edinburgh lady told me that her housemaid one morning came and asked her for leave of absence until six in the evening, saying that her sister was to be buried that day.

The permission was granted, of course.

The Scotch know how to keep their word. At six o'clock precisely the maid returned, but wanted to know whether she might have the evening free as well.

"What do you want the evening for?" asked her mistress.

"Oh! ma'am," replied the lassie, "the rest of the family want to finish the day at the theatre, and they asked me to go with them."

Impossible to refuse so natural a request.

This trait of the Scotch character is often to be met with in the superior classes also.

Here is a very striking example of it.

One of my friends, an eminent professor at one of the great English public schools, had taken to Braemar with him a young Scotchman of great promise whom he wished not to lose sight of during the long summer vacation.

The mornings and evenings were devoted to study. The hot afternoons were spent with Horace and Euripides, on the bank of the Dee, in the shade of the trees that crowd down to the water's brink, as if they were all eager to gaze at their own reflection in the river. [Pg 106]

During the dry season the stream is fordable in several places, and many times had the young Scotchman crossed it.

Wishing to pass a week with his family before school reopened, the pupil had told his professor that he wished to leave Braemar before him.

The day before that which he had fixed for his departure, a fearful storm had burst over the neighbourhood.

Arrived with his knapsack on his back at the banks of the Dee, he saw before him, not a peaceful stream, but an angry torrent, swollen and lashed to fury by the storm.

The young Scotchman was not to be intimidated. He had crossed many times, and he would do it again. Besides, the only other way of getting to the station was by going two or three miles further down and taking the boat. He prepared to ford the stream.

Next day the poor young fellow's corpse, bruised and mangled, was found a mile down the river.

It would be beyond my powers to describe the despair of the professor, when he heard of the terrible catastrophe. Entrusted with the care of the young man, he felt as if guilty of his death. What could he say to the unhappy parents?

A telegram was despatched to the father, who arrived the day after. My friend went to meet him at the station. What was his relief when he heard this father say to him: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." [Pg 107]

And he added:

"This sublime passage is from *Job*, first chapter and twenty-second verse—let me see, is it the twenty-first or the twenty-second verse? It is the twenty-first, I am pretty sure."

"I fear I cannot say," replied my friend.

They walked, discussing the Book of *Job* the while, to the house where lay the remains of the unfortunate youth.

Do not suppose that the Scotchman ran to imprint a farewell kiss on the brow of his dead son. He seized upon a Bible that lay on the drawing-room table, turned to the Book of *Job*, and having found the passage he had quoted, said with a triumphant look at the professor:

"It is the twenty-first verse—I knew I was right."

In days gone by, Scotch funerals were made the occasions of visiting and great drinking. During the week that preceded the actual burying, open house was kept for the relatives and friends of the *corpse*,[C] and prodigious quantities of whisky were consumed. These scenes took place [Pg 108] among the aristocracy and the gentry as well as among the lower classes, and they culminated in a general drinking bout on the day of the interment.

The route of the funeral procession might be traced by the victims of Scotch hospitality to be seen lying helplessly inebriated by the wayside, and only a small remnant of it reached the graveyard. More than once was the coffin, which was carried by hand, left by the hedge, and the burial put off until the morrow. After several stages the defunct reached his long home.[D]

To-day such scenes would excite as much disgust in Scotland as anywhere else. Scotch manners and customs have greatly toned down.

In the lower classes, however, the burial of a relative is still an occasion for Bacchanalian festivities, and the day is finished up, as we have seen, at the theatre or other place of entertainment, where a pleasant evening can be spent.

But what is this in comparison with that which still goes on in Ireland in our day? That is where the thing is brought to perfection.

As I fear I might be taxed with imposture, if I attempted to give a description of the Irish wake, I will pass the pen to an English journalist.

A woman having died suddenly at Waterford, the Coroner had, according to law, ordered an inquest. Here is the deposition of the police constable; I extract it from my newspaper (May 8th, [Pg 109] 1887):

"When I entered the house last night, I found all the family in the room where the coffin was. They were all drunk. The deceased had been raised to a sitting posture in the coffin, and, by means of cords attached to her hands and feet, was being made to execute all kinds of marionette performances. It was like a *Punch and Judy* show, at which the corpse played the part of *Punch*. One of the sons was seated near the coffin playing a concertina. When they saw me enter, the young men quarrelled over the body, and danced around madly to the sound of the instrument. I had the greatest difficulty to get possession of the corpse for the inquest."

One would think one was reading a description of some scene of life in an out-of-the-way island of Oceania, instead of the sister-isle of civilised England.

One more anecdote to show that Donald views the approach of dissolution in his neighbour, without alarm.

An old Scotchman, feeling death at hand, had bidden all his family to his bedside.

"I have sent for you," he said to them, "in order to give you my last commands. I leave my house and all that belongs to it to my son Donald, as well as all my cattle." [Pg 110]

"Puir old father, he keeps his faculties to the last," said Donald to his neighbour.

"As for my personal property, I desire that it may be divided equally between...."

Here the old man's voice failed. He made a last effort to speak. His children bent down to catch his words.

He was dead.

"Puir father," cried Donald, "he is gone just as he was beginning to rave."

Here is a touching funeral oration.

Donald had just had the misfortune to lose on the same day his wife and his cow.

"Oh, my poor Janet," he lamented, "why have ye left me? Wha 'll gie me back my Janet?"

"Nonsense! you will soon get over it," said a friend, "times cures every ill. You'll marry again by-and-by."

"It may be, I dinna say no; but wha 'll gie me back my Janet?"

Janet, as the reader may have divined, was the name of the "coo." [Pg 111]

CHAPTER XVIII.

Intellectual Life in Scotland.—The Climate is not so bad as it is represented to be.—Comparisons.—Literary and Scientific Societies.—Why should not France possess such Societies?—Scotch Newspapers.—Scotland is the Sinew of the British Empire.

How active and intellectual life in Scotland seems, in comparison with the petty and monotonous existence led by the dwellers in Provincial France!

Is it the climate that so stirs the Scotch up to action? Possibly it may be, up to a certain point: in a cold damp climate, a man feels it imperative to keep his brain and body stirring; however, it is not fair to abuse that poor Scotch climate too much. I saw roses blooming on the walls of a house I visited at in Helensburgh last January, and I culled primroses in the open air in February, at Buckie on the north coast of Scotland.

Scotch intellectual activity is the result of a widespread education which is within the reach of the poorest.

Enter the lowliest cottage and you will find books there—the Bible, books on agriculture, a novel or two, and almost invariably the poems of their dear Burns.

[Pg 112] There is no little town of three or four thousand inhabitants but has its Literary and Scientific Society.

In some cases, a rich philanthropist has come forward with a sum of money to build a suitable home for the Society, but very often no such building exists, and the meetings are held in the Town Hall, or some other public edifice of the place.

Scotchwomen are excellent housewives. In their leisure time they draw, write, and make themselves acquainted with the social, religious, and political, questions of the day.

They organise societies for the help of the poor, or get up concerts in aid of the unfortunate. On Sundays, they teach the Bible to the children of the poor. The old maids hunt out cases of distress and make themselves useful to the community: they do the house-to-house visitation.

At any rate it is living.

Compare this existence with life as led in Provincial France, where people are wrapped up in their own family circle, take to keeping birds, and divide their spare time between saying their *pater nosters* and criticising their neighbours.

In Paris there is too much life, and in the provinces too little. All the blood goes to the head, and the body droops and is paralysed. It is the initiative spirit that is wanting; for, thank Heaven, it is neither the brain nor the money that lacks. [Pg 113]

I spoke of Buckie at the commencement of this chapter. You have probably never heard of Buckie, dear Reader. I assure you that a few months ago I was in the same state of ignorance. My lecturing manager had marked this little town on my list. I was invited to lecture at Buckie, it appeared.

This little hive of three or four thousand bees looked to me, as I alighted from the train, like a most insignificant little place.

The chief doctor of the town, having written to offer me hospitality for the night, had come to the station to meet me.

"Do you mean to say you have a Literary Society here?" I said to him.

"I should think so indeed," he replied; "and a very flourishing one it is."

"It is a manufacturing town, I suppose?"

"Well, no; we have here a few well-to-do families. The rest of the town consists of farmers, shopkeepers, and fisherfolk."

"I hope the lecture-room is a small one," I remarked.

"Make yourself easy about that," he replied; "our room holds from seven to eight hundred people, but I guarantee it will be full to-night. They will all want to come and hear what the Frenchman has got to say."

I pretended to feel reassured, but I was far from being so.

[Pg 114] His prediction was verified after all, and never did I have a more intelligent and appreciative audience.

Surely Lyons, Marseilles, Lille, Nantes, Nancy, Bordeaux, ought to be able to do what can be done by Buckie!

I doubt whether the Scotch are more intelligent than the English (I mean the masses), but they are still more energetic and persevering, much more frugal and economical, and certainly more intellectual; that is to say, that the pleasures they seek after are of a higher order.

The Scotch are great readers.

In their public libraries, I have seen hundreds of workmen and labourers thronged around the tables, and absorbed in reading the newspapers.

The Scotch papers, such as the *Scotsman*, the *Glasgow Herald*, the *Glasgow News*, the *British Mail*, are in no wise behind the London papers in importance or in literary merit. They have their own correspondents in all the capitals of the world, and get the news of the day at first hand.

Comic papers are remarkable by their absence. The Scot does not throw away his time and money on such trifles.

On the other hand, religious papers swarm and make their fortune. [Pg 115]

The famous *Edinburgh Review* has perhaps no longer quite the reputation it used to enjoy, but it is still one of the most important *Reviews* of Great Britain.

Yes, in all truth, Scotland is an energetic, robust, and intelligent, nation.

It is the sinew of the British Empire.

CHAPTER XIX.

Higher Education in Scotland.—The Universities.—How they differ from English Universities.—Is he a Gentleman?—Scholarships.—A Visit to the University of Aberdeen.—English Prejudice against Scotch Universities.

Scotland boasts four universities: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and St. Andrew's.

These four great centres of learning constitute the system of Higher Education in Scotland.

These universities differ essentially from the two great English ones, first because men go there to work, secondly because they are open to the people. A peasant's son, like Thomas Carlyle for instance, can go there without fearing that his fellow-students will avoid him because he comes of a poor family.

[Pg 116] When a new student arrives at Oxford or Cambridge, the others do not enquire whether he is a clever fellow or a dunce; what they want to know is what his father is, and who was his grandfather. It is only after obtaining a satisfactory answer to these questions that they associate with the new comer.

In Scotland, as in France, every man who is well educated and has the manners of good society is a gentleman. The son of a peasant possessing these is received everywhere.

Each Scotch university offers from fifty to eighty scholarships, varying in value from £8 to £70. These sums, paid annually to the winners of the scholarships, help them to live while they are devoting their time to study.

The most admirable thing about high education in Scotland is that it is put within the reach of all, and is not, as it is in England, a sugarplum held so high as to be often unattainable.

The result is that every intelligent young Scotchman may aim at entering a profession. There may be in this a little danger to the commerce and agriculture of the country. However, these young men do not encumber Scotland; their studies fit them for a lucrative career, which they often go and seek in the Colonies. An Australian friend told me recently that more than half the doctors in Victoria were Scotchmen.

I have spoken, in a previous chapter, of the privations that Scotch undergraduates will often
impose upon themselves. Nothing is more remarkable than the sustained application and [Pg 117]
indefatigable will which they bring to bear on their studies. Nothing distracts them from their aim; they never lose sight of the diploma that will be their bread-winner. I have seen them at work, these Scotch students. I visited the School of Medicine at Aberdeen University, in the company of Dr. John Struthers, the learned Professor of Anatomy. I was struck, in passing through the dissecting room, to see about fifty students, without any professor, so absorbed in their work that not one of them lifted his head as we passed.

In France it would have been very different: every eye would have been turned to the stranger, and all through the room there would have been a whisper of *Qui ça*? And then remarks and jokes would have run rife.

The English are very prejudiced against the Scotch universities.

How many times have I been told in England that young fellows, who fail to obtain their medical diploma in England, could get them easily enough in Scotland. Nothing is more absurd; if ever it was so, it was a long while ago. In these days, the examinations of the four Scotch faculties are quite as severe and quite as difficult as the English ones.

[Pg 118] Whenever there is a vacant mastership in an English public school advertised in the newspapers, it is always stated that the candidates for the post must be graduates of one of the universities of the United Kingdom. This does not alter the fact that candidates, who are not Oxford or Cambridge men, have no chance of being elected. I have known Scotch masters in the public schools. They had studied at Edinburgh, Glasgow, or Aberdeen, but had gone to Oxford or Cambridge to reside, in order to obtain an English degree.

Why is this?

Simply because these two great English universities give their old scholars an importance, not necessarily literary or scientific, but social; they stamp them gentlemen.

Whatever the English may say, the universities of old Scotland are the nurseries of learned and useful citizens. Of this they would soon be convinced if they would visit those great centres of intellectual activity. But this is just what they avoid doing. When the English go to Scotland, it is to fish or to shoot in the Highlands, and whatever they may get in the way of game or fish, they do not pick up much serious information on the subject of Scotland. [Pg 119]

CHAPTER XX.

Scotch Literature.—Robert Burns.—Walter Scott.—Thomas Carlyle and Adam Smith.—Burns Worship.—Scotch Ballads and Poetry.

Scotland possesses a national literature of which the greatest nations might justly be proud.

To take only the great names, it may safely be said that more touching and sublime poetry than that of Burns was never written, that Walter Scott was the greatest novelist of the century, that Thomas Carlyle has never been surpassed as a historian and essayist, and that Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* can be considered as the basis of modern political economy.

I pass over the Humes, Smolletts, and other illustrious representatives of Scotch literature, on whom I certainly do not intend to write an essay.

But how can one speak of Scotland without devoting a few words to Robert Burns? In their worship of their great poet I see a trait characteristic of the Scotch people.

Scotland is above all things full of practical common sense, but it is steeped to the brim in poetry. There is poetry at the core of every Scot. Visit the castle of the rich, or the cottage of the poor, or [Pg 120] step into your hotel bedroom, and you will see the portrait of the graceful bard.

I happened to be in Edinburgh on the 25th of January, the anniversary of Burns' birth. The theatres were empty. Everyone was celebrating the anniversary. Dinners, meetings, lectures were consecrated to Burns; and that which was passing in Edinburgh was also passing, on a small scale, in every little Scotch village.

It was a national communion.

Burns wrote in Scotch, and in celebrating the anniversary of his birth, they celebrated a national fête. His poetry reminds them that they belong to a nation perfectly distinct from England, a nation having a literature of her own. This is why his memory is revered by high and low alike. The Scotch could no more part with their Burns than England with Shakespeare, or Italy with Dante. The Gaelic tongue is rapidly dying out, Scotch customs become more and more English every day, but each year only adds to the glory of Robert Burns. His poems have run rapidly through many editions—they have reached more than a hundred up to now—the sad story of his life is retold every year, and his portrait is still in great demand. The popularity Burns still enjoys in Scotland may be judged from the fact than in one single shop in Edinburgh there are twenty thousand portraits of the poet sold annually.

[Pg 121] Whilst the English allow the house which Carlyle inhabited for so many years at Chelsea to go to ruins, the Scotch take a pride in showing the stranger the little clay cottage where Burns first saw the light on the 25th of January, 1759.

It is with real regret that I turn from the subject of the "Ayrshire Ploughman," his life and his works. Few poets have united as he has, delicate pathos and comic force, pure *rêverie* and the sense of the grotesque. But after all, I should but do what has been done over and over again by his numerous biographers, the chief of whom are Carlyle, Chambers, and Professor Shairp.

Longfellow has said that what Jasmin, the author of the *The Blind Girl of Castel Cuillé*, was to the south of France, Burns was to the south of Scotland: the representative of the heart of the people.

Nothing can be more suave, piquant, and picturesque than the wild and primitive melodies of the songs of Scotland. The Scotch ballad is the spontaneous production of the touching and simple genius of the nation.

The words are full of pathos and rustic humour. The music is light, often plaintive, always graceful. The whole has a delicious perfume of the mountain. I know of no other kind of song to compare with it, unless it were perhaps the songs of the Tyrol and a few *Breton* ballads. [Pg 122]

The verses of Burns and other Scotch poets have inspired some of the greatest musicians. Mendelssohn was a great admirer of them.

Madame Patti delights to charm her audiences with "Comin' thro' the rye," or "Within a mile o' Edinbro' town," and these vocal gems suit the supple voice of the inimitable songstress; they even suit her very person, as she sings them in her arch manner, and finishes up with a saucy little curtsey.

The songs of Scotland, old as they are most of them, have lost nothing of their freshness. They are still the delight of the nation.[E]

CHAPTER XXI.

The Dance in Scotland.—Reels and Highland Schottische.—Is Dancing a Sin?—Dances of Antiquity.—There is no Dancing now.

People do not dance now—in drawing-rooms at least—they walk, says M. Ratisbonne.

In Scotland, however, people still dance.

The Scotch have preserved the primitive, innocent, pastoral character of this exercise.

Nothing is more graceful than the reel and schottische of the Highlands. [Pg 123]

The reel demands great agility. Two swords are placed crosswise on the ground and, to the sound of bagpipes, Donald executes double and triple pirouettes in and out, carefully avoiding the weapons.

Ask me how Society dances in Scotland and I will answer: just as it does elsewhere, but with a gravity that would do honour to our senators.

The Scotch are not all agreed as to whether dancing is sinful or not.

Certain dwellers in the Highlands look on it as the eighth deadly sin; the Shakers, on the contrary, consider it as the most edifying of religious exercises.

Between the two, the margin is wide.

Socrates, the wisest of men in the eyes of Apollo, admired this exercise and learned dancing in his old age. Homer speaks of Merion as a good dancer, and adds that the grace and agility he had acquired in dancing rendered him superior to all the Greek and Trojan warriors.

Dancing was among the religious acts of the Hebrews, Greeks, and Egyptians. The early Fathers of the Church led the dance of the children at solemn festivals.

The holy king David danced in front of the Ark, as we know by the Scriptures.

Real virtue is amiable, and tolerance and gaiety are its distinguishing marks. [Pg 124]

For my part, I know no more charming sight than those village dances, becoming, alas! more and more rare. Boys and girls gave themselves up to mirthful pleasure without thought of harm, and these pastoral fêtes kept alive joy and innocence in the hearts of our villagers. We are growing too serious, the railways and telegraph have upset us and enervated us, we are getting languid and dull.

If I am to believe the Scotch, with whom I have talked on the subject, it is not dancing that they object to, it is the fashion in which people dance nowadays. They admire the contre-dance and minuet, but consider it improper that a man should whirl round a room with a half-dressed lady in his arms.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Wisdom of Scotland.—Proverbs.—Morals in Words and Morals in Deeds.—Maxims.—The Scot is a Judge of Human Nature.—Scotch and Norman Proverbs compared.—Practical Interpretation of a Passage of the Bible.

In a country where everyone moralises, one may expect to find a great number of proverbs, those time-honoured oracles of the wisdom of nations.

And, indeed, Scotland, the home of moral phrases *par excellence*, owns more than three thousand proverbs. [Pg 125]

These proverbs show up all the characteristics of the Scotch people, their prudence, caution, sagacity, self-confidence, and knowledge of human nature.

Several of them are not exclusively Scotch, whatever the Scotch people may say. We have, in

Normandy, many which may differ slightly in the wording, but which express the same ideas, a fact which shows once more how many traits of character the Scot has in common with the Norman.

Here are a few:

Mony smas mak a muckle. The French say "Little streams make big rivers."

Anes payit never cravit (no more debts, no more bothers). The French go further when they say: "A man is the richer for paying his debts." I am afraid the truth of this adage might fail to strike the Scotchman at first sight. The only privilege of a proverb is to be incontestable. This French proverb smacks of the sermon, it oversteps the mark.

A cat may look at a king. One man is as good as another. This illustrates the independence of the Scotch character.

Be a frien' to yoursel', an sae will ithers. "Help yourself and Heaven will help you."

We'll bark oursels ere we buy dogs sae dear. A good maxim of political economy: "Don't pay others to do what you can do for yourself." [Pg 126]

A' Stuarts are na sib to the King: All Stuarts are not related to the King. The French say: "The frock does not make the monk."

Guid folk are scarce, tak care o' me. The Normans say: "Good folks are scarce in the parish, take care of me."

He that cheats me ance, shame fa' him; he that cheats me twice, shame fa' me. A proverb that well illustrates Scotch caution.

The fear of the devil has inspired many Scotch proverbs, which are in constant use still.

The de'il's nae sae ill as he's caaed. A delicate little compliment to his Satanic Majesty: the Scot is right, one never knows what may happen, it is as well to make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness. A personage who receives so few compliments is likely to remember with pleasure the folks who pay them.

The same neat spirit of flattery is visible in the following proverb:

It's a sin to lee on the de'il.

The de'il's bairns hae de'il's luck, and the de'il's aye gude to his ain, are used to hurl at people who excite jealousy by their success.

Scotch sarcasm is well illustrated in such a proverb as:

Ye wad do little for God gin the de'il war deid. This is reducing the *unco' guid* to the level of devil dodgers.

It's ill to wauken sleepin' dogs. This is rather hard on the dog, who certainly cannot be
considered the emblem of wickedness and hypocrisy. In France we say: "Do not waken the [Pg 127]
sleeping cat," and I think with more show of reason.

The following is full of poetry:

The evening bring a' hame. The evening brings the family together around the hearth, and in the evening of life man turns his thoughts homewards, forgets the faults of his neighbours, and lays aside disputes and strivings.

Let him tak a spring on his ain fiddle, says a proverb that illustrates the coolness with which Donald will bide his time. A lawyer, who had to listen to an eloquent tirade of an opponent in court, contented himself with remarking: "Aweel, aweel, sir, you're welcome to a tune on your ain fiddle; but see if I dinna gar ye dance till't afore it's dune."

The same idea occurs in:

Ne'er let on but laugh i' your ain sleeve.

A travelled man has leave to lee: Folks will not go to far countries to prove his words. O Tartarin de Tarascon!

Better learn by your neighbour's skaith than your ain skin. So might Cleopatra have said when she tried the effect of poisons on her slaves before making her own choice.

Drink little that ye may drink lang, is a piece of advice Donald has well laid to heart, only he has modified the first part considerably.

I think I have quoted enough proverbs to prove that the Scot has the measure of his neighbour, [Pg 128]
and knows how to make use of him.

Most of them have a smack of realism which shows that Donald has a serious aim in life, that of being a successful man.

Even the use he makes of the precepts of the Bible proves it. He uses his Bible, but adapts to his purpose the lessons he finds therein.

The Bible is his servant rather than his master, and has this good about it, that with a little cleverness it can be made to prove anything.

If he sometimes come across a precept which is perfectly clear and irrefutable, Donald does not scruple to ignore it.

I was talking with a Scotchman one evening about the different religions of the world, and I remarked to him that when the Mussulmans call us "dogs of Christians," it is not because we are Christians, for they are admirers of the Christian religion, but simply because we do not follow the precepts of Christianity.

"The Mussulmans are quite right," I said, "Christianity is the grandest thing in the world; but Christians are mostly 'Pharisees and hypocrites' who believe little in their religion and act up to it still less."

He, on the contrary, maintained that Christians were no less admirable than their faith, that they followed the precepts contained in the Sermon on the Mount to the letter, and finally that of all Christians the Scotch were the cream. [Pg 129]

We argued long without either of us convincing the other, and I must admit that my host, who was a much cleverer theologian than myself, had the last word.

In taking leave of him that night, I was bold enough to return to the charge. "Come, my dear sir," I began, "if we receive a blow on our right cheek, the Scriptures command us to offer our left also. If a man struck you on the right cheek, now what would you do?"

"What would I do?" he said after drawing a great whiff at his pipe. "What would I do? By Jove, I'd give him two that he wouldn't soon forget, I can tell you!"

I shook hands with my host, and retired in triumph.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Massacre of the English Tongue.—Donald the Friend of France.—Scotch Anecdotes again.—Reason of their Drollery.—Picturesque Dialect.—Dry Old Faces.—A Scotch Chambermaid.—Oddly-placed Moustachios.—My Chimney smokes.—Sarcastic Spirit.—A good Chance of entering Paradise thrown away.—Robbie Burns and the Greenock Shopkeeper.

The Scotch may be recognised at the first word by the very strong,[F] sonorous accent with which they speak English. It is like a German accent with the *r*'s of the Normans. In the [Pg 130] North of Scotland, the accent is so Teutonic that one seems to be listening to Germans talking English. The letters *b*, *d*, and *v* are changed into *p*, *t*, and *f*. The *ch* is perfectly German at the end of a word, such as *loch*. *Ght* becomes *cht*, and is pronounced as in the German word *nacht*.

Certainly there is nothing insurmountably difficult to understand in all this; but that rogue of a Donald has a way of eating the ends of many of his words, of running the mutilated remains in together with such bewildering rapidity, and accompanying the whole with such a tremendous rolling of *r*'s, that the stranger is completely staggered until his ear grows accustomed to the jargon.

The English language is composed of about forty-three thousand words, out of which fourteen thousand are of Germanic origin, and twenty-nine thousand have come into it from the Latin through the Norman dialect. But in Scotland you will hear the people using numbers of modern French words, which are no part of the English vocabulary. These words are remnants of the close relations that existed between France and Scotland in the sixteenth century. They are mostly heard now in the mouths of the older inhabitants.

[Pg 131] For nearly a hundred years past the English have been continually borrowing words from us (a loan which we return with interest), but they are words which will only be found in use among the upper classes. The case is different in Scotland. There the French words were adopted by the people, and it is the people that still use them, and not the better educated classes, for these latter avoid them as vulgar. In a hundred years they will probably have fallen into disuse. It may not therefore be out of place to give here a list, which I think is pretty complete, of the French words that form the last trace of an alliance which has left to this day a very pronounced sentiment of affection for France in the hearts of the Scotch.

There were doubtless many others in use formerly, but I have collected only those which may still be heard in everyday use among the Scotch populace:

Scotch.	English.	French.	
Ashet	Dish	Assiette	
Aumrie	Cupboard	Armoire	
Bonnaille	Parting glass	Bon aller	
Bourd	Jest	Bourde	
Braw	Fine	Brave	
Caraff	Decanter	Carafe	
Certy	Certainly	Certes	
Dambrod	Draught board	Dames	
Dementit	Derange	Démentir	
Dorty	Sulky	Dureté	
Douce	Mild	Doux	
Dour	Obstinate	Dur	
Fash oneself (to)	Get angry (to)	Fâcher (se)	[Pg 132]
Fashious	Troublesome	Fâcheux	
Gardy loo	Look out	Gardez l'eau (gare l'eau)	
Gardyveen	Wine bin	Garde-vin	
Gean	Cherry	Guigne	
Gigot	Leg of mutton	Gigot	
Gou	Taste	Goût	
Grange	Granary	Grange	
Grosserts	Gooseberries	Groseilles	
Gysart	Disguised	Guise	
Haggis	Hatched meat	Hachis	
Hogue	Tainted	Haut goût	
Jalouse (to)	Suspect	Jalouser	
Jupe	Skirt	Jupe	
Kimmer	Gossip	Commère	
Mouter	Mixture of corn	Mouture	
Pantufles	Slippers	Pantoufles	
Pertricks	Partridges	Perdrix	
Petticoat tails	Cakes	Petits gatelles (gâteaux)	
Pouch	Pocket	Poche	
Prosh, madame	Come, madam	Aprochez, madame	
Reeforts	Radishes	Raiforts	
Ruckle	Heap (of stones)	Recueil	
Serviter	Napkin	Serviette	
Sucker	Sugar	Sucre	
Tassie	Cup	Tasse	
Ule	Oi	Huile	
Verity	Truth	Vérité	
Vizzy	Aim	Viser	

These are not, as may be seen, words borrowed from our milliners and dressmakers; they are terms that express the necessaries of life, and which the Scotch housewives have not yet forgotten. [Pg 133] They prove in an irrefutable manner that the two nations mixed and knew each other intimately.

The language spoken by the Scotch lends itself to humour. Their picturesque pronunciation gives their conversation a piquancy which defies imitation. A Scotch anecdote told in Scotch language never misses its effect. Tell it in English, or any other language, and it loses all its raciness.

As I have already remarked, the Scot does not seek to appear witty, still less amusing, and there lies the charm. His remarks are not intended to be quaint, but are intensely so. Their drollery lies in the dialect and the combination of ideas. The Scotch are quick to seize the humorous side of things, and that without being aware of it. Their remarks are made with an imperturbable gravity, without a gesture, or the movement of a muscle.

I fancy I see still the old Scotch servant with whom I was speaking on the subject of a fire which would not burn in my room at a hotel. All at once she interrupted the conversation; she had just perceived, on the top of my head, a somewhat solitary lock of hair.

"Are ye growin' a moustache on the top o' your heid?" she exclaimed without a smile. [Pg 134]

My first impulse was to bid her mind her business, and make my fire draw. But though I disliked the familiarity, I saw immediately that the good creature, a bony Scotchwoman of at least fifty summers, had not had the least intention of joking me, still less of vexing me. Her stolid expression, her quaint accent, to say nothing of the incongruous idea that had come to her lips, it all diverted me intensely, and I laughed well over it to the great astonishment of the worthy woman, who went away grumbling at the fire which had proved very obdurate.

The chimney continued to smoke horribly, and presently I rang the bell again.

The woman reappeared.

"This chimney smokes atrociously still," I said.

You should have seen her dry old face as she simply remarked:

"Eh, mony a ane has complained o' that chimney."

The familiarity of the Scotch servant is an old theme. The good humour of the master in Scotland encourages familiarity in the servant, and the fidelity of the latter causes it to be overlooked.

I remember the dinner-gong had been sounded in a house where I was one day visiting, and not being quite ready, I was still in my room. Someone knocked at my door. It was an old servant. "Noo," said she, "it's time to come doun to your dinner." [Pg 135]

Scotch wit is cutting, there is often a sarcastic thrust in it, sometimes even a little spice of malice.

You hear none of those good broad bulls, brimming over with innocence, that are so amusing in the Irish; the Scotch witticisms are sharp strokes that penetrate and strike home.

Lunardi, the aeronaut, having made an ascent in his balloon at Edinburgh, came down on the property of a Presbyterian minister in the neighbourhood of Cupar.

"We have been up a prodigious way," said the aeronaut to the minister; "I really believe we must have been close to the gates of Paradise."

"What a pity you did not go in!" replied the Scotchman, "you may never be so near again."

I might give numerous examples of this sarcastic wit that so often underlies Scotch anecdotes. I will only cite one more. This time we have Robert Burns for hero, and I extract the story from his biography:

The celebrated poet was one day walking on Greenock pier, when a rich tradesman, who happened to be there also, slipped and fell in the water. Being unable to swim, he would have been drowned but for the bravery of a sailor who threw himself, all dressed as he was, into the water, and brought him to land.

When the tradesman had regained consciousness and recovered from his fright, he bethought himself that he ought to reward his rescuer. Putting his hand in his pocket, he drew out a [Pg 136] shilling, which he generously presented to the brave sailor.

The crowd that had gathered round in admiration of the sailor's heroic act could not restrain its indignation. Protestations were followed by hoots, and the object of their scorn came very near being returned to the water—to learn his way about.

Robbie Burns, however, succeeded in appeasing their wrath.

"Calm yourselves," said he; "this gentleman is certainly a better judge of his own value than you can be."

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Staff of Life in Scotland.—Money is round and flat.—Cheap Restaurants.—Democratic Bill of Fare.—Caution to the Public.—"Parritch!"*—The Secret of Scotland's Success.—The National Drink of Scotland.—Scotch and Irish Whiskies.—Whisky a very slow Poison.—Dean Ramsay's best Anecdote.*

In Scotland, the staff of life is porridge, pronounced *parritch* by the natives.

Porridge is served at breakfast in every Scotch home, from the castle to the cottage. It is the first dish at breakfast, or the only one, according to the income. [Pg 137]

Porridge is a food which satisfies and strengthens, and which, it seems, is rich in bone-forming matter.

Many a brave young Scotch undergraduate, with rubicund face and meagre purse, breakfasts off a plate of porridge which he prepares for himself, while *ces messieurs* of Oxford breakfast like princes.

I saw a labourer near Dumfries, who, on his wages of twelve shillings a week, was bringing up a family of eight children, all of them robust and radiant with health, thanks to porridge. The eldest, a fine fellow of eighteen, had carried off a scholarship at Aberdeen University. In England, no professional career would have been open to him.

Few of the lower class English people will condescend to eat porridge; they will have animal food twice a day, if they can get it, and beer or other stimulants. Twenty years of prosperity and high wages have spoiled, ruined the working class in England. Now wages have fallen, or rather work has become scarce, and these people, who never thought of saving anything in the days of their splendour, are plenty of them lacking bread. They are not cured for all that. If you offered them porridge, they would feel insulted. "It is workhouse food," they will tell you.

When the Scotch maidservant receives her wages, she goes and puts part in the Savings Bank, like the French *bonne* of the provinces. When the English servant takes up hers, she straightway [Pg 138] goes and buys a new hat to get photographed in it. Money burns her pockets.

Money is round, say the English, it was meant to roll; money is flat, say the Scotch and the Normans, it was meant to be piled up.

When he is in work, the workman of London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, will spend three or four shillings a day on his keep; when he is out of work, he stands about the tavern-door and whines for help.

I visited one day, in Aberdeen, a restaurant where a copious repast was being served for the modest sum of two pence a head. The room was full of healthy-looking workmen, tidily dressed and busily doing honour to the porridge and other items on the *menu*.

The bill of fare for the week was posted up at the door. Here is a copy of it:

> "*Monday*—Porridge, sausage and potato.
> "*Tuesday*—Scotch broth, beef pie.
> "*Wednesday*—Peasoup and ham.
> "*Thursday*—Porridge, sausage and potato.
> "*Friday*—Fish and potato.
> "*Saturday*—Porridge, sausage and potato."

A trifle monotonous, perhaps, this bill of fare, I own; but, at all events, you will admit that for twopence the Aberdeen workman can have a good square meal.

What would the Parisians have given for this fare during the siege! [Pg 139]

On the walls, I observed the following notice:

"The public are respectfully requested to pay in advance, so as to avoid mistakes."

"To avoid mistakes!" Thoroughly Scotch this little caution!

I had always seen porridge eaten before the other food. So seeing a worthy fellow ask that his porridge might be brought to him after his sausage and potato, I made bold to ask him the explanation of it.

"Do you take your porridge after your meat?" I enquired.

"Ay, mon," he replied, "it's to chock up the chinks."

Ask a Scotch rustic what he takes for breakfast, and he will answer proudly:

"Parritch, mon!"

And for dinner?

"Parrritch!!"

And for supper?

"*Parrrritch!!!*"

If he took a fourth meal, he would roll in another *r*; it is his way of expressing his sentiments.

I like people who roll their *r*'s: there is backbone in them.

Robert Burns, who has sung of the haggis and the whisky of his native land, has only made [Pg 140] indirect mention of porridge. He ought to have consecrated to it an ode in several cantos.

Porridge! it is the secret of the Scot's success. Try to compete with a man who can content himself with porridge, when you must have your three or four meals a day and animal food at two of them.

It is porridge that gives a healthy body, cool head, and warm feet;

Porridge promotes the circulation of the blood;

It is porridge that calms the head after the libations of overnight.

It is porridge that keeps the poor man from ending his days in the Union.

It is porridge that helps the son of the humble peasant to aspire to the highest career, in allowing him to live on a scholarship at the University;

It is porridge that makes such men of iron as Livingstone and Gordon;

And, above all, it is porridge that puts the different classes in Scotland on a footing of equality once a day at least, and thus makes of them the most liberal-minded people of Great Britain.

The national drink of Scotland is Scotch whisky.

The Scotch will tell you that Irish whisky is no good; the Irish will tell you that Scotch whisky is simply detestable. I have tasted both, and, having no national prejudice on the point, have no [Pg 141] hesitation in saying that there is nothing to choose between them: both are horrible.

Whisky may easily be obtained by dissolving a little soot in brandy. As the coal-smoky taste is much more pronounced in the Scotch whisky than in the Irish, I conclude that, in the latter, the dose is smaller.

They say that of all alcoholic liquors whisky is the least injurious. By "they" must be understood all the good folks who cannot do without this beverage. There must, however, be truth in it, or Scotland and Ireland must have been depopulated long since. And, as we know the Scotch generally live to a good old age, and centenarians are not rare in the Land o' Cakes, if whisky be a poison, it must be a slow one—a very slow one.

The prettiest anecdote, in Dean Ramsay's *Reminiscences*, relates to whisky, and I cannot refrain from quoting it.

An old Scotch lady had just sent for her gardener to cut the grass on her lawn.

"Cut it short," she said to him; "mind, Donald, an inch at the bottom is worth two at the top."

Always the same way of speaking in moral sentences so common in Scotland.

The work done, the good lady offered Donald a glass of whisky, and proceeded to pour it out, but [Pg 142] showed sign of stopping before the top was reached.

"Fill it up, ma'am, fill it up," said the shrewd-witted fellow, "an inch at the top is worth twa at the bottom."

CHAPTER XXV.

Hors-d'œuvre.—A Word to the Reader and another to the Critic.—A Man who has a right to be proud.—Why?

Here I pause, dear Reader.

An idea has just come to my head, and for fear it might be lonely there, I will impart it to you without delay.

Now, to come at once to the sense of the matter, will you allow me for once—for once only—to pay myself a compliment that I think I well deserve? It is the word "Ireland," which I have just written in the preceding chapter, that makes me think of addressing sincere congratulations to myself. Forgive me for this little digression, it will relieve me.

I have written two books on England, a third on the relations between England and France, and I shall soon have finished a volume of recollections of Scotland.

How many times I have had to write the words "England" and "Ireland," I could not say; but I affirm that I have not once—no, not once—spoken of "Perfidious Albion" or the "Emerald Isle." [Pg 143]

"Indeed!" and "What of that?" you will perhaps exclaim.

Well, whatever you may say, I assure you that if ever a man had a right to feel proud of himself, I have.

More than once have I been tempted, once or twice I have had to make an erasure, but I am the first who has triumphed over the difficulty.

Come, dear Critic, if thou wilt be amiable, here is an occasion. Admit that a Frenchman, who can write fourteen or fifteen hundred pages on the subject of England, without once calling her "Perfidious Albion," is a man who is entitled to thy respect and thy indulgence for the thousand and one shortcomings of which he knows himself to be guilty.

There, I feel better now. Let us now go and see Donald's big *touns*. [Pg 144]

CHAPTER XXVI.

Glasgow.—Origin of the Name.—Rapid Growth of the City.—St. Mungo's Injunction to Donald.—James Watt and the Clyde.—George Square.—Exhibition of Sculpture in the open Air.—Royal Exchange.—Wellington again.—Wanted an Umbrella.—The Cathedral.—How it was saved by a Gardener.—The Streets.—Kelvingrove Park.—The University.—The Streets at Night.—The Tartan Shawls a Godsend.—The Populace.—Pity for the poor little Children.—Sunday Lectures in Glasgow.—To the Station, and let us be off.

If, as Shelley has said, "Hell is a city much like London," Glasgow must be very much like the dungeon where Satan shuts up those who do not behave themselves.

The word "Glasgow" is of Celtic origin, and, it appears, means *Sombre Valley*.

The town has not given the lie to its name.

I have travelled from the south of England to the north of Scotland; I have seen every corner of the great towns, and I do not hesitate to give the palm to Glasgow: it is the dirtiest, blackest, most repulsive-looking nest that it was ever given to man to inhabit.

I am bound to say that the Scotch themselves, so justly proud of their old Scotland, dare not take it upon themselves to defend Glasgow: they give it over to the visitor, not, however, without [Pg 145] having added, as a kind of extenuating circumstance:

"There is money in it."

At the time of the Reformation, Glasgow was but an insignificant little town with five thousand inhabitants. At the commencement of this century it contained about eight thousand. To-day it is the most important city of Scotland, a city which holds, including the suburbs, very nearly a million souls, tortured by the passion for wealth or by misery and hunger.

If the importance of the place is recent, the place itself dates back more than thirteen centuries. It was indeed in 560 that Saint Mungo founded a bishopric there, and no doubt, to try the faith of Donald, whom he had just converted to Christianity, he said to him, as he put an umbrella into his hands with strict injunctions never to part with it:

"For thy sins, Donald, here shalt thou dwell."

Glasgow is the home of iron and coal. Coal underground, coal in the air, coal on people's faces, coal everywhere!

There rise thousands of high chimneys, vomiting flames and great clouds of smoke, which settle down on the town and, mixing with the humidity of the streets, form a black, sticky mud that clogs your footsteps. No one thinks of wearing elastic-side boots. They would go home with naked [Pg 146] feet if they did. Glasgow people wear carmen's boots, strongly fastened on with leather laces.

I assure you that if you were to fall in the street, you would leave your overcoat behind when you got up.

The neighbourhood of the sea and the Clyde has been, and still is, a source of prosperity and opulence to the town; and here it behoves me to speak of the Scotch energy, which has made of this stream a river capable of giving anchorage to vessels drawing twenty-four feet of water.

In 1769, the illustrious James Watt was directed to examine the river. At that time small craft could scarcely enter the river even at high water. Watt indeed found that, at low tide, the rivulet—for it was nothing else—had but a depth of one foot two inches, and at high tide never more than three feet three inches.

To-day you may see the largest ironclads afloat there. This gigantic enterprise cost no less than £10,300,000.

It was on the Clyde that Henry Bell, in 1812, launched the first steamboat. Since then the banks of the Clyde have been lined with vast shipbuilding yards, which turn out from four to five hundred vessels a year.

[Pg 147] Glasgow always had a taste for smoke. Before the war of American Independence, this town had the monopoly of the tobacco commerce. Colossal fortunes were realised over the importation of the Virginian weed in the end of the last century. At present Glasgow trades in coal, machinery, iron goods, printed calico, etc.

The Glasgow man has been influenced by his surroundings. The climate is dull and damp, the man is obstinate and laborious; the ground contains coal and iron for the Clyde to carry to sea, and so the man is a trader.

And, indeed, what is there to be done in Glasgow but work? Out-of-door life is interdicted, so to speak; gaiety is out of the question; everything predisposes to industry and thought. People divide their time between work and prayer, the kirk and the counting-house; such is life in Glasgow.

And now let us take a stroll, or rather let us walk, for a stroll implies pleasure, and I certainly cannot promise you that.

The most striking feature of Glasgow is George Square. It is large, and literally crowded with statues, a regular carnival. It looks as if the Glasgow folks had said: "We must have some statues, but do not, for all that, let us encumber the streets with them; let us keep them out of the way in a place to themselves. If a visitor likes to go and look at them, much good may it do him." At a certain distance the effect is that of a cemetery, or picture to yourself Madame Tussaud's [Pg 148] exhibition *à la belle étoile*.

When I say *à la belle étoile*, it is but a figure of speech in Glasgow.

In this exhibition of sculpture, I discover Walter Scott, Robert Burns, David Livingstone, James Watt, Prince Albert, Queen Victoria, Thomas Campbell, and Sir Robert Peel. Some are on foot, some on horseback. There are none driving, but there is Scott who, in the centre of this Kensal Green, is perched on the summit of a column eighty feet high. It is enough to make the tallest chimney of the neighbourhood topple over with envy. By dint of a little squeezing, it would be easy to make room for a dozen more statues.

In Queen's Street, quite close to George Square, we find the Royal Exchange—an elegant building in the Corinthian style—in front of which stands an equestrian statue of gigantic dimensions.

It is Wellington—the inevitable, the eternal, the everlasting Wellington.

Oh, what a bore that Wellington is!

This statue was erected at the expense of the town for a sum of £10,000.

Wellington will never know what he has cost his compatriots.

Let us go up George Street, turn to the left by High Street, towards the north-east, and we shall come to the Cathedral, the only one which the fanatic vandalism of the Puritans spared. I was told in Scotland that this is how it escaped. The Puritans had come to Glasgow in 1567 to destroy [Pg 149] the Cathedral of Saint Mungo. But a gardener, a practical Scot of the neighbourhood, reasoned with them in the following manner:

"My friends, you are come with the meritorious intention of destroying this temple of popery. But why destroy the edifice? It will cost a mint of money to build such another. Could not you use this one and worship God in it after our own manner?"

The Puritans, who were Scots too, saw the force of the argument and the cathedral was saved.

The edifice is gothic, and very handsome. I recommend especially the crypt, under the choir. The windows are most remarkable.

Around the cathedral is a graveyard containing fine monuments. I read on a tablet, put up in commemoration of the execution of nine covenanters (1666-1684) the following inscription, which shows once more how they forgive in Scotland. Here is the hint to the persecutors:

"*They'll know at resurrection day*
To murder saints was no sweet play."

Let us return down High Street as far as Argyle Street, the great artery of Glasgow.

After a few minutes' walking, we come to Buchanan Street, the fashionable street of Glasgow—I mean the one which contains the fashionable shops, the Regent Street of this great [Pg 150] manufacturing city. The houses are well-built, I do not say tastefully, but solidly. This might be said indeed of the whole town: it is dirty, but substantial. Let us push on to Sanchyhall Street, and there turn to the west. We presently come to the park of Kelvingrove, undulating, well laid out, and surrounded with pretty houses: it is the only part of Glasgow which does not give you cold shivers. Among the well-kept paths, flowerbeds, and ponds, you forget the coal-smoke for awhile. At the end of the park runs the Kelvin, a little stream which you cross to get to Gilmore Hill, on the summit of which stand the buildings of the university. The interior of these buildings is magnificent.

The Bute Hall is one of the finest halls I ever saw: 108 feet long, 75 broad, and 70 high. A splendid library and all the comfortable accessories, which they are careful to supply studious youth with in this country. The university cost more than half-a-million. With the exception of a few other parks—which, however, cannot be compared to those of London—there is nothing more to be seen in Glasgow, and if your business is transacted, go to your hotel, strap your luggage, and be off.

But if you prefer it, we will arm ourselves with umbrellas and return to the streets, and see what kind of people are to be met there.

That which strikes one at a first visit, is that from five in the afternoon almost every respectable-looking person has disappeared, and the town seems given over to the populace. Like [Pg 151] the City proper in London, Glasgow is only occupied by the superior classes during business hours. From four to five o'clock there is a general stampede towards the railway stations. The *employé*, who earns two or three hundred a year, has his villa or cottage in the suburbs. The rich merchant, the engineer, the ironmaster, all these live far from the city.

The streets of Glasgow, from six or seven in the evening, are entirely given up to the manufacturing population—the dirtiest and roughest to be seen anywhere, I should think.

I have seen poverty and vice in Paris, in London, in Dublin, and Brussels, but they are nothing to compare to the spectacle that Glasgow presents. It is the living illustration of some unwritten page of Dante.

"But there is money in Glasgow."

The lower-class women of London do wear a semblance of a toilette: fur mantles in rags, battered, greasy hats with faded flowers, flounced skirts in tatters—an apology for a costume, in short.

But here, there is nothing of all that. No finery, not even a hat. The tartan seems to take the place of all.

The attributions of this tartan are multiple. It is as useful to the women of the lower classes in the [Pg 152] great Scotch towns as the reindeer is to the Laplander.

This tartan serves them as a hood when it is cold; as an umbrella when it rains; as a blanket in winter nights; as a mattress in summer ones; as a basket when they go to market; a towel when they do their own and their children's dry-polishing; a cradle for their babies, which they carry either slung over their back, Hottentot fashion, or hanging in front, like the kangaroos. When poverty presses hard, the tartan goes to the pawnbroker's shop, whence it issues in the form of a sixpence or a shilling, according to its value. After living in them they live on them, and so these useful servants pass from external to internal use, and appease the hunger or thirst of their owners for a day or two. A very godsend this tartan, as you see.

A Glasgow police inspector told me that, having one day to make a search at a pawnbroker's in the town, he had found more than fifteen hundred of these shawls on the premises. "Many of those poor borrowers are Irish," he said. Did he say this to pass on to a neighbour that which seemed to him a disgrace to his own country? In any case, it is a fact that there are a great number of Irish in Glasgow.

No doubt poverty, with its accompaniments of shame and vice, exists in all great cities; but here it has a distressing aspect that it presents in no other country. The Arab beggar makes one smile [Pg 153] as he majestically drapes around him his picturesque, multicoloured rags; the lazzarone, lying on the quay of Naples under the radiant Italian sky, is a prince compared to the wretch who drags out his existence in the dirty streets or garrets of Glasgow.

"But there is money in Glasgow."

In Paris, the newspapers are sold in shops or pretty kiosks kept by clean, tidy, respectable women. In London and other large English towns, the papers are cried in the streets by low-class men and boys. In Glasgow and Edinburgh the work is done by ragged children, who literally besiege you as you walk the streets: poor little girls half-naked, shivering, and starving, with their feet in the mud, try to earn a few pence to appease their own hunger, or, perhaps, furnish an unnatural parent with the means of getting tipsy. Others have a little stock of matches that they look at with an envious eye, one fancies, as one thinks of Andersen's touching tale.

Oh, pity for the poor little children!

In a country so Christian, so philanthropic, can it be that childhood is abandoned thus? Asylums for the aged are to be seen in plenty, and is not youth still more interesting than age, and must it needs commit some crime before it has the right to enter some house of refuge?

I cannot tell you how sad the sight of those poor little beings, forsaken of God and man, made me feel. [Pg 154]

But how shall I describe my feelings when, having drawn the attention of a Scotchman who was with me to one of these pitiful little creatures, I heard him say:

"Do not stop, the immorality of those children is awful."

No, it is not possible; it must be a bad dream, a hideous nightmare.

"It is a fact," said my companion, who knows Glasgow as he knows himself.

"But there is money in it."

It seems incomprehensible that these children should not be reclaimed, still more incomprehensible that no one seeks to do it. The money spent in statues of Wellington would more than suffice, and the Iron Duke would be none the worse off in Paradise.

Yes, this is what may be seen in Glasgow, in that city so pious, that to calm the feelings of some of the inhabitants, the literary and scientific lectures which used to be given to the people on Sunday evenings in Saint Andrew's Hall have had to be discontinued.

Heaven be thanked, Glasgow is not Scotland, and we can go and rejoice our eyes in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Braemar, and elsewhere, and admire the lakes and the blue mountains. [Pg 155]

CHAPTER XXVII.

Edinburgh—Glasgow's Opinion thereof, and vice versâ.—High Street.—The old Town.—John Knox's House.—The old Parliament House.—Holyrood Palace.—Mary Stuart.—Arthur's Seat.—The University.—The Castle.—Princes Street.—Two Greek Buildings.—The Statues.—Walter Scott.—The inevitable Wellington again.—Calton Hill.—The Athens of the North and the modern Parthenon.—Why did not the Scotch buy the ancient Parthenon of the modern Greeks?—Lord Elgin.—The Acropolis of Edinburgh.—Nelson for a Change.

A railway journey of an hour and ten minutes transports you from darkness into light. You leave Glasgow in gloom, wrapped in its eternal winding-sheet of fog and mud, and you arrive at Edinburgh to find clean streets, pure air, and a clear beautiful sky. Such at least was my own experience, six times repeated. The prospect delights the eyes and heart; your lungs begin to do their work easily; you breathe freely once more, and once more feel glad to be alive.

You alight at Waverley Station in the centre of the city. You cannot do better than go straightway and take up your quarters at the Royal Hotel, Princes Street, opposite the gigantic Gothic monument erected to Walter Scott. Ask for a room looking on the street. Take possession of it without delay, and open your window: the sight that will meet your gaze is truly enchanting. At [Pg 156] your feet, the most elegant street imaginable. No houses opposite: only large gardens, beautifully kept, sloping gracefully away to the bottom of a valley, whence the ground rises almost perpendicularly, bearing on its summit houses of a prodigious height. It is the old town of Edinburgh, where everything will bring back memories of Mary Stuart and the novels of Scott. On the right the famous castle perched on a sheer rock nearly four hundred feet high; the whole bathed in a blue-grey haze that forms a light veil to soften its colouring and contour. It is impossible to imagine a more romantic sight in the midst of a large modern city.

Whether your tastes be archæological or artistic, you will be able to satisfy them in one of the two towns of Edinburgh, the old city to the south, or the modern town to the north.

The Glasgow folks say there is not much money made in Edinburgh, and speak of the place with a certain contempt, which the Edinburgh people return with interest.

It is always amusing to hear the dwellers in neighbouring towns run each other down: Manchester and Liverpool, Brighton and Hastings. The nearer the rival towns are to each other, the livelier and more diverting is the jealousy. Go and ask a Saint-Malo man what he thinks of Saint-Servan, and *vice versâ*! [Pg 157]

"Ah! you are going to Edinburgh," the Glasgow people say to you; "it is full of snobs, who give themselves airs and are as poor as Job. Ours is a substantial place, sir. We've no time to waste on nonsense here; we go in for commerce and manufactures."

"Ah! you have just come from Glasgow," say the Edinburgh people. "What do you think of the illiterate parvenus that are for ever rattling their money bags? You will find no worship of the golden calf here; we cultivate the beautiful, and go in for science and literature, not manufactures; our town is essentially one of learning."

This is true. Edinburgh is one of the most important intellectual centres of the world, and its celebrated university, and learned societies, have justly earned for it the appellation of "the Athens of the North," a name which this unique city deserves also on account of its natural features, the style in which it is built, and the numerous monuments it possesses.

Edinburgh has a population of 350,000 inhabitants, including the sentry at Holyrood Palace.

According to d'Anville, the city stands on the site of the Roman station of Alata Castra. Towards the year 626 the fortress became the residence of Edwin, King of Northumbria, who gave it his name.

The old city was entirely destroyed by fire in 1537. That which now bears the name of *old town* [Pg 158] dates from the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth.

The modern part of Edinburgh was begun at the close of last century, and the handsomest streets are of a quite recent date.

A tout seigneur tout honneur. Let us commence our inspection by a visit to Holyrood Palace.

I should like to transform this little volume into a guide-book, and give you the history of all the houses we are passing, as we go through the old town, for almost every one has its history. There on your left is the house of John Knox, with its flight of steps, its overhanging stories, and, over the door, the inscription, "Love God above all, and your neighbour as yourself." Here is the house where Cromwell decided on the execution of Charles I.; there Hume and Smollett wrote history.

At the end of Canongate, the prolongation of High Street, we come out on a large open square. The palace of Holyrood is before us.

Standing in a hollow, and surrounded by high hills, the aspect of the palace is most sombre. From the moment you cross the threshold, a thousand sad thoughts assail you. You are in the home of Mary Stuart. Everything speaks to you of her. Her sweet, tragic face, her noble presence, her thoughtful brow—you see all again in these halls instinct with her souvenir. They haunt the place as they still haunt the memory of the Scotch. [Pg 159] In spite of her bigotry, in spite of all the crimes historians have imputed to her, the Scotch cherish her memory, think only of her misfortunes and sufferings, and will not hear you speak of her with anything but respect. One may easily imagine the ascendency which this woman must have had over those who came in contact with her.

But let us go in, and first we must get our sixpences ready; for in this country, where *l'hospitalité se donne*, you must pay everywhere, and on entering too, for fear you may not be pleased when you come out: *to avoid misunderstandings*, as the Scotch put it.

On the first floor we enter the picture gallery. It is here that the Scotch peers are elected. The room contains portraits of the Scottish kings, from Fergus I. to James VII. At the end of it we find a door which leads to the apartments occupied by the unfortunate princess. Small windows throw a feeble light on the sombre tapestries; though the day is fine, it is difficult to distinguish the various objects of furniture. There is an air of mystery about the place. Poor Mary! After the gay French court, what a tomb must this palace have seemed! Between two windows is a little mirror that must often have reflected back the image of that beautiful countenance, stamped with sadness, the fair head that was one day to roll at the feet of the executioner. Close by, a portrait which must be a libel on so gracious an original. [Pg 160] At the two extremities of the bedroom two little closets—I had almost said, cells—formed in the towers which overhang from the outside. The one on the left is the dressing-room; that on the right the supper-room. Near the latter a door leads to the secret staircase. You can reconstruct for yourself the scene of the murder of the favourite Italian secretary, who paid with his blood for the honour of having now and then cheered the heart of the queen with his songs. On the floor of the audience-room you are shown the stains of the unhappy Rizzio's blood. It was here, too, that Chastelard, grandson of Bayard, declared his love to his royal mistress, whom he had accompanied to Scotland on her departure from the French court. Poor Chastelard! he, too, payed with his life for the love which the enchantress had inspired in him, not for this first declaration, which was forgiven him, but for a graver offence, committed at Rossend Castle, of which I shall have occasion to speak presently.

A visit to Holyrood always leaves a painful impression. It is the temple of misfortune, and I can understand Queen Victoria's preference for the bright breezy Highlands.

On our return through Canongate and High Street, we shall come to the Castle. Without going much out of our way, we can go and see the Parliament House and the University; but first, let us go to the summit of Arthur's Seat, a hill eight hundred and twenty-two feet high, situated behind the Palace of Holyrood. [Pg 161] The ascent is not difficult, and the magnificence of the panorama that meets the eyes is beyond description.

The House where the Scotch Parliament met before the union of the Scotch and English Crowns, is now transformed into Courts of Law. This building is interesting not only on account of the souvenirs it evokes, but also on account of the hopes it keeps alive in the hearts of the Scotch. Before many years have elapsed, the representatives of Scotland will probably sit there to manage the local affairs of the nation.

Edinburgh University, which dates from the year 1582, is the finest edifice of the kind in Europe: two hundred and fifty-five feet long, by three hundred and fifty-eight broad. A library of one hundred and fifty thousand volumes (sixpence entrance). Rare manuscripts. Magnificent lecture rooms. Over three thousand students work under most eminent professors.

Facing the University is the Museum of Arts and Science. For a list of the innumerable treasures it contains, I must refer the reader to guides to Scotland.

The Royal Infirmary, with its numerous buildings, in the midst of which rises a tower thirty-three feet high, arrests our attention a few moments. From here we can turn down High Street to admire the Cathedral of Saint Giles, so full of souvenirs of the Reformation, and then continue our course up the great street of the old city, as far as the famous Edinburgh Castle, a feudal [Pg 162] edifice standing on the summit of a perpendicular rock, from whence you can survey the old and new towns.

The Crown Room contains the insignia of the Scottish sovereigns. Close to it is the room where Mary Stuart gave birth to the son who was to unite the crowns of England and Scotland. In this rapid glimpse of Edinburgh, it would be out of place to enter into all the history of the Castle, the sieges it has stood, and so on. Historical castles all resemble each other a little; but that which makes the interest of this one unique is its marvellous position: the sixteenth century at your right; the hills and the sea beyond; on your left, the parks; in front, nearly four hundred feet below you, the beautiful modern town, with its elegant buildings, straight, wide streets, and its statues; a little in the distance, Calton Hill, with its Greek monuments; beyond again, Leith with its harbour bristling with masts; you are chained to the spot in admiration.

Following the castle terrace, we will descend towards the new town, and come out at the west of Princes Street.

We are walking towards the East. On our left, we shall have the shops; on our right, the public gardens, a mixture of *Boulevard des Italiens* and *Champs Elysées*. Everything here is in perfect taste. Look at the statues judiciously placed about the public gardens, streets, and squares!

O George Square! [Pg 163]

Here is a shop-window full of photographs. Let us stop and look in: they are not portraits of actresses and fashionable beauties, but chiefly of professors of the University, of which Edinburgh is so proud. Remarkable among them is Professor Blackie, his fine head recalling a likeness of Lizst. It was this same Professor Blackie on whom the people of Glasgow made such an attack about two years ago, for having given, one Sunday in Saint Andrew's Hall, a most charming and poetical discourse on the Songs of Scotland.

The sweep of the public gardens on the right is agreeably broken by two specimens of the most elegant Greek architecture: they are the buildings of the Royal Institution and the National Gallery. Nothing could be more graceful, more Attic, than these twin structures. The first contains thousands of national relics, from the pulpit of Knox to the Ribbon of the Garter worn by Prince Charles Stuart. The second is an admirable museum of painting and sculpture.

The most striking monument of Princes Street is the one which was erected to Walter Scott in 1844. It has the form of a Gothic steeple, and is not less than two hundred feet high. It resembles somewhat the Albert Memorial in Hyde Park, but with this difference, that, while designed with ten times as much taste, it cost about a tenth of the money. The novelist's heroes and heroines are gracefully placed in the niches; the author himself is seated in an attitude of contemplation in [Pg 164] the midst of his creations. Now for the comic side of the thing. A staircase conducts to the summit of the monument, to which you may mount for the sum of twopence.

On the East of Princes Street are two very fine buildings—the Post Office and the Register Office, or resting-place of the national archives. This latter building has a magnificent flight of steps, in front of which is an equestrian statue—you guess whose, of course: the inevitable, the eternal, the never-to-be-sufficiently-paraded.

What a bore that creature is!

I am quite willing to admit that Wellington did exist, and that he rendered his country service; but is that a reason for turning him into a bore? He is a very nightmare!

Napoleon, surely, was as great a general as Wellington. We have placed him on the top of the Vendome Column, but we had the good taste not to stick him up in every provincial city.

That is true, you will perhaps say; but Wellington saved his country, whereas Napoleon ruined his. That is not my opinion; but we will not argue.

Joan of Arc saved France. We have her statue at Domrémy, where she was born; at Orleans, where she handed over to her king his kingdom; and at Rouen, where she suffered death.

I should understand every Scotch town having a statue of Burns, and another of Scott. These two geniuses personify Scotland; they remind the Scotch that Scotland is a nation, with a literature of [Pg 165] her own; they keep up patriotism in every heart. But what did Wellington do for Scotland? If, in 1840, for instance, the Scotch had asked the English to give them their national rights and their parliament, Wellington is probably the general who would have gone to reduce them to order.

But let us say no more about it. We will continue our walk to the end of Princes Street. Here we are at the foot of Calton Hill. By means of flights of steps and paths we pass the Observatory, and reach the top, to see the monument erected to Nelson's memory (threepence entrance).

Between this monument and the Observatory, there stands a reproduction of the Parthenon. This is what chiefly suggested the idea of calling Edinburgh the Athens of the North. Calton Hill does its best to play the part of the Acropolis. But, unhappily, this Parthenon, built to commemorate the victory of Waterloo, remains unfinished for want of funds. It is true that this lends it a ruined look, which does not give a bad effect to the scene. But £20,000 to make a ruin is dear. In that time the Greeks would have sold the Scots the real Parthenon for half the money. Half the money! What am I talking about? for a timepiece. Go to the British Museum and see what Lord Elgin got for a clock: the marbles and frieze of the Parthenon, the bas-reliefs of Phidias, columns from the temple of Diana at Ephesus, the epitaph of the Athenians who died at Potidœa, the bas-reliefs [Pg 166] of the temple of Ægina. Lord Elgin was a business-like Scotchman. In 1816 the English bought his collection of him for £36,000. They would not sell it to-day for £500,000.

Going round the Acropolis we will descend near the High School, the most important school in

Edinburgh, opposite which stands the monument to Robert Burns (twopence entrance). It is rather insignificant-looking, and reminds one of that erected by the Athenians in memory of Lysicrates. Cost, £2,600.

I pass over many museums and institutions; but I hope I have succeeded in showing that Edinburgh is a place to be seen, and quite repays one for the trouble of a long journey.

And now let us see what kind of people one meets in the streets of Edinburgh. After that, I will ask your permission to take you across the Firth of Forth, and show you a castle little known in England, where I hope we shall be able to pass a little time pleasantly. [Pg 167]

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Where are the Scotch?—Something wanting in the Landscape.—The Inhabitants.—The Highlanders and the Servant Girls.—Evening in Princes Street.—Leith and the Firth of Forth.—Rossend Castle at Burntisland.—Mary Stuart once more.—I receive Scotch Hospitality in the Bedroom where Chastelard was as enterprising as unfortunate.

With the exception of the famous tartan shawls, which we come across again in Edinburgh on the backs of the lower-class women, nothing in the costume of the inhabitants could remind you that you were not in Paris, London, Brussels, or any other haunt of that badge of modern civilisation, the chimney-pot. In Glasgow this does not shock you more than it would in Manchester or Birmingham; but, in the romantic city of Edinburgh, even the whistle of the railway engine annoys you; the cap and kilt are sadly felt wanting, and you almost want to stop the passers-by and ask them: "Where are your kilts?" You feel as if you were cheated out of something.

Alas! the national costume of the Scotch is almost a thing of the past: it is no longer a dress—it is a get-up.

[Pg 168] You may see it yet at fancy dress balls, in the army of Her Britannic Majesty, at the Paris Opera-Comique, and in the comic papers.

I believe the Royal Princes occasionally don it, when they go to Scotland in the autumn to shoot; but even in the remote Highlands the national costume is dying out, and if you count upon seeing Scotchmen, dressed Scotch fashion in Scotland, you will be disappointed. As well look for lions in the outskirts of Algiers, or a pretty woman in the streets of Berne.

A gentleman in kilts would make as great a sensation in the streets of Edinburgh as he would on the Boulevard des Italiens. Nay, more, if he stood still, he might have pence offered him.

The costume of *Dickson* in *La Dame Blanche* is only seen on the backs of those splendid Highlanders whom the maidservants in large towns hire by the afternoon on Sundays to accompany them to the parks.

In London you will sometimes see Highlanders—from Whitechapel—playing the bagpipes and dancing reels, talents which bring an ample harvest of pennies in populous neighbourhoods, but which would fall rather flat in Edinburgh.

I cannot imagine anything much more picturesque than Princes Street at night, when the old city in amphitheatre-shape, on the other side of the valley, stands out from the sky which it seems to touch with its old sombre majestic castle, and its houses ten or twelve stories high, rising tier above tier up the side of the hill, and shining with a thousand lights. [Pg 169] I can understand that the inhabitants of Edinburgh enjoy to come out in the evening and feast their eyes on the enchanting sight, and this even in winter, when the street is a very funnel for the east wind which blows across straight from the Scandinavian icebergs.

Edinburgh is the only town in Great Britain, which I have visited, whose streets are not shunned by respectable people at night.

A fine road about two miles long leads to Leith, which stands for Piræus to the Scotch Athens. There, in the mud and smoke, dwells a population of sixty thousand toil-stained folk, who contrast strongly with their elegant neighbours of Edinburgh. There is nothing here to attract the eye of the traveller, unless it be the harbour with its two piers—one 3,530, the other 3,123 feet long—where the inhabitants can go and breathe the sea air, away from the noise and smoke of the town.

Along the coast to the west, two miles from Leith, we come upon the interesting village of Newhaven. Here we find a little world apart, composed of fisherfolk, all related one to another, it is said. They treat as Philistines all who did not first see the light in their sanctuary, and the result is that they are constantly intermarrying. All the men work at fishing. The women go to Edinburgh to sell what their husbands catch, and bring back empty baskets and full pockets.

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These worthy women would think they were robbing their dear village if they bought the least thing in Edinburgh. Needless to say, the little community prospers. To see the costume of the women, who, in no point imitate the ridiculous get-up of their sisters in great towns; to see the activity and zeal for their work, one would believe oneself in France.

"All the skippers own their own boats, and the pretty little houses they live in," said the Scotchman who accompanied me.

And how neat and clean they look, those little white houses covered with climbing plants of all sorts! The whole scene speaks loudly of the work, thrift, and order of the people.

By pushing on two miles further we come to Granton. There we can take the boat which will carry us over the Firth of Forth, and set us down at Burntisland in Fifeshire; but instead of there taking the train to the north of Scotland, we will stop to see Rossend Castle.

Standing on a promontory, which dominates the Firth of Forth and the hills of Edinburgh, Rossend Castle is one of the most romantic places in Scotland.

Its old square tower contains the bedroom used by Mary Stuart when she travelled in Fifeshire, and stopped at the castle. The present owner, whose hospitality is proverbial in the neighbourhood, has religiously preserved the room intact. It is there just as it existed three hundred years ago, with its two little turret-rooms, oak wainscoting, and a thousand relics of its [Pg 171] unhappy visitor.

The portrait of Mary Stuart at Rossend is the most striking that I saw in Scotland. Placed over the mantelpiece, it seems to fill the room with its dreamy melancholy gaze. It seems to follow you, and you cannot take your eyes off it. I occupied this room for four nights, a prey to the saddest thoughts. It was in the month of January, and the wind, which was blowing hard across the Firth, roared round the tower. With my feet before the fire, which burned in the immense fireplace, I let my fancy reconstruct the scene in which poor Chastelard lost his head, first figuratively, and then in reality.

As I mentioned in the preceding chapter, my young and handsome countryman Pierre de Boscosel de Chastelard had conceived a mad passion for the queen. He had dared to declare this love in the Holyrood Palace. His offence was forgiven.

Imagining, from the fact of his having been pardoned, that he had succeeded in inspiring affection in the heart of his royal mistress, the poor moth must needs flutter again around the flame, which was to be his destruction. The romantic troubadour secretly followed the queen from Edinburgh to Rossend Castle, and, on the night of the 14th of February, 1562, hid himself in her chamber, until she was almost undressed for the night, when he left his hiding-place, and, seizing the queen in his arms, so alarmed her, that she screamed for protection. This woman [Pg 172] who, to avenge Rizzio's death, did not hesitate to have a barrel of powder placed under her husband's bed, felt herself insulted. Her cries attracted her attendants, and Murray was ordered by the indignant queen to stab the young madman dead then and there. But Murray preferred to wreak his wrath on Chastelard, whom he hated, by having him hanged. The poor secretary, who had been so favoured by his mistress that all the courtiers were jealous of him, who had so often beguiled her solitude by his poems and his music, went cheerfully to the scaffold. Like Cornelius de Witt, who, a century later, recited Horace's *Justum et tenacem* while the executioner of The Hague put him to the torture, Chastelard mounted the scaffold calm and smiling, reciting Rousard's *Ode to Love*.

"I die not without reproach, like my ancestor Bayard," said he; "but, like him, I die without fear."

And then, turning his eyes towards the castle inhabited by Mary Stuart, he cried:

"Adieu, thou cruel but beautiful one, who killest me, but whom I cannot cease to love!"

Rossend Castle is a veritable poem in stone. Do not visit Edinburgh without pushing to Burntisland. The *châtelain* is justly proud of his romantic home, and does the honours of it with a kind grace that charms the visitor. [Pg 173]

CHAPTER XXIX.

Aberdeen, the Granite City.—No sign of the Statue of "you know whom."—All Grey.—The Town and its Suburbs.—Character of the Aberdonian.—Why London could not give an Ovation to a Provost of Aberdeen.—Blue Hill.—Aberdeen Society.—A thoughtful Caretaker.—To this Aberdonian's Disappointment, I do not appear in Tights before the Aberdeen Public.

It does not enter into the plan of this book to give a detailed description of the principal towns and sites in Scotland. That can be found in any guide-book.

The aim of this little volume is to give an idea of the character and customs of the Scotch, from *Souvenirs* of several visits made by the author to the land of Burns and Scott.

But a few words must be said on the subject of the City of Granite.

Aberdeen is a large, clean-looking town, with more than a hundred thousand inhabitants; wide, regular streets, fine edifices, and many statues, among which we are happy, for a change, not to find that of *you know whom*.

If Glasgow and Dundee are the principal centres of commercial activity in Scotland, Edinburgh [Pg 174] and Aberdeen are the two great centres of learning.

Union Street, the principal thoroughfare, is about half-a-mile long, and is built entirely of light grey granite, which gives it a rather monotonous aspect. Public buildings, churches, private houses, pavements, all are grey; the inhabitants are mostly dressed in grey, and look where you will, you seem to see nothing but grey.

Just as it is in London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, the fashionable quarter is the west, and the poor live in the east.

Is this due to chance?

The most conspicuous edifice of the town is the Municipal Building, forming a town hall and a court of justice. The most interesting is Marischal College, the home of the Faculty and School of Medicine, which now form part of the University of Aberdeen, after having had a separate existence for two hundred and sixty-six years. The college is a very fine building, but is unfortunately hemmed in by a number of other buildings which hide its *façade*.

A mile from the town stands the college of the university (King's College), built in 1495 on the model of the Paris university. Most of the Scotch buildings, which date from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, have a very pronounced French character.

I would advise tourists, who go as far north as Aberdeen, not to miss making the ascension of the [Pg 175] Blue Hill, which is about four miles from the town. From the summit of this hill, they will see a delightful panorama of Aberdeen, a stretch of fifty or sixty miles of coast, the ruins of the celebrated castle of Dunnottar, and all the valley of the Dee framed in hills. It is a grand sight; unfortunately, to thoroughly bring out its beauties, a clear sky is essential, and there comes the rub.

The county of Aberdeen is not only one of the great intellectual centres of Scotland, it is the home of Caledonian shrewdness and pawkiness. Aberdeenshire alone furnished more than half the anecdotes collected by Dean Ramsay.

The Aberdonians are the chosen people, the elect of God.

Every Scot is proud of his nationality, but an Aberdonian will tell you: "Not only am I a Scotchman, but I was born in Aberdeen."

And true enough, "tak' awa' Aberdeen, and twal' miles round, and faar are ye?"

It is related that a provost of Aberdeen, having come to London with his wife, someone recommended the lady to be sure and go to Covent Garden to see the opera.

"No," she replied, "we have come to London to be quiet and not to receive ovations. We shall not [Pg 176] show ourselves in public during our stay in the capital."

Her resolution was adhered to, and London saw them not.

For the future life, the Aberdonian has no fears, and if he will only recommend you to Saint Peter, you will not have to wait long at the gates of Paradise.

Society in Aberdeen is of the choicest. Its aristocracy is an aristocracy of talent. In Aberdeen, as in Edinburgh, the local lions are the professors of the university, literary people, doctors, barristers, and artists. To cut a figure there, you need not jingle your guineas, but only show your brains and good manners. In Glasgow, show your *savoir-faire*; but, in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, your *savoir-vivre*.

I cannot quit the subject of Aberdeen without relating a little incident which exceedingly diverted me.

A few hours before delivering a lecture at the Albert Hall, I paid a visit to the place to see if my reading-desk had been properly arranged. Great was my surprise, on entering the hall, to see near the platform an elegant improvised green-room, curtained off. I asked the caretaker if there was not a retiring-room, in which I could await the moment for beginning my lecture, to which he replied:

[Pg 177] "Yes, sir; we have an anteroom over there, but I have set apart this little green-room, because I thought it would be more comfortable for you to go and change your dresses in during the performance."

The worthy fellow evidently imagined that I was going to appear in tights before the lairds of

Aberdeen.

The learned professor, who had kindly come to introduce me to my audience, laughed heartily with me over the joke.

CHAPTER XXX.

> *The Thistle.—"Nemo me impune lacessit."—"Honi soit qui Mollet pince."—Political Aspirations of the Scotch.—Signification of Liberalism in Scotland.—Self-Government in the near Future.—Coercive Pills.—The Disunited Kingdom.—The United Empire.*

The emblem of Scotland is the thistle, the device *Nemo me impune lacessit*.

The great Order of Scotland is that of the Thistle, or Saint Andrew, the patron saint of the country, and was instituted by James V. in 1534—that is to say, about two hundred years after Edward III. of England had founded the Order of the Garter.

A propos of this Garter, what fables and anecdotes have been written! Historians even are not agreed as to the origin of the famous device: *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. [Pg 178]

The explanation which seems to be the most plausible is this:

The Countess of Salisbury, King Edward III.'s mistress, dropped her garter at a ball. The king picked it up; but, as the worthy descendant of a bashful race, he did not attempt to replace it, but turning towards his courtiers, said:

"My lords, *honi soit qui mollet pince*."

Then he advanced towards the countess and gave her her garter.

The king's expression became corrupted into:

Honi soit qui mal y pense.

This is the correct version, you may depend on it.

The Scots are a nation of hardy, valiant men, whom the English never would have succeeded in conquering by force of arms.

The Scotch will tell you that it was not England that annexed them, it was they who annexed England. Let us not grudge them this consolation, if it gives them any pleasure.

It is a fact that, on the death of Elizabeth, James VI. of Scotland—Mary Stuart's son—was called to fill the English throne, and thus united the crowns of England and Scotland.

[Pg 179] But these conquering Scots begin to perceive that they are treated rather like conquered Scots at the Palace of Westminster, and they do not like it.

"They are very quiet under it," you may say; "one does not hear them complaining like the Irish."

That is true: Donald is patient, and knows how to bide his time.

The Irish question overwhelms every other political one just now in England. We all know that the Irish demand Home Rule, and as we do not hear the Scotch and the Welsh talked of, we conclude that these two peoples are comfortably enjoying life under the best of possible governments.

Scotland and Wales content themselves for the present with sending Liberal members to the British Parliament. But with them the word "Liberal" has not the political sense which it possesses in England, it has a rather revolutionary meaning. I do not mean by this that it implies an idea of rebellion.

No. But in their vocabulary it is almost synonymous with *autonomist*.

The English Liberals are men who are convinced that things are not perfect, and who admit the possibility of reforms.

In the eyes of the Scotch, Liberalism consists in preparing to ask one day for a great reform: Home Rule. Before ten years have passed, we shall see Scotland and Wales electing Home Rule [Pg 180] candidates, as Ireland is doing now.

The Scotch will consent to remain British on condition that the English allow them to become Scotch—that is to say, to manage for themselves matters which have no connection with the Empire, and concern the Scotch people alone; such as religion, education, and the administration of justice. They are too shrewd to desire to become once more Scots pure and simple, and so renounce their part and profit in the gigantic concern called the British Empire. They will continue to send members to Westminster to take part in the work of governing the Empire, but they will have a parliament or a council at Edinburgh, whose business it will be to look after matters purely Scotch.

They would be willing to walk hand-in-hand with England, but not by means of handcuffs.

The English are fond of talking of Scotland as if it were a county of England. The Scotch mean that Scotland shall be Scotland.

"Let the English look after England," they say, "and we will look after Scotland. As soon as a question relating to the British Empire arises, we will be as British as they. We do not want to destroy the unity of the Empire, or to break off our relations with the Parliament; but we simply wish to do as we like at home."

There is nothing extraordinary in such a demand. [Pg 181]

When the Scotch, or the Irish, win a battle, it is immediately announced in the papers that "the English have gained a victory." But let an Irishman or a Scotchman commit a crime, and John Bull quickly cries out:

"It is an Irishman," or "It is a Scotchman."

"Let it be each one to himself, and each for himself," says Donald, "so long as it is a question of England or Scotland. But when it is a question of the great Motherland, then we will all be Britons."

The English have this good point: they know that it is good policy not to try and prevent the inevitable, but rather to put a good face upon it. They know that that which is given ungraciously is received ungratefully.

They are now administering the eighty-seventh coercive pill to the Irish. That will be the last.

In two or three years time, Ireland will belong to the Irish, as, later on, Scotland will belong to the Scotch.

The United Kingdom will only be the more powerful for it. Having no more internal squabbles to fear, it will present a formidable quadruple breast to the outer world.

London will be the political centre of an immense imperial federation. England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, India, the Cape, Canada, Australia, all will be represented in a Parliament really Britannic. Their capitals will be the respective leaders of this grand team. [Pg 182]

The British Empire will be built upon hearts in all parts of the globe.

If there is no longer any United Kingdom, neither will there be a Disunited Kingdom, and instead there will be something much more imposing, much more powerful, there will be

THE UNITED EMPIRE.

[A] I mean "the people." As for the higher classes, their manners and dress are perfectly English; they only differ in their political and religious opinions.

[B] I trust to the intelligence of the reader to distinguish here between the well-bred Scot and his humbler brethren.

[C] It was thus that the defunct was referred to until after the funeral was over.

[D] Dean Ramsay relates that in Inverness, forty years ago, the coffin of a certain laird only reached the cemetery at the end of a fortnight.

[E] The finest edition of the Songs of Scotland is that recently published by Messrs. Muir Wood, of Glasgow.

[F] The Scotch dialect has sometimes been called the Doric of Great Britain.

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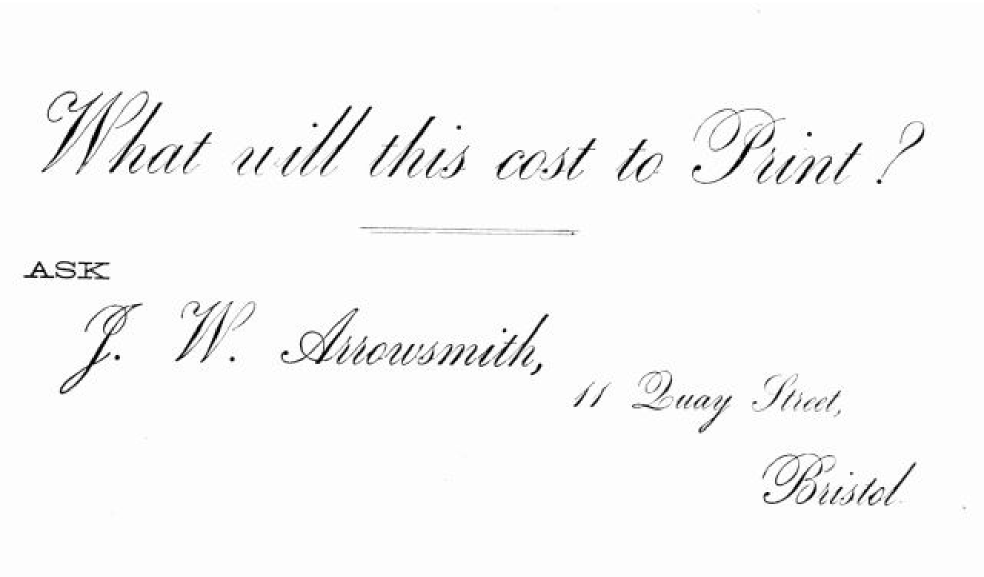

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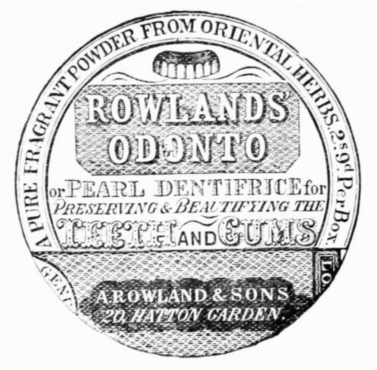
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