

## CHAPTER XXI.

PROFESSOR BLACKIE — HIS VERSATILITY, VITALITY, AND DISREGARD OF CONVENTION — DINNERS AT BLACKIE'S AND CALDERWOOD'S — THE HELLENIC CLUB PRESENTATION ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY—HIS INGENUOUSNESS—MASSON — MACLAGAN — CHRISTISON — NORMAN MACLEOD — HIS BREADTH, FORCE, HUMANITY, AND HUMOUR—THE LATE LORD INVERCLYDE.

DURING the three years, 1867 to 1870, when I was joint classical examiner for degrees in Edinburgh University, and from 1888 to 1895 as a member of the Hellenic Society, of which Professor Blackie was president, I saw a great deal of him both officially and socially. Like all who came into contact with him, I was struck by his marvellous versatility and vitality, his large-hearted tolerance, his wide sympathy, his alertness in everything literary, and his *præfervidum ingenium* in the advocacy of all that he believed true and right. Combined, however, with these high qualities one could not fail to observe a complete disregard of convention, a

youthful and almost boyish—may I say?—rowdyism, which detracted somewhat from dignity of bearing, and an eccentricity which sometimes bordered closely on buffoonery, perhaps originally assumed, but ultimately natural. Those who knew him best and liked him most will readily admit there was a considerable amount of vanity in his composition, but it was inoffensive and by no means aggressive. Nor was this feature in his character difficult to be accounted for. Welcomed wherever he went, a most popular platform speaker, enjoying the friendship of men eminent in almost every field of literature, receiving constant proofs that he was regarded as no ordinary man, it is not matter for wonder that he should come to think of himself as others thought of him. How few men in such circumstances could have escaped being vain? in how many would not the vanity have been offensive? In him it was not.

For a man with strong opinions on most subjects, he was singularly free from malice and pettiness in his intercourse with those who differed from him. This transparent good-nature and sweetness of temper enabled him to make, without offence, personal remarks on which men of different type could not have ventured, or which,

if made, would have been sharply resented. At a dinner-party in his own house Sir Lyon (afterwards Lord) Playfair, Professor Calderwood, and myself were seated on his right hand. As the decanters went round Professor Calderwood, who was a consistent but not at all an aggressive abstainer, passed them on without helping himself. Sir Lyon seeing this asked him if he would not take a glass of wine. "No," said Blackie, taking the reply out of his mouth, "he does not take wine himself, but," addressing Calderwood, "you must not refuse it to your friends." This remark was prospective, because next night we were to dine with Calderwood, who was promoter of degrees that year. Next night Blackie reached Calderwood's house immediately before me. After disposing of his hat and plaid he turned round, and, seeing me, remembered the conversation of the previous night, and, clasping me in his arms, sang out in tones that rang through the house, "Nunc est bibendum, nunc est potandum!" and on entering the drawing-room rapturously embraced Sir Alexander Grant and repeated the exclamation.

As to the strain of vanity observable in him, I remember meeting him one day on a short railway journey almost immediately after Mr

Gladstone's famous speech in connection with Mr Bradlaugh's admission to Parliament. I remarked that it was a great feat for a man of Gladstone's age to make such a long and able speech. "Oh," he replied, "age has nothing to do with it. The part of a man that's strongest lasts longest: if the muscles are strongest, they last longest; if the brain is strongest, it lasts longest. I could not climb Ben Nevis as nimbly as I could thirty years ago, but my head is as clear as ever it was, and I could speak for an hour and a half or more without any feeling of fatigue." To this I replied half seriously, half in joke, "Ah, yes! but there are not many Gladstones and Blackies in the world." It was not unnatural to expect him to deprecate being compared with such a giant as Gladstone. He did not, but complacently accepted, as legitimate and serious, a comparison from one point of view quite legitimate, but not more than half serious.

A good example of the ever-varying moods of the "old man eloquent," and of his almost boyish vitality combined, was given at a meeting of the Hellenic Club, when he was presented with a silver cup by the members as a memorial of his eightieth birthday. Care was taken that he should have no knowledge of the proposed pres-

entation, which was made with great taste and feeling by Mr Charles Robertson, one of the oldest members. The surprise and pleasure were almost overwhelming to the old man. For a few moments, under strong feeling, his wonted fluency failed him, but glancing round the meeting, which was an unusually full one, and catching the sympathetic looks of friends who had sat under his presidency for many years, he pulled himself together, and expressed his thanks in a speech which, permeated throughout with deep feeling and the true ring of sincerity, for felicitous phrase, genial warmth of sentiment for old friends, sound counsel to the younger members, and a catholic kindness for all, was absolutely perfect. That speech will be remembered by all who heard it. And yet that cultured old man, not very many minutes after he sat down, on being asked to sing a song, chose one of his own composition about Jenny Geddes and the cutty stool, and would have been miserable if he had not had at hand, in the absence of a cutty stool, a cane chair to fling for dramatic effect at the head of the offending dean. It occurred to me that in one sense, and not an entirely unfavourable one, it was true that there were not many Gladstones and Blackies in the world.

At a meeting of the club he gave a striking proof of ingenuousness and an open mind. The meaning of *βαθύκολπος*, a Homeric epithet descriptive of Trojan ladies, was being discussed. Blackie at first supported a view held by many scholars, and adopted by himself in his published translation; but one of the members propounded another, and defended it so successfully that Blackie gave in, and admitted that his own translation was inferior, if not altogether wrong. Men of eighty years of age seldom change their opinions on questions of scholarship about which their minds have been long made up, and which have been published.

A few nights after the dinner at Professor Blackie's to which I have referred, I dined with Professor Masson, and passed a most enjoyable evening. There were about a dozen professors, and among them Blackie, Maclagan, and Christison. The conversation was excellent, our host, with characteristic fulness and accuracy, effectively taking his share. The other three professors already named sang remarkably well, Sir Douglas giving "Glen Tilt" and imitations of Mario. Sir Robert, whom I had thought a type of quiet and almost reserved dignity, unbent like a boy, and joined in a comic duet with

all the heart and spirit of one of his youngest students. Masson alone is still with us, with, I am glad to say, when I last saw him, undiminished energy and interest in what has been his lifework.

On the many occasions when I visited Glasgow I scarcely ever failed to call upon and keep alive my acquaintance with the great Norman Macleod of the Barony Church. Few of those who knew him intimately will think the epithet "great" misapplied. I do not think it possible for any one to have come into close contact with him without feeling that, in respect of intellectual and moral force, breadth of sympathy, courage, and humanity, he was really a great man. How quickly and pleasantly an hour's "twa-handed crack" passed with him in his study, or, as he called it, his "den," and how sorry one felt when it came to an end. He had led a rich life in contact with all sorts and conditions of men, and had turned his great powers of observation and analysis of character to the best account. His world was a big one, and he had sounded all its depths and shoals with rare insight and a keen sense of humour. Nothing could be more interesting than his account of his experiences in some of his earlier charges, which

he narrated with a drollery and graphic power all his own, and which cannot be communicated to paper.

One day the subject was a visit to the family of a Chartist given over to socialism, tipping, and general improvidence, who never had two six-pences to rub on each other, who insisted on the integrity of the "seven points" and a periodical redistribution of this world's goods; and when it was shown that revolution, national bankruptcy, and probably ruin to himself would follow if his plan were carried out, replied (after a deliberative pinch of snuff) with the courage of a hero and a sounding slap on his thigh, "Dod, Mr Macleod, I'll risk it!" On another day it was to a Cameronian family, in which the head of the house was an old and very deaf woman, who, in prospect of the minister's visit, had invited the attendance of half-a-dozen neighbours of the same strict sect as herself as a sort of spiritual body-guard against the Erastian invasion. There they sat, each as grim and inexorable as Rhadamanthus, every face the embodiment of dogmas of the hardest kind, and no one shook hands with him by way of welcome till, through a long ear-trumpet, he had "run owre the fundamentals" in the ear of the old woman, and showed himself



sound on "justification by faith" and "effectual calling."

I have always regretted being unable to accept a proposal he made that I should accompany him to the studio of Sir Daniel Macnee, and hear him tell one of his marvellous stories. I had unfortunately an engagement which prevented me on that occasion. It was the only opportunity I ever had.

On another of my visits to Glasgow I met at a dinner-party in the university the late Lord Inverclyde, who had lived a life in close association with men of mark in a wide and varied field, and had kept eye and ear open for incidents, humorous and other, worthy of note and reproduction. His *répertoire* was large, and he handled it with admirable tact and dramatic effect. Among other stories he told was one, a good deal of the charm of which depends on the American quality of unexpectedness in the *dénoûment*. The following is, to the best of my recollection, a fairly correct version:—

A party of gentlemen after dinner were sitting over their walnuts and wine, when something led one to hazard the remark that there was probably not a person present who had not been at least once in his life tipsy or near it. All admitted the

soft impeachment. It was then proposed, as likely to be amusing, that each in turn should relate his experience on the occasion of his first departure from strict sobriety. As no one was willing to begin, it was decided to draw lots as to who should take the lead. This was done, and the lot fell to an English clergyman, who thus began :—

“ I had just been a year married after getting a nice country living, when I was asked to marry a couple of my parishioners. At a supper-party on the evening of the marriage, as I had performed the ceremony, and knew the relations of both bride and bridegroom, I was courteously challenged a good many times in the course of the evening by one or another of the guests holding up his glass to give him the pleasure of drinking a glass of wine with me. To refuse was, of course, impossible, but I had not the slightest intention of going beyond the strictest limits of moderation. Now, whether it was that I had unconsciously taken more than I intended, or had foolishly mixed my wines, I almost suddenly had a strange sensation in my head, and said to myself, ‘ Good heavens! this is intoxication. I shall take no more,’ and I didn’t. I thought I should be all right when I got to the open air,

but, on the contrary, I got very much worse—so much worse that I could not venture to face my young wife. I accordingly walked about for an hour or perhaps two, till I felt so much better that I thought I might go home. I was unsuccessful in several attempts to get the key into the keyhole. Succeeding at last, I turned the bolt and closed the door as noiselessly as possible, and hung up my greatcoat in the lobby. And now to get upstairs. Steadying myself for the effort, I began the ascent carefully and quietly, hoping to get into bed without awaking my wife, for though I was better I was not quite well. I had only got half-way up when, to my horror, I saw light shining below the bedroom door. My wife was evidently reading in bed, awaiting my return. There was nothing for it now but facing the difficulty boldly. On opening the bedroom door I found, to my delight, that she was sound asleep. She had been reading, and had not blown out the candle. I began to undress as quickly and quietly as I could, and was just about to blow out the candle when a voice reached my ears that I shall never forget as long as I live, ‘John! John! surely you are not going to bed with your hat on.’”

A good many years afterwards I met Lord

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Inverclyde at a dinner-party, and reminding him of the story, asked him to repeat it. He declined, saying that he had made up his mind never to tell it again. The reason he gave was that on one occasion when he was telling it at a dinner-party, and had got to the point where the clergyman was undressing before blowing out the candle, the hostess, evidently fearing that he was getting on to dangerous ground, made a signal to the lady at the other end of the table and said, "Now, ladies, shall we go to the drawing-room?"

## CHAPTER XXII.

INFANT-TEACHING MUCH IMPROVED—WHEN SHOULD IT BEGIN—  
“D—N THE CAT!”—GREAT IMPROVEMENT IN READING-  
BOOKS—READING THE MOST VALUABLE SCHOOL PRODUCT—  
CORPORAL PUNISHMENT—DR MELVIN—LEATHER—THOMAS  
FRASER OF GOLSPIE—AN EQUESTRIAN INCIDENT.

IN my pretty long retrospect of school work and school appliances I know no respect in which there are greater changes and improvements than in infant-class teaching. Till within comparatively recent years the school-life of infants was absolutely unrelieved by anything in the shape of amusement or healthy admixture of work and play. The alphabet, and nothing but the alphabet, was their daily food for a month or six weeks, or even longer. When the lesson was over, they had to go to their seats, and either sit quiet or make a disturbance, according to the teacher's idea of discipline. Drill or the various manual exercises that now brighten the child's life were not thought of, and, if they had been thought of, would have

been considered a sheer and silly waste of valuable time. In this respect there has been a marvellous and beneficent change, especially in large town schools, and also, though to a smaller extent, in country schools, where the teachers for fertility of resource in devising plans combining amusement and instruction deserve the highest praise.

On my visit in 1884, at the request of the Department, to schools in London, Cambridge, and Manchester, I was much struck by the superiority of the infant schools as compared with those in Scotland. In the management there was more repose of manner and gentleness on the part of the teacher, and greater refinement and politeness on that of the pupil, than with us. This was due partly to a pretty general prejudice in Scotland at that time against children being sent to school before six or seven years of age, and partly to the infant grants in England being graded according to merit, while in Scotland there was one uniform grant on the simple condition that the infants were taught "suitably to their age." There was therefore no encouragement for the development of new and superior methods. The prejudice against infant-training has to a large extent broken down since the introduction, more

or less fully, of Kindergarten methods, and a Scottish infant school now need not fear comparison with its English rival. There are, however, a good many parents whose opinions are still divided as to the most suitable education for young children, and the age at which it should commence. Some years ago the subject turned up in the course of a conversation I had with a well-known lawyer. He told me that he once held very strongly that no child under six years of age should break educational ground in anything demanding fixed attention or effort of any kind; that the mind should be left to the free play of spontaneous observation of what was said and done around him. He said, however, that he had changed his mind from what he had observed in dealing with his only boy. He had carried out his theory rigidly till his son was six. Being an only child the boy was almost constantly with his parents, and from listening to their conversation his general intelligence was well developed. "As soon as he was six," said his father, "we began to teach him the alphabet. This he found most distasteful, just because he was so intelligent. He knew all about so many interesting things, that to grind up the names of letters seemed cruel and unmeaning trifling. I am quite sure," he

continued, "that if he had begun it at four years of age, when his intelligence was much less developed, he would have taken kindly to his letters. We persevered, however, with him till he knew them all, and got as far as to know little words—'lo, we go,' 'we do so,' &c. One day he was reading the lesson, 'A cat sat on a mat, the cat saw a rat, the cat ran at the rat, the fat cat'—he then looked up in my face full of disgust, threw the book into the corner, saying, 'Oh, d—n the cat!'" It was evident that the language he had heard at his father's table was not only intelligent but forcible.

What a change and improvement in the character of reading-books for school purposes within the last forty years. Before 1860 there were a few good lesson-books—so good that I am not sure they have yet been surpassed from the point of view of judicious selection of literary extracts, such as those compiled by Dr Maculloch—but they were not in very general use, and scarcely at all in small schools in country districts. After the penny book and "ladder"—both absolutely uninteresting—were mastered, a child was introduced to the New Testament, which did duty for what are now Third and Fourth Standard readers, the Old Testament doing the same for



the Fifth and Sixth Standards. Removal from the Testament to the Bible class was as distinct and definite promotion as removal from the Fourth to the Fifth or Sixth Standard. "I'm in the Testament now," a boy from one school would say, and another from a different school would say, "Ah, but I'm in the Bible," as a proof of superior attainments. It is difficult to say what effect on the moral and religious nature of the child this daily and secular use of the Scriptures as lesson-books may have had, but it is most improbable that greater reverence for them was one of the results. It is quite certain that it did not give interest to the reading-lesson.

May we not trace to this the answer of the retired gamekeeper who, when asked by his minister if he read much, now that he was laid aside from work, replied that he was very fond of reading, and read everything that he could put his hands on. When the minister rejoined, "I hope, Robert, you read your Bible too?" "Oh ay," he said, "I read my Bible whiles; there's some fine interesting stories in the Bible, but, man, it has nae chance wi' 'Wilson's Tales of the Borders.'"

Dames' schools, which were once common in

country districts, and, in their own simple way, did useful work, have almost ceased to exist. It is told of one of them that when a little girl, in reading a portion of the Old Testament which bristled with proper names of great difficulty, came to a dead stop, the old mistress, probably herself puzzled, said to her, "Jeannie, just read ye straucht on. Dinna mind hoo ye misca' them, they're a' deid."

I have always considered the consciousness of acquired power through being able to read with ease and understanding as by far the most valuable of school products for the average pupil. To read with expression and elocutionary effect is desirable, but confessedly difficult, unless the teacher has a strong leaning in that direction. But even when the effort falls short of this added excellence, it cannot, I think, be doubted that when the mechanical difficulty is completely overcome, and an appreciative taste for reading during respite from labour is created, the working man is put in possession of the most effective instrument for sweetening his life, and raising himself almost unconsciously to a higher level. Many intelligent working men have not very frequent occasion for writing, many more have little occasion for arithmetic, except for the

simple head calculations connected with their wages and weekly expenditure ; but if the working man is not to stagnate, and expose himself to the dangers that usually accompany stagnation in the moral as in the material world, he must read, and read as regularly as he can. It must not be thought that I undervalue writing and arithmetic, or that I think lower attainments than are demanded would be satisfactory in a national system of education. The estimate of the three branches is a comparative one. Writing and arithmetic are mainly, if not entirely, educational forces. Reading is an educational, but still more a moral force.

Here a protest against certain kinds of reading is not out of place. There are some that are neither morally nor intellectually good. I have a strong conviction that the "penny dreadfuls," and some of even the higher-priced periodicals (containing little else than sensational and impossible adventures) which are issued weekly or monthly from the press, can scarcely fail to create an appetite for exciting and highly-spiced reading to which literature of a higher, more useful, and, except to a diseased taste, intrinsically more interesting kind will appeal in vain. The boy or girl who between the ages of sixteen

and twenty has gone through a course of this sensational rubbish, will be with difficulty brought back to a state of mind which can enjoy the beauty, pathos, and truthfulness of such writers as Scott, Thackeray, and Dickens. The result must be a waste of valuable time and a debauching of literary taste.

The question of corporal punishment in the maintenance of discipline is by no means a simple one. I have only once or twice seen the tawse used during the annual inspection, but at visits without notice, in passing from room to room, I have both seen and heard it vigorously administered by both sexes in the staff of juvenile departments. On every occasion when it was seen that I observed it, the instrument was immediately huddled out of sight, as if the teacher had a feeling that everything was not quite right. That it can be entirely dispensed with is, I think, impossible; that it is much more common than it ought to be, and is resorted to as being the most expeditious, and, to the teacher, the least troublesome exercise of discipline, is, I am satisfied, quite certain. It is often due not so much to the pupil being naughty as to the teacher being injudicious. It should not be much needed in roomy, well-ventilated schools, where the pupils are physically

comfortable. It should be used only for moral offences, such as falsehood, cheating, and disobedience, and then only when other means have been tried and failed, and it is beyond doubt that the teacher is the best disciplinarian who punishes least. In no school where the teacher takes the trouble to make careful observation of character, moral and mental, ought corporal punishment to be anything but a matter of rare occurrence. Sympathy with inferior mental power in one class of pupil, and with nervousness in another, would enormously diminish the number of cases in which physical pain is regarded as a corrective. It is simply cruel and permanently injurious to punish for shortcomings resulting from dulness or nervousness.

A very noteworthy example of excellent discipline is told of a famous Aberdeen teacher, Dr Melvin. He is said to have scarcely ever had recourse to corporal punishment. On one very serious occasion he was compelled to depart from his almost invariable rule. He called up the offender and said, "James, I'm going to punish you, and you must be a very bad boy, and have done something very wrong, for I have not punished a boy for seven years. But I must punish you to-day, and very sorry I am to be compelled

to do so." After a few more remarks, firm but kindly, about the nature of the offence, he took his keys from his pocket, opened the desk, and took out the tawse that had been lying with the dust of seven years upon it, and said, "James, hold out your hand." James did so, and the Doctor, grasping the instrument of torture in his right hand, and raising it aloft, brought it down very very slowly, and with the lightness of a feather touched James's palm. "Now, James, go to your seat." James went, laid his head on the desk, and cried as if his heart would break. He had not been hardened by the daily contemplation of flogging, and he felt there was contamination in the very touch of the tawse. Perhaps none but a strong man could rise to this height of discipline, but weaker men might take it as an example, and probably the strength would come. Dr Melvin was at any rate infinitely nearer the ideal of discipline than a teacher who once gave in my presence an object-lesson on leather. He illustrated its use in the manufacture of boots, bags, belts, &c., and pressed for still other examples. After running the class dry, while still one use was wanting, he turned to his desk, on which the tawse was lying,

and with a roguish smile held it up before the class. I thought it a mistake to treat in this would-be funny fashion an article which it was desirable to regard, I do not say with reverence, but certainly not with familiarity; and that it would have been better either to omit his own special illustration of the use of leather, or, if mentioned, not to have made it a subject of more than questionable humour.

*Non omnes omnia possumus.* This short disquisition on discipline leads me to speak of another teacher scarcely less famous than Dr Melvin, though in a somewhat narrower sphere,—like him in accuracy of scholarship and untiring devotion to duty, as unlike as possible in his method of discipline,—Thomas Fraser, parish schoolmaster of Golspie. Revered as his memory is in the two parishes, Rogart and Golspie, in which he spent the greatest part of his laborious life, and on whose school walls affectionate memorial tablets have lately been placed by admiring pupils, the sternness and severity of his discipline bulk largely in the estimate formed of him even by those who have the greatest admiration for his work and character. His abundant—it is not unfair to say his super-

abundant — use of the tawse has not blinded them to his inflexible justice, his inspiring influence, his high moral tone, his manly independence of character, and his whole-hearted appreciation of good work well done. His pupils are spread all over the world, many of them doing high and responsible work. I know no man who more fully, perhaps none who so fully, carried out John Knox's idea of a school in every parish in which education was carried to such a height as enabled a boy to go straight from the school to the university. I have found in Mr Fraser's school attainments in classics and mathematics of which any grammar-school would have been proud.

I chanced to be in Golspie last autumn on a visit to an old and valued friend, Dr Joass, the minister of the parish, when the tablet there was unveiled, the Duke of Sutherland occupying the chair. An appreciative and discriminating account of Mr Fraser's career was given by Mr Gray, a former pupil and now an eminent lawyer in London. I am tempted to give a short extract from his speech: "Let us leave, then, 'his few faults shut up like dead flowerets,' for his memory is very dear and delightful to



us his pupils, as that of the ablest and best of masters, whose enthusiasm in teaching stimulated us to learn and to love learning all our days, not only as a means of livelihood but of life; whom we feared as we entered, but learnt to love as we passed through this school, and to whom after we had left it we ever felt the deepest sense of gratitude."

The lines—

"When all is over on the tomb is seen  
Not what he was, but what he should have been,"

are not true of Mr Fraser. The tablet and Mr Gray's speech furnish a plain unvarnished record.

This visit to Golspie recalls an incident of a former one many years ago, when my travelling was done on horseback. I was spending a weekend at the manse. Dr Joass's servant, thinking my mare required a little exercise, got on her back with this laudable object in view. The mare, evidently regarding this as an unwarranted liberty, promptly dislodged him. The lad naturally did not publish his ignominious though harmless downfall. It came out, however, a few days after, and Dr Joass sent me the sub-

joined spirited sketch, which I thought worthy of preservation. He wrote, "I have just been informed that your mare 'dashed my buttons' to the ground, and was making tracks for the grass-parks at Aberdeen, when she was happily caught ere she had gone many yards."



*Recent deposit, of mare-ine origin. "Human" remains.*

## CHAPTER XXIII.

NOT TO BE IMPOSED UPON — PRAYING FOR QUEEN CAROLINE  
— ROUNDS OF TOASTS — HUMOROUS CERTIFICATES — A  
NATHANIEL — “YON” — WATTIE DUNLOP — ADVICE BASED ON  
BIBLICAL EXAMPLE — PROVIDENCE AND LIMITED LIABILITY  
— “A DIVINITY THAT SHAPES OUR ENDS.”

THERE are few Scottish ministers of whom so many stories of pawky humour are told as of Mr Leslie, a former minister of Lhanbryde, in Morayshire. He was a man of comfortable means, of genial but strictly decorous hospitality, and had a wide circle of friends. He was very proud of his skill in brewing toddy suited to the general taste. In his time toddy was made by the host for all his guests in a punch-bowl. Three of his friends, who knew of the pride he had in his skill in the operation, were asked to dine with him, and conspired to deal him the “most unkindest cut of all” on this tender point. After compounding the mixture with his usual care he ladled out a glass for trial pre-

liminary to real business, and passed it to Mr A, saying, "What do you think of that?"

"It is very nice, but I think it might perhaps stand another bit of sugar."

Taken aback at this he said to Mr B, "What do you think?"

"It is quite sweet enough, but it strikes me as just a shade strong; a little more water would improve it."

Still more puzzled, he asked Mr C for his opinion, who said that it was excellent, but slightly weak and might be none the worse of just a little more whisky. At his wits' end he rang the bell, and asked the servant to send up John the beadle, on whose judgment he knew he could rely. Filling a glass for John, he asked what he thought of it. "Oh, sir, it's just first rate."

"Very well, John, take this bowl down to the kitchen. Your friends and you will be able to finish it, and send up some coffee to these lads."

While Mr Leslie disliked "rounds of toasts"—that is, the custom of accompanying every glass by a toast or sentiment, a custom that at last became odious and has now fallen into disuse—he retained in his kindly old-fashioned way a fringe of the now forgotten habit. After the

ladies had retired three toasts were proposed—(1) *an angel*, (2) a *friend*, and (3) a *sentiment*, after which they joined the ladies. The subjects of the two first were a lady and gentleman held in high estimation by the company. The *sentiment* was something epigrammatic, such as, “May the evening’s enjoyment bear the morning’s reflections.” In literary and political circles at the time when rounds of toasts were the fashion the sentiment might, however, take different colours, political or cynical, as when Charles Lamb, annoyed by some of his witticisms being drowned by the noisy romping of the children in the nursery adjoining the dining-room, proposed, with a significant glance in the direction of the nursery, “the memory of the *good King Herod*.”

There were many other occasions on which Mr Leslie showed that he had a rich vein of humour. Mr W., a co-presbyter of his, arraigned him before the presbytery for praying for Queen Caroline. He pleaded guilty to the charge, and by way of defence said, “I did pray for her, and if she is as bad as ye make her she’ll be nane the waur o’ my prayers.”

An Aberdeen minister, when called to account by Dr F. on the same charge, defended himself

in a less delicate but scarcely less humorous and effective way. "I did pray for Queen Caroline, and I'll pray for her again, and I'll pray for the debased and the vile, for thieves and murderers, for evil-doers of every kind, and I'll pray for Dr F."

Mr Leslie was famous for his certificates, which often proved a source of substantial emolument to the possessors, to whom people with a mixture of charity and curiosity in their composition freely gave a few coppers for a perusal of them. The following was one such:—

"To all his Majesty's loving subjects who can feel for a fellow-sinner in distress, I beg to certify that the bearer, W. J., is the son of my bellman, a man well known for his honest poverty and excessive indolence. The son has inherited a full share of the father's poverty with a double portion of his improvidence. I cannot say that he has many active virtues to boast of, but he is not altogether unmindful of Scriptural injunctions, having striven with no small success 'to replenish the earth,' though he has done but little 'to subdue' the same. It was his misfortune to lose his cow lately from too little care and too much bere-chaff, and that walking

skeleton, which he called his horse, having ceased to 'hear the oppressor's voice, or dread the tyrant's rod,' the poor man has now no means of repairing his loss but the skins of the defuncts and the generosity of a benevolent public, whom he expects to be stimulated to great liberality by this testimonial from theirs, with respect, &c.,

WILL. LESLIE.

"LHANBRYDE GLEBE, 22nd Dec. 1829."

The following I got from a friend who was at one time schoolmaster of Lhanbryde, and, before he died, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. I reproduce it, to the best of my recollection, *verbatim*. Being parish schoolmaster, he was also, as was then customary, session clerk, one of whose duties is to give certificates of church membership to persons removing from one parish to another. A request for such a certificate was made to him almost immediately after his appointment to the office. Not knowing the precise form the certificate should take, he consulted Mr Leslie, who asked what sort of person the applicant was, and was told that he seemed a very respectable man.

"What," said Mr Leslie, "does he say about himself?"

“He says that he has been a farm-servant with Mr R. for the past year.”

“Ay, ay,” meditatively; “what else does he say?”

“That he was a communicant in our church on the last Sacrament Sunday.”

“Ay, ay; give me a sheet of paper.”

Having got it he wrote out a certificate, signed, and passed it to the session clerk, who countersigned without reading it till he had left the room, when he found the contents were:—

“This is to certify that Robert W. has been, according to his own account, a farm-servant with Mr R. for the past year; that he was, according to the same account, a communicant in our church on the last occasion; that he is, so far as we know, a decent enough sort of person, and not distinguished for any heinous crime beyond the rest of the parish.”

The certificate is perhaps noteworthy from its quizzically expressing *in gremio* the general scope of such documents.

To a girl who had been accused of stealing £30, and asked him for a certificate of character, he gave the following:—

“To all whom this may or may not concern, it is hereby certified that in my estimation Jane



Simpson is a very good, clean, and honest lass, meriting the favourable regards and protection of any of the elect among whom Providence may appoint her lot, the cause of this, my estimation of her, being that she is often rather a casual inmate for several days, and occasionally for weeks together at a time, than a permanent residentress. And although she never had the means of stealing £30 from me, as such an amount is very rarely allowed to light with me, yet I have often seen clothes belonging to each and all of the family, servants' chests left open, and silver spoons left carelessly on the kitchen-dresser and otherwise ill laid up, with many other little matters, tempting to any one of dishonest habits, entirely in her power had she been thievishly inclined. But I know that nothing has been missed by any of the servants or others at any time since she first began to be serviceable amongst us.

“Given by me at Lhanbryde Manse the 4th December 1826, by the testimony of my signature,  
WILL. LESLIE.

(“The accuser of the girl's honesty, it was generally believed, had not such a sum lying beside him whereof to be robbed.”)

A good story is told of the Rev. Mr Bower of Maryculter, who died a good many years ago. He was a most faithful parish minister, universally respected, and a guileless Nathanael. On being appointed to a country parish he is said to have had serious doubts as to whether milking a cow on Sunday was a work of either necessity or mercy. One day Dr Scott, Professor of Moral Philosophy in Aberdeen, was called upon by a gentleman whom the servant took for Mr Bower. The Professor was not at home. When he came in his servant told him that Mr Bower had called. He asked if Mr Bower had left any message, and was told that he had not. A few days afterwards the same gentleman called a second time. The Professor was again out, and, asking if Mr Bower had left no message, the servant said he had not. Surprised at this, he said, "Did he not say anything at all."

"Yes, sir, he said something."

"What did he say?"

"Well, sir, I wud rayther not tell you."

"Nonsense! What did Mr Bower say?"

"Well, I *wud* rayther not say it of a minister."

The Professor, knowing that Mr Bower would say nothing wrong, insisted on being told what

he said, to which the maid replied, "Well, sir, if ye *will* hear it, he just said 'Damn it!' and turned on his heel and gaed awa'."

Dr Scott knew there was some mistake and said, "Are you quite sure Mr Bower said that?"

"Yes, sir, he did say that, and I didna want to tell you, but ye wud mak me."

"But are you sure it was Mr Bower?"

"Deed ay; it was Mr Bower!"

He then asked her to describe his dress and appearance, and found from the description that it was not Mr Bower, but Lord A—b—t, who somewhat resembled the worthy minister in size and build, and was in the habit of sometimes using strong language. The idea of Mr Bower being accused of swearing furnished a subject for a practical joke too good to be resisted. Professor Scott accordingly narrated the incident to one of Mr Bower's co-presbyters, who at the first presbytery meeting thereafter rose with a perfectly grave face and said he had a most serious charge to bring against Mr Bower, one of his oldest and dearest friends, the father of the presbytery, a man who had hitherto led a singularly blameless life, and whose intimacy he had enjoyed for upwards of thirty years. He said he was most unwilling and sorely grieved to bring

such a charge against an old friend, but regard for his cloth left him no alternative. He then gave a circumstantial account of the incident above described. Poor Mr. Bower was dreadfully taken aback, and for some time was speechless. He felt, however, that he must make some reply, which he did in substantially the following terms: "Mr. Moderator and brethren, I know that Mr. D. is a friend of mine, and I am a friend of his. We have been friends for thirty years, and I well believe that he would say nothing against me that he did not believe to be true; but either he has lost his judgment or I have lost mine, for I don't believe I ever said these words." He then sat down fairly overcome. The matter was then explained, and the joke was enjoyed as much by himself as by his friends. The meeting over, his friend and he were driving home together in a two-wheeled gig when one of the wheels collided with a large stone and they were almost upset, and ran the risk of being thrown into the Dee. Mr. Bower, turning to his friend, said, "I'm thinking if it had been Lord A—b—t he would have said *yon*."

After I had finished the examination of an excellent school taught by a man of great practical ability and sound scholarship, he told me

that as he was approaching seventy years of age he thought of retiring. I said I hoped the board would give him a good retiring allowance, which he had well earned. He replied that he did not know what to expect, but he hoped, if the board should think of dealing with him as the congregation of a Secession church in Dumfriesshire proposed to deal with their minister, who after long and faithful service had become unfit for duty, that some *deus ex machina* would come to the rescue, as the well-known Rev. Walter Dunlop had done on that occasion. I asked him for an explanation, which he gave pretty much in the following terms. He said that he came originally from the south of Scotland, and was present at the meeting at which the question of the retirement of the old minister was discussed. It was at the time when what is known in ecclesiastical circles as the Voluntary controversy was raging upwards of fifty years ago all over Scotland, and especially in the south, that the question arose. I forget of what elements the meeting was composed. It was probably a presbytery meeting. There were at any rate Secession ministers present, and among them one of the most zealous and able advocates of the Voluntary principle, who arose and, dealing with the

question as to whether there should be a fixed retiring allowance, or whether the old man should be left to the goodwill and attachment of the congregation whom he had served so long and so faithfully, contended that he did not see what the Voluntary principle was worth if it could not stand this test. Here was a man beloved by his people, who had gone in and out among them and borne the burden and heat of the day for upwards of forty years, and now when his natural force was abated, and he was no longer fit for active duty, was seeking the rest he had so richly earned. Surely if ever there was a case in which the principle for which they contended, and which was one of the essentials of their Church, might be trusted to show its strength and vitality, without being sordidly tied down to a fixed amount, this was one. He accordingly moved that this worthy minister should be left to be dealt with as the affection of his congregation should dictate. This motion chimed in so completely with the temper of the time, and with the speeches that had been, and were being, delivered all over the country, that assent was given by acclamation, and a general cry of "Agreed, agreed," was about to be recorded as the finding of the meeting, when Mr Dunlop

(generally known as Wattie Dunlop) rose and said, "Mr Moderator and brethren, I was born a Voluntary, and I mean to dee a Voluntary, and nobody that kens me will accuse me of being lukewarm in the Voluntary cause; but I'm a Christian as weel's a Voluntary, and being a Christian I believe my Bible, and the Bible says that the heart o' man's deceitfu' above a' things and *desperately* wicked, and just because I believe my Bible I've aye insisted on having a bit written document on ony important money business I ever did in my life. I therefore move that Mr —— should have a fixed retiring allowance."

It need scarcely be said that Wattie's strong common-sense carried the day and completely upset the motion which was on the point of being carried, and a fixed retiring allowance was settled.

Coming nearer our own times, a combination of worldly wisdom and common-sense, based as this was on Bible principles, had a somewhat similar success in connection with the threatened secession from the Free Church in the north, owing to antagonistic views about the Declaratory Act. At a presbytery meeting several members expressed themselves as dissatisfied

with the position of matters, and some by no means obscure hints of secession were given. At present, they said, things were not at all comfortable in the Free Church. The Moderator admitted that things were not very comfortable, "but," he added, "there are many different kinds of discomfort, and it is often both expedient and necessary to bear with discomfort. Do you think that we are the only persons who are uncomfortable? No, my friends. Do you think Jonah was comfortable in the whale's belly? No, my friends, we may be sure he was very far from being comfortable. But what did Jonah do because he was uncomfortable? Did he take a knife out of his pocket and cut to the right and the left so as to get out? No, my friends; Jonah, like a sensible man, remained where he was till, in the providence of God, he was *putt* out. And so, my friends, we cannot be wrong to follow Jonah's Biblical example and stay where we are till we are *putt* out." It is said that this advice was largely followed, and to a considerable extent checked the secession in that presbytery.

Both in the Highlands and Lowlands there are not wanting instances in which the relation of individual effort to Providence is not, as with



Jonah, one of passive acquiescence, but is tacitly regarded as a kind of limited liability, as when Donald in crossing a ferry on a very stormy night was nearly drowned, and only after a severe struggle contrived to scramble ashore. On reaching home his wife said to him, "Ah, Donald, Providence has been very good to you."

"Yes, Mary," he replied, "but I was pretty clever too myself."

A similar case is that of the old lady to whose trust in Providence there was a distinctly materialistic limit, and who when, by herself, driving a pair of spirited ponies down a steep hill lost command of them, but without serious consequences. On being asked what she did when the ponies bolted, she replied, "I just lay back, and put my feet on the splashboard and my trust in Providence till the breeching broke."

More satisfactory evidence of the belief that

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will,"

is found in the case of two old ministers who had been many years colleagues in the same charge. Both had considerably outlived the threescore years and ten, and casting a retrospective glance on their past lives, one of them

expressed his admiration of the way in which in their case Providence had overruled matters; that they had been colleagues for thirty years, and never had a quarrel.

“Yes,” said the other, “but we have not made much of it, for our church is nearly empty.”

“True,” replied his friend, “but that’s just where we see the hand of Providence again. Being colleagues, we have nearly emptied only one church; if we had had separate charges we would have nearly emptied two.”

Continuing the conversation, one remarked that he thought it was more tiring to listen to a sermon than to preach it.

“Yes,” said the other, “I have often found that I was more fatigued hearing you preach than when I preach myself.”

“Well, then,” was the reply, “it’s a very great pity of them that must hear us both.”

I knew intimately a minister, Mr X, in mental and moral build not unlike the two just referred to. Like them, he was not harassed by any ideas of “vaulting ambition”; like them, constitutionally tired, he gave not only otiose acquiescence but hearty approval to the workings of Providence towards his church and his

relation to it. He was very stout, the reverse of energetic, and his church, which in other hands might have been full, was very thinly attended. For an important object a very popular preacher, Dr Z, on one occasion filled Mr X's pulpit. The church was crammed in every corner, and the night was sultry. Mr X being, as I have said, very stout, found the heat oppressive, and meeting Dr Z as he came down the pulpit stairs he said, while he mopped his perspiring forehead, "Man, Dr Z, I'm gled I'm no poap-lar."

I recall some instances in which the providential management was not quite so satisfactory as in those mentioned. A dignitary of the Scottish Episcopal Church, who enjoyed his pipe, had comfortably installed himself in an empty smoking-compartment of a railway carriage. At a station near a fishing village the door was opened by a fishwife. The clergyman, wishing to be alone, said to her very civilly, "My good woman, this is a smoking-compartment," a remark to which she paid no attention. Thinking she was probably deaf, he repeated the remark in a louder tone. By this time the woman had taken the creel from her shoulders and was pushing it into the carriage. Still no notice

was taken. For the third time, and in quite a stentorian voice, he shouted the same intimation. The woman made no reply, but got into the carriage, and, taking a pipe from her pocket, she filled it with strong twist tobacco, lit it, and looking to the clergyman, said, "Ye thoct naebody could smoke but yoursel', my bonnie man."

One morning on leaving Aberdeen by an early train I got into a smoking-compartment in which a gentleman was smoking a fine full-flavoured cigar. At a station a few miles farther on an old man came into the carriage smoking a pipe of very strong tobacco. The gentleman with the cigar evidently disliked the smell of the coarse tobacco, and in the hope of getting rid of it took out his cigar-case and asked the old man if he would not try one of his cigars. "Oh, thank ye, sir," said the other, taking one out of the case; "I like fine to smoke thae weak half-papery, half-tobacco things in the evening, but I like a pipe better in the morning, and I'll just finish my pipe noo," at the same time putting the cigar into his pocket. The owner of the cigar was so tickled with the humour of the incident that he pardoned the injury to himself and the insult to his cigar, and took a hearty laugh, in which I joined him.

Yet another case in which the arrangement was not satisfactory. In front of the manse of Birse in Aberdeenshire there was once a deep marsh. A former laird of Finzean in riding to the manse took a short cut to the front door through this marsh, in which his horse got completely bogged and could not get out. The laird in his difficulty shouted out to Mr Smith, the minister, "Ho, Minister! how can you help me out of this?" "I dinna ken hoo I can help you; it's a part o' my parish I've never been in."

A minister in the north of Scotland, who was too much given to flowery language in his sermons, had a very matter-of-fact wife who had no sympathy with her husband's lofty flights, and thought it to be her duty to correct this weakness. She accordingly tried to keep him in check by either coughing or shuffling with her feet on the floor when she thought he was going beyond reasonable limits, and often succeeded. But one day when he was preaching on the fall of man he said, "Henceforth the earth was to be enriched with the sweat of man's brow and watered with woman's tears." Coughing and shuffling were too weak for the occasion, and she was heard to exclaim, "Eh, what an awfu' like mixture!"

## CHAPTER XXIV.

JOINT UNIVERSITY AND NORMAL SCHOOL TRAINING—NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE TRADITION OF THE OLD PARISH SCHOOL—PROGRESS MOST SATISFACTORY—TRAINING COLLEGE CURRICULUM WIDENED AND RAISED—ATTITUDE OF EDINBURGH BOARD TOWARDS PRACTICE IN SINGING—VISITS TO ENGLISH TRAINING COLLEGES—STUDENTS' DINNER SCHEME—SECONDARY SCHOOLS—ORGANISATION IMPROVED—EDINBURGH MERCHANT COMPANY SET THE EXAMPLE OF REFORM—LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH'S ENDOWED SCHOOL COMMISSION—SPLENDID RESULTS.

I SHOULD be departing from the main purpose of these reminiscences were I to enter in any detail into the changes that have taken place during the last forty years in the attainments of pupil-teachers on their admission to apprenticeship, and their mental equipment as teachers on leaving the Training College as qualified teachers. One has only to compare the ludicrously meagre attainments of pupil-teachers in the 'Sixties with what is now demanded of them, to see that the boy of sixteen has, all over, higher attainments than the boy of eighteen of forty years ago. The

same is true of girls. Commencing their apprenticeship on a much higher level, many contrive, during the currency of it, to compete for more or fewer leaving certificates as a preparation for entering the university. This marks a height of attainment which forty years ago was hopelessly out of reach.

A rapid sketch of the means by which this was brought about is probably not out of place.

#### *Joint University and Normal School Training.*

I had under my charge, during the first sixteen years of my service, the counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Moray, in which, as I have already said, the parish schools were almost invariably filled by men who had a full university course. In view of prospective legislation which might interfere with the continuance of this, and of the fact that, in a number of cases elsewhere in Scotland, men of purely Normal School training had been appointed to parish schools, it seemed probable that in the course of a few years the majority of our parish schools would be similarly staffed. I therefore thought it important to consider how far the curriculum of the Normal School was (by itself) fitted to

furnish a body of teachers who could maintain the fine tradition of the old parish school. There could be no doubt that it was totally unfit. The various Training Colleges did their work faithfully and well, but they did not pretend to more than the fringe of higher subjects, for the too good reason that the average pupil-teacher was not prepared to receive more.

In my first general report for 1865 I pointed this out, and sketched roughly a scheme by which attendance at the university might be conjoined with Normal College training without injury to the latter. During the two years that followed before a second general report was required of me, I had a very large amount of communication, personal and written, with Sir Francis Sandford, and the rectors of the four Training Colleges then existing, as to its feasibility. The result was general approval. My colleagues, Drs Wilson and Middleton, also made one or two references in support of it. Year after year I returned to the subject in successive reports, but it was not till after the separation of the Scottish from the English Department, and we had got a code of our own, that the first mention of permission to attend university classes appeared in the Code of 1873. Queen's



Scholars were allowed to attend not more than two classes, and their attendance at the Training College was correspondingly reduced. It commenced in a tentative way in 1874, when the four colleges sent up 33 students. In 1878 and ever since, the permission was practically extended to any number of classes, subject to the consent of the Training College authorities, who may dispense with the students' attendance at the Training College during the university session for such time as they may deem necessary. The number of students availing themselves of this permission has steadily increased, till now nearly 400 are enrolled every year, and when the report for 1901 appears, it will be found that not fewer than 5000 Training College students have during the last twenty-seven years received a more or less complete university education. In some, and probably in all the colleges, two-thirds of the male entrants come up having already gained so many leaving certificates as are considered equivalent to passing the preliminary examination for entrance into the university. It is expected that two or three years hence, between male and female students, from 150 to 200 Masters of Arts will be sent out every year as teachers.

My being in close contact with the parish teachers of the three Dick Bequest counties—men of distinctly superior education—probably accounts for my attitude towards this question. But having taken an early and active interest in it, there is perhaps no part of my work in the education field to which I look back with greater satisfaction.

This result could not be brought about without very considerable changes in the curriculum of the Training Colleges; but they were carried out gradually, and have been directed in almost every case towards something more robust and educative than the prescriptions of the early syllabus. Duplication of examination on the less important subjects was abolished, and the range of mathematics and science was extended. Time was found for higher work in the more educative subjects by cutting down or abolishing those that were less so, and for which satisfactory provision had been made during the four years of the pupil-teacher's course. When the Training Colleges came directly under my supervision in 1888, I found that the most distasteful and harassing task of the students was the committing to memory for repetition, *and repetition only*, of 300 lines of poetry in both the first and

second years of training. This seemed to me more a school than a college exercise, and made a drain on the student's time out of all proportion to its usefulness. I obtained the consent of the Department to its abolition. I had observed that instruction in French and German was entirely confined to translation and grammatical drill; that attention to pronunciation was in most of the colleges *nil* and in none sufficient, because it was not tested, and carried no marks in examination; and that the majority of students left the Training Colleges nominally qualified to teach a language, their pronunciation of which was absolutely unrecognisable. Further, the translation from Latin, Greek, French, and German was all from prescribed books. I felt certain, from the improved curriculum of pupil-teachers, that the majority could attack with fair success unseen passages judiciously chosen. My suggestions for remedy in these and other subjects, which it is unnecessary to mention, received the sanction of the Department, with unquestionable improvement of the curriculum, and without unduly increasing the work of the student, who had to face the double and difficult task of taking a good place in both Training College and university subjects.

An important change in the syllabus issued last year is the substitution of experimental laboratory treatment for mere bookwork in science. Any subject which conveniently lends itself to such treatment may be chosen, subject to the approval of the Department, but a general consensus of opinion has led to the adoption of the following course in all the Training Colleges—viz., Physics, followed by Chemistry, in the winter session of both years; and Botany, followed by Zoology, in the summer sessions. In both cases the course is one of first-hand investigation of the actual facts of the science, with as little reference as possible to text-books.

The change from the cramming of text-books to first-hand investigation of facts in the laboratory is directly in the line of Lord Balfour's admirable installation address as Chancellor of St Andrews University. A modern university must deal with principles and encourage original research. "For this purpose," said his lordship, "the university must have full equipment, and must be furnished with teachers of special attainments who will direct and guide original research." In no way and at no time can a better beginning in this direction be made than by training those who are to be teachers in our schools in personal

investigation of the science subjects they are to teach. School education conducted on these lines, and with steady regard to underlying principles, cannot fail to influence university teaching, and so make school and university act and react on each other. This is doubtless the motive of the change.

The musical training has generally been reported by the late Sir John Stainer and Dr M'Naught as generally satisfactory, and in several of the colleges excellent. In addition to school songs, cantatas of Gounod and Coleridge, and choruses of Schubert, Handel, Bishop, and Mendelssohn, are rendered tastefully and with spirit. It is matter for sincere regret that, so far as Edinburgh schools are concerned, almost the whole of this admirable training is absolutely unused. Edinburgh is the only considerable town or city in Great Britain where the teaching of school music is, except in the infant departments and one or two schools, exclusively the function of the visiting masters, who, as a rule, make one visit per week. It is a branch with which the ordinary staff, nine-tenths of whom have been pronounced by the musical experts above mentioned fully qualified for the work, dare not, or at any rate do not, interfere.

It is now eleven years since I first directed the attention of the Edinburgh Board to this matter, suggesting that, even as a means of recreative discipline and brightening of school work, it was a pity not to utilise the abundant appliances they had at hand. In subsequent reports I recurred to the subject four or five times, assuring them that I had the authority of Sir John Stainer and Dr M'Naught for saying that the ordinary school staff could be employed in teaching singing without the slightest injury, and even with advantage, to the special functions of the visiting masters. I did not at any time, and I do not now, suggest their discontinuance, or say a single word in their disparagement. I believe they do their work probably as well as it can be done. I only wished children to have more practice when abundant means were available. To all my appeals a deaf ear was turned, and up to the present time there seems to be no change. I see that my successor, Dr Stewart, in a recent report follows suit in vigorous terms in disapproval of this policy. It is difficult to believe that, as a rule, in the juvenile and upper departments, except during the visiting master's weekly hour, there is no exercise of ear, voice, or lungs in singing from one week's

end to the other, though in almost every classroom, and certainly in every school, there is an abundant supply of competent teachers of singing. It is one of the few cases in my experience in which suggestions of a practical and obviously common-sense character have been steadily ignored.

Near the end of 1888 I spent one week with Mr (now Sir Joshua) Fitch, and another with Mr (now Sir H. E.) Oakeley, Inspectors of English Training Colleges. I found their system and methods very similar to those pursued in Scotland. I visited with them several colleges, some for male and others for female students. At this time all English colleges for both sexes were, I think, residential. I have no doubt that for female students a residential college is on many grounds desirable. Regular and sufficient food and regular hours for study are thereby secured. The temptation to overwork under pressure of examination, and to under-feeding under pressure of necessity, are sometimes too strong to be resisted. In Scotland there are only two residential female colleges, the Episcopal in Edinburgh and the Roman Catholic in Glasgow. Both are admirably managed. To all the other colleges there are attached boarding-houses for

a large proportion of the female students, the management of which is also highly satisfactory. For male students it is doubtful if residential colleges are to be preferred. Regular hours for study and sufficient food are no doubt quite as important for them as for females, but the broadening and liberalising influence arising from intercourse with others than those who have the same professional aims as themselves would be lost in the semi-monastic life of a residential college. The more men rub shoulders with others who have different pursuits from themselves, the better fitted are they for the general business of life. Under existing arrangements they breathe a freer and, given an average amount of prudence, a more wholesome and invigorating atmosphere, and have opportunities of acquiring habits of self-reliance in matters other than professional, which are more necessary for them than for the softer sex, as contributing to success in their future career.

For two, and in many cases three years, the strain of successfully overtaking the combined work of Training College and university is a severe one, and I found that in bearing it few had the support that comes from a generous diet, and that almost every year some broke down.



The rectors had no doubt that this was due to overwork and the absence of a substantial mid-day meal. In Edinburgh the majority of the students come from the country and live in lodgings, where I found on personal inquiry that their food was in many cases both insufficient and badly cooked. By an appeal to those interested in education I set on foot in 1893 a movement in Edinburgh for providing, for such students as chose, a plain nourishing dinner at a price within their moderate means. The scheme has been beyond expectation successful. It is common to the Established and Free Church Colleges, in each of which a dining-room has been provided, and about 130 students take advantage of it. The rectors of both colleges, who preside in the respective dining-halls, give a most encouraging account of the beneficial results of the scheme in all respects, moral, social, and physical. We have put aside a proportion of the subscriptions to form the nucleus of a permanent fund, and there is accordingly good reason to expect that the scheme will be permanent.

There are now eight Training Colleges, two being commenced in Aberdeen in 1886, and one Roman Catholic Female College in Glasgow in 1896.

Between 1860 and 1885, when, in the latter year, the Department undertook the inspection of secondary schools, I was able without interference with my official duties to inspect and report on the majority of secondary schools between Elgin and Ayr. Since 1885 I have taken part in the inspection which must be accepted by all schools that send in candidates for the leaving certificate examination. Of the 93 visited in 1901, I inspected, at one time or another, at least 40 either unofficially or by instruction of the Department. The condition of many of these schools thirty-five years ago was widely different from what it is now. Even in some of the best the organisation was very unsatisfactory. In many of them the rectors were not central sources of authority; and in several, where they legally had rectorial power, they did not choose to exercise it. Each teacher was a law unto himself, and fought for his own hand, and each pupil paid for just as many classes in each department as he chose. In English and commercial subjects the pupils were of course more numerous than in the mathematical and classical ones. To secure for each master a fair proportion of fees, geography and history, which naturally go together, were separ-

ated, geography being handed over to the mathematical, and history to the classical master, or *vice versa*. In some schools pupils went up from class to class, year after year, altogether irrespective of examination or proved fitness to keep abreast of the more advanced work of the class into which they were automatically promoted. In many cases, by the joint advice of the examiners associated with me, some of these glaring weaknesses were remedied; but nothing has done so much to bring secondary education into line, the autonomy of each school being at the same time preserved, as the institution of the leaving certificate examination introduced in 1887. There is no part of the educational field to which Sir Henry Craik has given greater attention, or on the success of which he is to be more heartily congratulated, than his scheme of a leaving certificate examination.

In a book of reminiscences largely scholastic I cannot omit a reference to an educational movement of vast importance, not only as affecting the locality in which it originated, but as probably giving the first impulse to the movement which resulted in the Endowed Schools Commission. This Commission, over which

Lord Balfour of Burleigh presided, has, all over Scotland, utilised to the fullest extent, and practically without violation of the intentions of the pious founders, funds which previously were comparatively unproductive. I mean the action of the Merchant Company of Edinburgh in converting their hospitals into day-schools open to all. In 1869—the year preceding the conversion—the number of pupils in the schools of the Merchant Company was 428. In the first session thereafter there were 3400 pupils on the roll; in the second session the number rose to 4100, and now it is within a little of 6000. The number of teachers and governesses is 233.

The history of George Heriot's Foundation is similar. A hospital for 180 boys from 1628 till 1885, when it was opened as a day-school, it has now on its roll nearly 1000 pupils, and is a fully equipped science school. I have many times examined all these schools. There is but one opinion among all who have examined them of the excellence of the work done. If further corroboration is sought, it will be found in the splendid list of university honours in every branch of study.

Gordon's College in Aberdeen has the same

tale to tell. When I examined it first in 1863, and for eight or ten years afterwards, there were only 180 pupils, and the education, though sound, was mainly elementary. It now takes rank with a roll of 800 pupils as a fully equipped science school. Here, as in the Edinburgh schools referred to, the fees are low and the education excellent. The foundationers, formerly boarded and clothed in the hospitals, and more or less cooped up in a quasi-monastic institution, receive equivalent allowances, live with their parents or guardians, dress as they please, and enjoy the natural liberty best suited to enable them to discharge successfully the duties of citizenship.

## CHAPTER XXV.

THE BITTERS LATITUDE—GIVE IT A GOOD NAME—SUDDEN METEOROLOGICAL CHANGE—BIBULOUS SCOTLAND—"HE PUT TOO MUCH WATER IN HIS WHISKY"—ITS PRESERVATIVE QUALITIES—SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION—AN AWFUL RISK—A HIGHLAND FUNERAL—ROMAN CATHOLIC RAG-GATHERERS—THE MOST DANGEROUS FORM OF DRUNKENNESS—SABBATH OBSERVANCE IN THE HIGHLANDS—"MEN"—SUPERSTITIONS.

EVERY man who has travelled much in the Highlands must have observed that, when he has reached a certain degree of latitude, the morning dram is a preliminary to breakfast in practically every house in which the *ménage* is fairly comfortable, or in what may be called a "bien house," whether it be the house of a minister, a well-to-do farmer, or a laird. This at any rate was the case thirty years ago. It is usually called bitters, and it often is a mixture of bitters and whisky, but it is also sometimes simply whisky. It is natural to infer from this that Highlanders must be more drunken

than Lowlanders. So far as I have observed, such an inference is unwarranted. It is usually a very small drop, about one-fourth of a wine-glass, or less. I have often seen gentlemen, and sometimes ladies, of irreproachably temperate habits, pay a visit to the sideboard and the bottle of bitters before sitting down to breakfast. When I visited Russia in 1897 I found the same custom prevalent on board Swedish and Russian steamers and in restaurants, and Swedes and Russians of that social class are not a notoriously intemperate people. I am unable to account for the custom, and I am not concerned to maintain that it is a good one. I only state the fact. It may be due to climatic conditions common to Sweden and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. If I may believe, and I know no reason why I should not, the account given me by a hotelkeeper in the west of Ross-shire, I should be disposed to assign the climate as the cause, seeing that Englishmen, when exposed to the same conditions, take kindly to the custom.

Some thirty years ago I was staying in the Balmacara Hotel, near Strome Ferry. During my stay a displenishing sale at a large farm in the neighbourhood was to take place. The ferry

crossings at Kyclerhea and Kyleakin are sometimes very troublesome, and farmers from considerable distances had come to the hotel on the night previous to the sale in view of possibly bad weather. On going into the commercial room for breakfast I found it full of these visitors, and Mr Macrae, the landlord, going round, bottle in hand, with the so-called bitters. When in due course he came to me, I asked in joke if it wasn't a very bad thing to drink whisky before breakfast.

"Oh no," he replied, "it is a very good old custom."

"But," I said, "if English people saw us taking whisky in the morning they would think we were a very drunken lot."

"Well," he replied, "I'll tell you my experience. When the Englishmen will come here, I'll give them a small drop just like the rest, and they'll pull a very ugly face, and say, 'Ach, Mr Macrae, it's very bad!' I'll never mind them, but I'll just persevere for three or four days, and give them a small drop every morning. And do you know, they find it does them good, and they'll come to like it, and they'll call it a tonic, and take it every morning whatever, and pull ugly faces no more."



I am assured that the custom has now to a large extent died out. Mr Macrae's illustration of the fact that one drop of bitters makes the whole world kin is corroborated by the experience of an Englishman on his first visit to Scotland. He was an oldish man, but very plucky, and had made up his mind to make good use of his visit, even at the cost of personal inconvenience. He paid a visit to Arran, where a company of volunteers were camping out. They were to change guard at an early hour in the morning, and the old gentleman, having resolved to do everything thoroughly, left his comfortable bed and repaired to the camping-ground. It was a cold raw morning, and his nose was blue and moist. He looked the very picture of discomfort, and could not help railing against the climate and the weather as the worst he had ever experienced. A friend of mine near him took pity on him and gave him from his flask a glass of undiluted whisky. This had not reached its destination more than a few minutes when he turned round rubbing his hands gleefully, and with a beaming countenance exclaimed, "Well, 'pon my word, this is a glorious morning."

Several considerations furnish very clear evidence that as a people we are bibulous, and not

exactly models of temperance. It is not an elevating reflection that in Edinburgh, and probably elsewhere, "the trade" is universally understood to mean the whisky trade. It may be said that this is because the making of whisky is a very large industry in Scotland. But "the trade" designates the retailer as well as the manufacturer, and where the retailing of any product is *par excellence* "the trade" there is good reason for supposing that a very wide and liberal use is made of the article retailed. Further, a very large proportion of amusing anecdotes have a distinct whisky basis. Some that are subjects of my own experience may be worth recording.

During a visit to Mull I went out one day to fish for sea-trout in the Dervaig, taking with me Sandy Munn, a well-known character in Mull. At lunch-time we sat down by the side of the stream. I said to Sandy, "Will you have a sandwich?"

"If you please, sir."

A sandwich or two having been disposed of, I asked him if he would take a dram.

"If you please, sir."

I took my flask out of my pocket and poured a decent glass of whisky into the cup, and bending



From a Sketch by James Cadenhead, A.R.S.W.

*"Ach! aach! No waater in my whusky."*

down to the stream I said, "I had better put a little water into it."

Sandy with an agonised shriek bawled out, "Goot Got! waater in whusky! No waater in my whusky to spoil the goot drink. Waahter! Waahter!!"

Sandy Munn does not stand alone among Highlanders in his preference for undiluted whisky. Three old men—Hector, Donald, and Duncan—had met for many years for their "meridian" or mid-day dram. They were all old men, but Donald and Duncan were considerably older than Hector. It was, however, Hector's fate to fall ill and die somewhat unexpectedly. This was a great shock to his two comrades, and for a week or two their daily forgathering was given up. As might be expected, however, they by-and-by returned to their old habits. On the first occasion of their return Donald said to Duncan, talking of their departed friend, "The ways of Providence, Duncan, is fery strange. Why should Hector, a younger man than you or me, and a strong man too, be taken away before us?"

"Yes, Donald, the ways of Providence is fery strange, to be sure. I'll not jist be able to say why Hector has been taken away before us,

but there was one thing I noticed,—I always thocht he wud be puttin' too much waater in his whusky."

There are a good many ways of civilly indicating a modified satisfaction with the treatment one receives in the matter of drams. A lady who thought it wrong to give undiluted whisky to any one, gave a man, for some little service rendered, her usual mixture of whisky-and-water. After taking a sip he said to her, "Did you put in the water or the whisky first?"

"I put in the whisky first," she replied.

"Oh, very well, I suppose I'll come to the whisky by-and-by."

To another man who did not seem quite satisfied she said, "A glass of whisky and a glass of water is a very good dram."

"Yes," he replied, "but not so good as two glasses of whisky and no water."

I had evidence of belief in the preservative or antiseptic power of whisky in a conversation I had with an old man in Perthshire, who informed me that he had been in the service of Lord Breadalbane for forty-five years as a boatman on Loch Tay. As he looked fresh and vigorous, I remarked that he must have commenced his service very early.

“Ah,” he replied, “I’m an older man than you wud be thinking.”

“Indeed; what is your age?”

“I’ll be seventy-two next summer.”

“Well,” I remarked, “you would pass for ten years less than that.”

“Oh yes; you see I wud be always gettin’ a small drop of whusky, and then the fresh air wud be a goot thing too.”

The views of total abstainers are widely different from those of the old boatman. In Forfar a Mr Murphy was giving a lecture on the dreadful effects of long and continuous indulgence in the use of alcohol. He mentioned, with most circumstantial details, a case in which a man who had drunk to excess for a number of years was so completely saturated with alcoholic fumes that one night when he was blowing out a candle his breath took fire, and he died in a short time from spontaneous combustion. One of the audience came up to the platform and said that he wished to thank Mr Murphy for having saved his life.

“How,” said Mr Murphy, “have I saved your life?”

“Yes,” he replied, “you’ve saved my life. I’ll never blow out a candle as long as I live.”

Two workmen met in the morning after a

night of heavy drinking. They were very thirsty, but could not muster more than the price of one glass of whisky. While they were about to share it a friend came in on the same errand. They offered him the glass, which he took and finished. He felt he could not do less than offer them each a glass in return. He then went away. One said to the other, "Now, wasna that weel managed?"

"It was so," he replied, "but, man, it was an awfu' risk."

On another of my visits to Mull Mr L., whose guest I was to be for a few days, sent his servant and dogcart to meet me at Tobermory pier. It was a cold raw day, and as Donald had been waiting for some time the arrival of the steamer, I thought he would probably have no serious objection to a dram, and found I was not mistaken. I accordingly took him into the hotel. He had not been told who I was, and made sundry attempts to find out. Amused at his curiosity, I did not at once enlighten him. As a final attempt he said, when about to drink my health over his dram, "I wud be thinking, and wass almost sure, you wud be a frien' of Mrs L.'s." I replied that I was no relation of hers. "No? Well you wass fery like her.

Your fery goot helse whatefer." I need scarcely say that my likeness to Mrs L. was purely imaginary and inquisitorial.

It happened that this was the funeral day of a highly esteemed citizen of Tobermory, out of respect to whose memory the coffin was to be carried a distance of eight or ten miles to the churchyard by relays of his friends and admirers. The churchyard was in the same direction as the house which was my destination. The funeral procession—a very large one—had already started, and the road was so narrow that it would have been somewhat difficult, and almost disrespectful, to have pressed past it. We accordingly followed at a walking pace. On each side of the coffin walked a man with a bottle of whisky for the refreshment of the relays of bearers, and behind the procession came a cart with the abundant supply of eatables and whisky which are the usual accompaniments of a Highland funeral. After we had gone two or three miles Donald said that if I had no objection he would let me drive myself, for he had a great respect for the deceased, and he would like to take a share of what was going. I daresay he meant me to understand, and perhaps also really meant, a share of the labour of carrying the



coffin, but it struck me that it might have a consequential though unavowed reference to the liberal distribution of whisky to the bearers, on the principle that the labourer is worthy of his hire. Whatever his meaning, I consented, and Donald took a share of "what was going" in both senses.

When he drove me back to Tobermory some days afterwards I noticed on Morven an elegant little church, and asked him what church it was.

"Ah," he replied, "it's a popish Roman Catholic place."

"Indeed," I said; "I didn't know that you Highlanders were Roman Catholics."

"Ach, it will not be Highlanders that's in it. They're Irish."

"But how have they been able to build a fine church like that?"

"Oh, Lady Gordon will help them. She's a Catholic herself."

"But what do Irishmen get to do in Mull? I should have thought there would be no work for them here. What do they get to do?"

"Oh, they gather rags and the like o' that," in a Protestant contemptuousness of tone that could be assumed only in speaking of a congregation of Roman Catholic rag-gatherers.

Alcoholic anecdotes have doubtless a humorous side, but they have also a serious aspect which we cannot as a nation regard with satisfaction or the complacency of indifference.

In view of the abundance of such anecdotes as the foregoing (and I have selected only a few) we are compelled to admit the strong presumptive evidence of undue and regrettable excess in the consumption of whisky, and the misery, destitution, and crime which follow in its train. Proofs of it abound in every large city, especially on Saturday nights. In a sad number of cases the necessities of wives and children in the matter of food and clothing are heartlessly disregarded by men whose wages, if properly husbanded, would secure all the comforts of a happy though humble home. Unfortunately the wife is too often as drunken as the husband. Nothing short of a miracle can prevent the children of such dissolute parents from swelling the ranks of the criminal classes.

I remember seeing a boy of not more than seven years of age selling matches at the Register House in Edinburgh at nearly twelve o'clock at night. There was a cold wind blowing, and the poor little fellow had availed himself of a projecting part of the building as

a shelter from the wind. He looked so pale, worn, and dejected that I spoke to him, bought a box of his matches, and asked him why he was out on the street so late. "I daurna," he replied, "gang hame till I have selled a' my matches." I bought all he had left, and asked at what time he went to bed. In a piteously languid tone he replied, "Just ony time." Hardly anything could be more pathetic than the hopeless sadness of the answer, as if, infant as he was, the iron had already entered into his soul, and there was nothing for it but passive acquiescence in the hardened neglect of his parents. Abandoned thus morally and physically, what did mature age, if he should ever reach it, promise for such a child but a permanently twisted and debased nature?

But this tendency to excess is not confined to the lowest stratum of society. A more dangerous form of drunkenness than being conspicuously drunk once a-fortnight exists in a class who have never been seen drunk. I refer to young men who habitually have recourse to "nips" in the forenoon and throughout the day, and are unconsciously nearing the line which, once crossed, is seldom recrossed. Their resilient power is gone, and they are courting

the approach of the alcoholic demon whose grip once fastened is scarcely ever relaxed. I have known men of chivalrous nature and great ability, in whom conscientiousness, sense of duty, self-respect were conspicuous features,—men who had the strongest motives for maintenance of social position,—lose their crispness of brain, their will-power, their truthfulness, their self-respect, their regard for the happiness of those near and dear to them, through the insidious poison of habitual “nipping.” And yet for years, while the habit was steadily growing, these men were never seen drunk. It is for this reason that I regard “nipping” as the most dangerous form of alcoholic abuse.

We must all bid God-speed to the numerous tea-rooms that have lately been established in large towns like Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Manchester. Twenty years ago there was generally no beverage to be had in restaurants that was not more or less intoxicating. Now milk, tea, cocoa can not only be had, but are largely chosen, to the unquestionable advantage of young men whose habits and character are in process of taking permanent form.

There are several other respects in which, especially in the Highlands, great changes have

taken place during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Thanks to railways and greater intercourse with the South, the exceedingly narrow views of former times, in respect of Sabbath observance, have given place to what is broader, healthier, and more rational. In few districts now would shaving on Sunday be thought Sabbath desecration. But not more than thirty years ago a minister told me that in performing that simple and (to one who does not grow a beard) necessary operation he found it imperative to shut his dressing-room door most carefully, lest his servants should see him shaving, raise a scandal in the parish, and he be regarded as sitting in the chair of the scorner.

Another instance of the same narrowness of view is furnished in the experience of a young English lady who, when she was a visitor at a country house in Ross-shire, was reprimanded by an old gamekeeper for a perfectly harmless expression of surprise, which he thought was swearing. On the following Sunday, when she was out walking, she lost sight for a moment of her pet dog and gave a whistle to bring it to heel. The same gamekeeper heard her, and with sternly reproofing tone and deprecatory

shake of the head said, "Ach, my leddy! sweerin's bad and bad enough, but whustlin' on the Sabbath! Ow!! Ow!!!"

A less ludicrous, but in its moral or rather immoral aspect more objectionable, instance than the foregoing is that of a Sutherland crofter who, on his deathbed, while bewailing his shortcomings, confessed to having stolen a sheep two years before—a theft which had not been proved against any one. The minister to whom he made the confession hoped he had prayed for forgiveness.

"Yes," said the man; "but that's not the biggest sin I have committed."

"What else have you done?" asked the minister.

"Well, sir," he replied, "there was one Sabbath I did not go to church for I was not well, and I was very thirsty, for it was a very warm day, and I went out to the well and brought in a canful of water, and I cannot get that sin out of my head."

It speaks equally for the irrational state of Sabbatarian feeling, whether we suppose that the man's contrition for carrying in the water was genuine, or that he thought the confession of it would raise him in the minister's estima-

tion. Under either supposition, morality fares badly.

It would be easy to accumulate examples, but it is not necessary. Those I have given are or were typical, and I know they are true.

At this time the Lord's Supper was regarded in the Highlands not as a means of grace, but as a test of discipleship, and it was accordingly thought almost sacrilegious presumption for any one below fifty or sixty years of age to sit down at the communion-table. This feeling is somewhat modified, but it is not yet extinct.

Any one who has been much in the country districts of the north of Scotland at the time of which I speak must have come across quasi-ecclesiastical functionaries who are, if not peculiar to the Highlands, at any rate more outstanding and incomparably more influential than in the Lowlands. They are elders of the church, but prominent ones, and are denominated *par excellence* MEN. They are often uneducated, always strictly evangelical, generally fluent of speech, unctuous in prayer, conscious of power, and sometimes not indifferent to the good things of this life in the shape of meat and drink, with which they are abundantly supplied during rounds of visits extending some-

times over two or three months. They owe their power over the labouring class to a gift of prayer, preaching, and catechising, which, owing nothing to the extraneous aid of school and college learning, but being regarded as heaven-sent, is of greater value, and worthy of deeper reverence than pulpit ministrations of ministers who required to be taught to preach and pray.

At the Disruption in 1843 the great majority of them left the Established Church. Their power and number are now much diminished. For the last forty years there has been no such functionary in the Established Church. They were not, except in the respects I have mentioned, of uniform type. Many were genuinely pious men, who showed great zeal in the discharge of duties of a missionary kind in large parishes where distance from the church was so great as to make regular attendance difficult. Of others an equally favourable estimate could not be given.

In Sutherland I got an amusing account of one of these missionary visits. In the course of conversation the *man* had got into a heated discussion on some knotty theological point with Mary Cameron, a maiden lady of very mature



years, sound knowledge of her Bible, and distinctly pronounced character. She had clearly the better of the argument, when the *man*, in order to escape ignominious defeat, discovered that it was time for family worship, and asked a servant to "bring in the books." He of course conducted the service, and in his prayer, among other petitions, said, "O Lord, we ask Thee to send down more light to Thine ancient handmaid Mary Cameron, that she may understand the Scriptures." Mary, smarting under the double wrong of the mean advantage he was taking when he had it all his own way, and the reference to herself as "ancient," sprang from her knees to her feet with, "It's just like your impudence to speak of me in that disrespectful way to my Maker."

The reverence paid to the *men* was strong enough to bear the strain of pronounced defects of character and conduct in respect of intemperance and other weaknesses. One *man* was known to be given to drinking not wisely but too well as often as opportunity presented itself. His praises as a godly man were nevertheless being sounded by a worthy woman, when a neighbour asked if it was not well known that he was often drunk, to which the reply was,

“Oh yes, many will be the times I have seen him drunk, but he’s soun’, soun’.”

Superstitious beliefs about “the evil eye,” quack medicines, and miraculous cures, though not yet extinct, have to a considerable extent decreased. I give some examples furnished to me by a doctor in the west of Ross-shire from his note-book.

A girl had the bone of her arm broken by falling over a form in school. After twenty-one days had elapsed the doctor was sent for and found a thread with three knots lying on the fracture, over which while knotting it an old woman pronounced some Gaelic verses. Many otherwise sensible people in the Highlands wear knotted threads on parts of the body as preventives or cures of disease. It is possible that the knots may be a survival from Catholic times of the beads on the rosary.

This doctor was called in to see a woman who had some outbreak on her face. On asking her to uncover her face he found it presented a most ghastly appearance, being all smeared with the blood of a black cock. This unfortunate fowl is a sovereign remedy for many troubles, and is sometimes in a vicarious way buried alive. Within the memory of people still living an

instance of this is known to have occurred in Ross-shire. An old man of great piety was very ill, and thought to be dying. His relatives, finding the usual remedies of no avail, called in the aid of a *wise woman*, who ordered them to dig a hole in the floor of the house and bury in it a black cock alive. This was accordingly done, but with what result is not recorded.

To cure dropsy, a bottle of water is brought from a well in an island in Loch Maree, and in the presence of the sufferer broken against a rock that had never been moved. The efficacy of this cure was tested within a few hundred yards of the residence of my informant three days before. To be bathed in the water of this well was believed to be a cure for lunacy, but the well is said to have dried up because a shepherd used the water as a cure for one of his dogs that was supposed to be mad.

A man had a child suffering from water in the head, and carried him on his back in a blanket from Lochcarron to Lochbroom and back—over 120 miles—to see a man who professed to cure such ailments. He got a bottle of water, a spoonful of which was to be given several times a day. The doctor found the water absolutely putrid.

Many of the common people would not for

the world count their chickens, nor pronounce a baby pretty without first blessing it. "Bless the child, what a beauty!" &c. The blessing disarms the evil eye. The Irish Celt has the same superstitions. I had an Irish servant whom I found squeezing some brown hair into a small wound in her thumb. I asked what she was doing. She replied, "Sure, sur, it's nothin' but an ould fashion we have in Oireland. The dog this marnin' bit my thumb, and a hair of the dog that bit you is said to be a good cure, and I thought there moight be no harrum in tryin' it."

To this day there is a very strong objection in the Highlands to a funeral procession taking any but the longest usual road to the churchyard. Where an excellent new road has for ordinary traffic taken the place of an old one, the former is never used for a funeral, the superstition being that if it were, another inmate of the house would die before the lapse of a year.

I do not know what consequences might be expected from a contretemps which occurred lately. A number of men in funeral garb were standing, without apparent object, at a railway station. The porter, on being asked for an explanation, said, "Oh, there was to have been a funeral, but the corpse has missed the connection."