CHAPTER XXVI.

TEACHERS WITH RARE EXCEPTIONS EMINENTLY FAITHFUL AND TRUSTWORTHY — NO CHARITY FOR CHEATING — AMUSING MISTAKES—"MY KINGDOM FOR A HORSE."

THE impression left on my mind after long and intimate intercourse with teachers in respect of fidelity, earnestness of purpose, and honesty in the midst of many temptations to deception, is a distinctly favourable one. Under all the various forms of the Code there have been opportunities for falsification in registration and other matters affecting professional status, but they have been exceedingly seldom taken advantage of. Faithful, honest work has been the all but universal characteristic. I have found, of course, very considerable variations in the extent to which self-reliance in the working of exercises is insisted on in different schools, and I am far from saying that, even with the strictest possible supervision, there may not have been many instances of pupils getting unfair assistance from their neighbours

in figuring out sums in arithmetic; but cases of teachers deliberately conspiring with the pupils in dishonest work have been so rare as not to require more than a passing notice. When they did occur they were of course severely punished.

I remember a case in the neighbourhood of Glasgow in which the attempt to deceive was so clear that nothing but a serious reduction of grant would have met it. It was a denominational, not a board school, the correspondent for which, when I told him of the gravity of the offence and the consequent reduction of grant, besought me, by every consideration he could think of, to overlook it, and assured me that it would never happen again. I was inexorable, and the reduction was made. This manager, in talking of my severity to a brother correspondent of another school, said that as long as Kerr came to his school he would never have peace in this world. "Never mind," said his friend; "you will be all right in the next world, for you know there's no care [Kerr] in heaven."

On another similar occasion, when the most glaring deception was attempted by both teacher and pupil-teachers, I had a talk with them after the scholars were dismissed, and said to the mistress, that if discipline had any meaning, there

could be no stronger case for the refusal of the grant for that subject, than when there was an obvious conspiracy on the part of the staff to deceive the inspector, and that it was quite impossible to recommend payment of it. I added that I rather thought the Department would not think that a sufficient punishment. She said, "Oh, sir, would you not have a little charity?"

"Charity for cheating?" I replied. "None. I have charity for weakness, nervousness, mistakes, misconceptions, but none for cheating."

On yet another occasion, in a Sutherland school, I had no choice but to refuse the same grant for the same reason. Several times during the examination I heard the teacher whispering answers to my questions. To avoid finding fault with him in the presence of his pupils, but at the same time to let him know that I heard the whispers, I said, "I hear some whispering. You must not whisper to each other. Every boy must answer for himself." When the inspection was over I said, "Now, children, I need not keep you any longer—you may go away home." All rose, and some were moving towards the door when the teacher called them back, informing me that he always closed the school with prayer. When the prayer and blessing were gone through

with great unction, and the pupils dismissed, I told the teacher that I knew the whispering I had checked came from him, adding, "Don't you think that your attempt to deceive did more to undermine a sense of honesty in your pupils than your prayers and blessing did them good?" He agreed with me, said he was very sorry, and promised that it would not occur again.

I have great satisfaction in saying that I have few such cases to record.

In every school, however well taught and whatever the class of pupil, there is always in almost every subject a crop of blunders that have something memorable about them. Selection is the difficulty. When religious instruction was under Government supervision I often asked a class to write out from memory a few lines of a well-known psalm as a test of writing and spelling.

On one occasion I prescribed four lines of the first psalm, and got from one boy—

> "That man hath perfect blessedness
> Who walketh *on a stray*."

On another occasion the meaning of two lines of the second paraphrase was asked—

> "Give us each day our daily bread,
> And raiment fit provide."

I asked the meaning of "raiment," and got the answer "Clothes." Then what is "*fit* raiment"? Answer, "Hose and shoon."

An advanced class had read "Othello." The Moor, in his defence for marrying, says that Desdemona asked that he

> "Should all his pilgrimage relate,
> Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
> But not intentively."

I asked the meaning of "by parcels," and was told that she had got it by the *parcel post.*

There are few exercises more difficult for the average pupil than writing a paraphrase of a poetical passage, and none in which senseless blunders are so often made. The thoughtless girl or boy thinks that nothing more is necessary than to exchange one word for another which is found in the dictionary. For example, Milton speaks of the plausibility of Belial's speech, but says, "All was false and hollow," for which the paraphrase given was, "All was untrue and excavated."

I have the permission of a colleague to record one of a totally different type. In the "Lady of the Lake" Fitz-James says to Roderick Dhu—

> "Now, yield thee, or by Him who made
> The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!"

For this the paraphrase given was, "If ye dinna gie in, by God, I'll kill ye!" Distinctly colloquial, but perfectly correct, and probably more like Fitz-James's actual utterance than Sir Walter's version.

Chaucer in his Prologue, describing the "Merye Frier," says, "And rage he couthe as dothe a whelpe," for which the paraphrase given was, "He was a rough tyke"—not a bad paraphrase, but probably not what Chaucer meant.

It would be difficult to find a better example of confusion or absence of thought than is furnished by a girl in a high-class school, who in an essay on Newton wrote, "The philosopher Sir Isaac Newton was the first to make the great discovery that when an apple becomes over-ripe it falls to the ground"; or one showing less skill in composition and greater scarcity of ideas than the boy who, in an essay on salt, confined himself to the simple statement, "Salt is a stuff which, if it is not boiled with potatoes, makes them nasty."

My colleague Mr Scougal examining a class in history tried to get from them the other name of Graham of Claverhouse. To help them to it he asked them to name any Scottish songs they knew.

Among others "The Bonnets of bonny Dundee" was given. Getting a boy to repeat the refrain, "Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can," ending with "Up with the bonnets of bonny Dundee," he said that Graham's other name was mentioned in that song, when a boy, delighted at the discovery, bawled out "Philip M'Cann."

It is pleasant to come across specimens of schoolwork in which more than average ability and something akin to sparkle and imagination are found. Instances of this kind are of course somewhat rare, by far the largest proportion of school-children, as of mankind generally, being essentially commonplace. The following strikes me as worth recording:—

At the examination of a higher class girls' school in Banff I prescribed as an exercise in composition "The Autobiography of an old Horse." One girl about fifteen years of age prefaced her exercise by saying that she was not up in natural history, nor knowing in horse-flesh, and ventured to substitute the following verses instead of the autobiography asked for:—

"Dear teacher, it is very hard
To write 'mid such a row :
My wits have gone to gather wool,
And addled is my pow.

'A horse, a horse, my kingdom for
A horse' of any kind!
A coal-black steed, a gallant grey,
A lame, a screw, a blind!

Come, Muses, Graces! come and help
A pilgrim on her way,
Who fain would climb Parnassus hill
On Pegasus this day.

Come, Jupiter! Come any one!
Will no one list my call?
Nay, nay, the Muses, Graces all
Are dressing for the ball.[1]

Pons asinorum I can't cross;
I'm fairly off the line,
Although my eyes look to the skies
In rolling frenzy fine.

No doubt good Mrs S—— expects
That all her youth and beauty
Before the Queen's examiner
This day will do their duty.

I'll give it up. The job is bad,
For aching are my orbs.
Excuse me, and I'll ever be
Your leal ELIZA FORBES."

[1] There was to be a ball that night in Duff House, near Banff.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FAILURE OF A RED-HERRING SCARE—"I'M A FISHER MY-SEL'"—"MORAL SUASION PERFECT NONSENSE"—EXAMINATION IN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE—A COURAGEOUS MINISTER—"NOT BIG ENOUGH TO HAUD A SOWL"—AN ATHLETIC BEADLE.

FISHING is a very favourite pastime with the schoolmaster: it falls in conveniently with his spare time. He has always Saturday at his disposal, and the afternoons of a large part of spring, summer, and autumn can be utilised in practising the gentle art if he happens to live within easy reach of burn or loch. Golf has become a pretty formidable rival with many, but not with an old man whom I knew in the North, and who, true as the needle to the pole, turned to his rod and basket every Saturday when the season and weather made fishing possible.

That he was inordinately fond of it may be gathered from the fact that even in Caithness, where Sabbath observance was of the most rigid type, he used often to set lines on Saturday night

and chose a safe hour on Sunday when, unseen by his neighbours, he went to see the success of his Sabbath-breaking. His sin, however, found him out, and he was severely reprimanded by the kirk-session. When even this did not check the ruling passion, one of his neighbours, thinking that something uncanny might have the desired effect, went under cover of night, removed the bait from the hook, and substituted a large red herring. His hope was that the smoked fish would indicate to Donald the hot quarter from which it had come, and which if he went on sinning would be his own ultimate destination. His neighbour was on the outlook next day to see the result. Donald took the red herring off the hook, smelt it, and was overheard saying, "This fush has been smoked with either sea-weed or sawdust, and I never heard that onything but brumstane was burnt doun yonder. Ach, Murdo M'Kay, you are a fery clever man, but you needna be tryin' ony of your sully capers on me."

Donald, like most fishermen, had some pretty tall stories of his own experience, some no doubt true, others possible but scarcely credible. It takes either a very smart fisherman or a very phlegmatic fish, or a combination of both, for the former, when the line breaks, to lay hold of it on

the surface of the water and then play and land a ten-pound salmon. Donald told me a number of such tales, to which I listened with a modified belief. The general tenor of them recalled to me the story of the two fishermen, on opposite sides of the Tweed, who fished for a considerable time without success. The one on the left bank at last changed his ground, went farther up the river, and, after a couple of hours, came back to find the man on the right bank still fishing, and called out to him, "I've got four fish." To this no reply was given. Thinking he had not been heard, he bawled in a much louder tone, "I've got four fish!" To which the other replied, "Oh, I heard you weel eneuch, but ye're forgettin', man, that I'm a fisher mysel'."

Donald, though not a very efficient teacher, was generally respected, and had many friends. In this he differed from a brother teacher in the same county, who was almost universally disliked as being greedy, cross-grained, and selfish. This man took ill and died very suddenly. At his funeral one of the company, who had not heard the cause of death, asked the gravedigger what the complaint was. "Oh," he replied, "there's no complaint at all; everybody's perfectly satisfied."

Humorous results often, as in the foregoing instance, follow from unexpected interpretations put on expressions that usually have, and are meant to have, but one meaning. We have an illustration of this in the case of a man who was twice married and survived both of his wives. The burial of his first wife happened on a day of sweltering heat, in the middle of summer. His second wife also died, and was buried on an extremely bitter day of frost and snow. The minister, who was present at both funerals, remarked to the widower that he had been very severely tried. "Ay," he replied; "when I buried my first wife we were a' nearly smothered wi' heat, and this time we are amaist frozen to death. My faith! the next time I'll hae a hearse."

No one who has been much in the Highlands, and is familiar with the manner in which sermons and religious matters generally are spoken of, will have any difficulty in understanding what was meant by a minister who, when he gave intimation of a prayer-meeting for a certain day, thought it necessary to add: "Now, my friends, you will understand that it is to be a *prayer*-meeting, simply a *prayer*-meeting, and that there will not be one word of truth spoken." Nor, in view

of the rigidity with which the dogma of justification by faith is generally held, will it be a matter for surprise that a man on his deathbed, being asked if he thought he was prepared for the change, replied, "Oh yes, I think I am prepared, for I have hated gude warks a' my days."

A vigorous and successful teacher in Aberdeenshire had the reputation of being a very severe disciplinarian. He had been found fault with for this, and was told of a teacher who never had recourse to corporal punishment. Having a keen interest in his profession, and no wish to inflict unnecessary pain, he took a resolution that for one month he would give a fair trial to "moral suasion," thinking that what was possible for others was not impossible for him. Shortly after this I had some talk with him on the subject, and asked if he had found it successful. "Successful!" he replied, with a contemptuous snort, "moral suasion is perfect nonsense. I locked the tawse in my desk and vowed that I would not touch them for a month. I kept my vow faithfully, but, man, it was an awful trial. Owre and owre again I was on the point of breaking through the self-denying ordinance.

I didn't; but oh, how I wearied for the end of that awful month. It came at last. The very next day I took out the tawse, and before the end of the week I was owre the haill lot o' them."

By the Act of 1872 examination in religious knowledge passed from H.M. Inspector, and was taken up by an examiner appointed by the Church. I got from an Aberdeen teacher the following account of one of these examinations of his school in 1878. The subject was the third question of the Shorter Catechism, "What do the Scriptures principally teach?" The answer was correctly given. Wishing to test their intelligence, the examiner asked what was the meaning of "Scriptures." After a number of unsuccessful attempts he put the matter very directly thus: "If I gave you money to buy the Scriptures, what would you get?" A little fellow, indifferently cared for by poor parents, and who occasionally shared the dinner of some of his fellows, promptly answered, "A piece, sir."

Another class was being examined on the 46th Psalm, "God is our refuge," &c. After the repetition of a few verses the examiner put the question, "What is God a refuge from?" No reply for some time; then a little boy answered

briskly, "hell-fire." "Well, yes," said the examiner; "but that is not quite what I want." Stillness again; then another reply, "the divil." "Quite right, but," &c. A third ventured to say "sin." The examiner then explained that the answer he wanted was "temptation." The examination was somewhat prolonged, and the class began to show a perhaps pardonable listlessness. After reproving a little fellow for inattention, he resumed. "Well, boys, what did I say just a minute ago?" Answer from one of the class, "Please, sir, you said *sit up*."

This answer recalls a very old and perhaps generally forgotten anecdote of a minister who openly rebuked from the pulpit any one whom he saw asleep. As his preaching was of the dullest, and hopelessly discontinuous in treatment, sleepers were common. On one occasion Lord D., the patron of the parish, and, as usual, the occupant of a prominent seat facing the pulpit, fell sound asleep during an exceptionally wandering discourse. The minister, who was nothing if not courageous, could not allow even the patron to sleep with impunity, and called to him in a loud voice, "Wauken, my Lord D.!"

"I'm not sleeping, minister," said his lordship.

"But ye *were* sleeping. I'll wager ye dinna ken what I said last."

"I'll wager ye I do."

"What was't, then?"

"Ye said, 'Wauken, my Lord D.'"

"Ay, but I'll wager ye dinna ken what I said last before that."

"I'll wager ye dinna ken yoursel'," said his lordship.

I have always thought this minister worthy of the well-meant but equivocal compliment which a clerical friend of mine told me was paid to him by one of his hearers after he had preached a sermon in which he had spoken out strongly on a burning social question: "Man, that was a grand sermon ye preached last Sunday. Ye're the man for me; ye fear neither God nor man."

An amusing instance of a man's language being moulded by his trade or profession occurred in the experience of one of my friends, who stood 6 ft. 3 in. and of corresponding breadth of build. On entering the shop of a tailor in the North, who was very considerably below the average height, his hat encountered a gasalier, to the danger of the globes. "I beg your pardon," he said to the little tailor.

"What are you begging pardon for; is it because God has made you a man?"

"Ah," said my friend, "I am bigger than most men."

"You're not a bit too big. Just look at me, a cratur like me, scarcely big enough to haud a sowl."

"Oh, you are surely big enough for that."

"Well, I don't know. It's a tight fit, I assure you—a very tight fit."

The stories about beadles are endless. The following is, so far as I know, unrecorded.

The minister of a parish in Ayrshire, on reaching the church one Sunday, found that he had left his sermon on his desk in the manse. The distance from the church to the manse was about half a mile. David, the beadle, was at once sent for the forgotten document, and was asked to return with it as quickly as possible. He got the sermon, and was on the point of returning with it when he looked at his watch, and saw that it was only by taking a bee-line across country over fields and hedges that he could reach the church in time for the commencement of the service. David, a hale man of middle age, had been in his youth a bit of an

athlete, and a famous runner. Clearing the first fence like a greyhound had an exhilarating effect upon him. He felt almost young again, and pursued his mad career, surmounting every obstacle of hedge and ditch that came in his way. As he came near the church he saw the minister and some of the elders at the church door waiting for him, and, as he thought, admiring his agility. Stimulated by this he put on a spurt, and cleared the only remaining hedge in splendid style, and it was with an air of triumph and a look confidently challenging approval that he placed the sermon in the minister's hand, saying, "I'm thinking ye'll no be verra late after a'." But a quite unexpected reception awaited him. "David, David," said the minister in his gravest manner, "I am shocked at your behaviour—shocked that any one connected with my church, and especially the beadle, should do as you have done to-day. I am sure you know quite well that neither the elders nor myself would ever profane the Lord's Day by jumping over hedges and ditches like mountebanks."

Now this was more than flesh and blood, or at any rate David's flesh and blood, could stand,

and there came the natural, though scarcely respectful, rejoinder, "Deil a ane o' ye *could* do't."

Kind words and benevolent intentions do not always meet with a fitting return. A kindly old minister had at least one such experience. He was travelling on the top of a coach from Edinburgh to Lasswade before a railway had found its way there, and had as a fellow-traveller a comparatively young man of pleasant and intelligent countenance, but looking haggard and sadly out of sorts. He felt interested in him, and from inquiry at the driver learned that he was a very nice fellow, but had an unfortunate habit of taking a spate of drinking twice and sometimes thrice a-year. The minister was tempted to improve the occasion, and began to talk with him. After a few commonplace remarks he said, "You don't seem very well to-day."

"No," he replied; "I'm not well at all."

"What is the matter with you?"

"I've just been drinkin' owre muckle."

"It's a great pity you should do that."

"Yes, it is a great pity. I don't drink often, but when I begin I keep at it for a week or two till I make a fool o' mysel'."

"What business do you follow?"

"I'm a joiner."

"I'm sure you must find that drinking spoils you for your work."

"Oh yes; I canna work when I'm on the spree."

"Are you married?"

"Yes, and I've got a very good wife."

"Don't you find that drinking spoils your temper too?"

"Well, my wife says that I am sometimes very crabbit when I've been drinkin'."

"And you won't be able to take your food as well as usual."

"Yes, that's true; I'm far waur to water than to corn."

"Don't you find, too, when you get up in the morning, that your eyes are hot and watery; that any sudden noise makes you start; that you are nervous and shaky, out of temper with yourself and everybody about you, and uncomfortable all over in both body and mind?"

"Ah," replied the man, laying his hand on his shoulder and looking him straight in the face, "ye've been fou yersel', ye auld beggar."

It is long since I heard the anecdote, and it

is probably a chestnut, of which I ought to be ashamed.

The same charge does not lie against the following, which relates an occurrence not yet, while I write, a month old. An able-bodied young Irishman called at the door of one of my clerical friends in Edinburgh asking for charity. My friend went to the door in order to have some satisfactory explanation of the request, but getting none, he told him that he ought to be ashamed to beg, and should try to get work of some kind.

"I see," said the Irishman, "you are like the rest of your cloth—ready enough with advice, but divil a bit of help will you give."

"Oh," said my friend, "you are going to be impertinent. I shall give you nothing; and let me tell you that if ever you come to my door again, I shall hand you over to the police."

"Ach, begorra," replied Paddy, "why should I ever dhrame of coming to *your* door again?"

Teachers are sometimes warned that it is dangerous to indulge in exaggeration in their reproofs. A schoolmistress once said to a troublesome child, "You are making my hair grey with all the bother you give me." No

reply was given at the time, but some days afterwards the girl asked the mistress if her mother was an old woman. "Yes," said the mistress, "she is very old, and her hair is quite white." "Oh," said the girl, "what an awful bother you must have been to her!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE TYPICAL FISHERMAN — INSCRIPTIONS—SIR GEORGE GROVE —CROFTERS AND DOMESTIC ANIMALS—A TICKLESOME CAR-DRIVER—IRISH BULLS AND REPARTEES—DANIEL WEBSTER, THE AMERICAN ORATOR — SIR JOHN MACDONALD — FIRE-BRIGADE DRILL.

MY vacations in autumn were spent in various ways, sometimes in shooting and fishing in the north of Scotland, sometimes in England, very often in a run to the Continent, once to Ireland, and once to America. I shall confine myself to a very few of the reminiscences connected with these holiday excursions.

One sometimes hears humorous remarks, with a certain flavour of the epigram in them, from quarters where they are least expected. Some years ago I was one of a large party in a country house on the banks of Loch Awe. The party was so large that it was found expedient to divide it, one-half going to shoot, the other to fish. I joined the shooting section, and we returned with

a very fair bag, but the fishermen came home "clean." One man, however, had hooked a salmon of large size, which he played for a long time but failed to land. He gave a glowing description of the struggle he had with it, and of its very large size—a not unusual occurrence when the fish gets away. Duncan the ghillie, who had been with the shooting party, and evidently suspected some exaggeration in the fisherman's account, turned round to me and said with a doubtful shake of the head, "Ay, fishermen will go out in the morning full of hope, and they'll come back in the evening full of whusky, and the truth is not in them."

I have fished a good deal in various parts of Scotland, but with only two incidents worth noting. One of these I have always had great hesitation in mentioning to any but intimate friends with whom I have the reputation of being fairly truthful. I record it now even at the risk of being classed with those whom Duncan describes as not having the truth in them. I was fishing in the tidal water of the Ythan in Aberdeenshire, in a boat with low gunwale. My aim was sea-trout, it being well known that salmon scarcely ever take the fly when they are leaving the sea and hurrying up

to fresh water. They were abundant and lively, leaping all round, sometimes over my line, but with no designs on the hook. I had no hope of being successful, but success came in the most unexpected way and through no merit of mine, for a salmon 7½-lb. weight took a suicidal leap and fell into the boat. I need not say that I promptly secured him. I have only to add, as in some sort a backing to what may be thought a doubtful story, that it was not the first time a salmon had leapt into a boat in the tidal water of the Ythan.

As I have said, I take no credit for my share in this incident. There is, however, another about which I confess to have been rather pleased with myself. I was fishing for salmon in the river Carron in Ross-shire. One rose to the fly, and I struck at it with more vigour than an old and infirm rod could bear, with the result that it broke clean off at the top of the butt. The fish was still hooked, but being unable to use the reel I had little hope of landing it. Fortunately there was a boy beside me to whom I handed the broken butt. Taking the other part of the rod in my left and the line in my right hand, and releasing from the reel a good many yards to meet possible rushes on the

part of my captive, I succeeded by careful management and after a considerable time in landing an 8-lb. fish.

I spent part of one of my vacations in Caithness, and met there a former teacher of the parish school of Canisbay. He was a native of Morayshire, and had never taken kindly to the Caithnessians. As he was walking one day through the churchyard he saw a tombstone bearing the simple but effective inscription, "Here lies an honest man." He found, however, that its beautiful simplicity had caused it to be copied on several other tombstones. As this did not square with his opinion of the Caithness people, he composed the following comment on it, of which he gave me a copy:—

> "Behold how many honest men
> Beneath our feet are found,
> While not a single one is seen
> In all the country round.
> The reason of this circumstance,
> If after it you strive,—
> They've buried all the honest men,
> And left the rogues alive."

During the same vacation I remember seeing in the churchyard of Fort-William an epitaph which struck me as unique in character, singu-

larly unpretentious, and probably quite true. It makes no claim to the exceptional piety and philanthropy which are not unusual characteristics of tombstone inscriptions.

I forget the name and regiment to which the deceased belonged, and I leave them blank.

"Here lie the remains of —— ——, Captain —— ——. He was a true Highlander, a sincere friend, and the best deerstalker of his day."

On one of my visits to England I had the good fortune to make, some years before his death, the acquaintance of Sir George Grove, a man remarkable for the wide range of his accomplishments in many different directions, in all of which he left the impress of his ability and boundless energy. As civil engineer in the erection of lighthouses in Jamaica and Bermuda, as secretary at the Crystal Palace, as author of the 'Dictionary of Music and Musicians,' as editor of 'Macmillan's Magazine,' as founder of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and as Dean Stanley's literary executor, he showed that he had the rare faculty of doing well whatever he undertook. Intercourse with a man of such wide and various culture was delightfully stimulative. Genial and kind-hearted, with a large amount of quiet humour and an excellent memory, he

narrated his experiences with admirable point. One of these was a striking and almost tragic incident, an account of which he got, if I am not mistaken, from the British consul in Cuba, who was himself a prominent actor in it.

A British subject in Cuba at a time when it was under martial law was one night passing along a street when he saw a crowd and went up to see the cause of it. He saw a man lying dead, some one having murdered him. In a few minutes the crowd moved off on the approach of the gendarmes and left him standing beside the dead body. He was accordingly charged with the murder and taken to prison, tried by court-martial, and sentenced to be shot next morning at eight o'clock. He sent a message to the British consul, who, being satisfied that he was innocent, went in full official costume to the place of execution, and found the firing party prepared to carry out the sentence. Going up to the lieutenant in charge he said, "I hear you are about to execute one of my countrymen." "Yes," said the officer, "he has been found guilty of murder." The consul interceded for him and urged delay for further investigation, but in vain. He then asked permission to go up and speak to the accused.

This being granted, he went up, and taking from his pocket a union-jack spread it over the condemned man. Then turning round he said, with a gesture towards the lieutenant, "Shoot now, if you dare." The man's life was thus saved.

Sometimes clever witticisms are found in unexpected places. On this same visit I went to see some of my old Cambridge friends, and found on the fly-leaf of an anthem book in Trinity College Chapel four lines which, in the opinion of the author of them, represented Dr Whewell's estimate of himself:—

"The man who 'midst comets and galaxies travels,
And nebulous films to the utmost unravels,
Will find when he reaches the verge of infinity,
That God's greatest work is the Master of Trinity."

In Ireland there is an amount of familiarity or friendship between owners of the crofter class and domestic animals which is common to the Scottish and Irish Celt, though not so fully developed in the former as in the latter. A gentleman whom I knew well said that a poor woman, from whom he had bought a horse, came to him as winter was approaching and insisted on having the horse returned, because in the cold weather the "childher" needed it for

a pillow. It is well known that the heat of cows, pigs, and horses is thus utilised in Kerry, and perhaps elsewhere in Ireland.

Of similar type is a story told me by a lady in Sutherland, who called one day on a crofter's wife and asked how they were all getting on, to which the reply in a somewhat sad tone was—

"Oh, we're just pretty well."

"You don't seem," said the lady, "to be in very good spirits. Is there anything wrong?"

"No, we're just pretty well."

"I'm sure from the way you speak that there is something the matter. Are your husband and the children all well?"

"Yes," still sadly, "we are just pretty well."

"Have you lost any relation lately?"

"No, not exactly a relation, but we have had a great disappointment."

"Indeed; what is it?"

"Well, we had a nice black pig. It wass not exactly a relation, but it's in and out of the house it wud be going just like a little dog, and we wass all fery fond of the black pig, and the black pig wass fery fond of us too—a nice warm-hearted pig it wass. And just three days since the black pig became fery unwell, and I wass

fery sorry for it, and I wud be doing all I could to make it better, and I gave it some castor-oil, but it wass no better, no better, and we wass all fery sorry. Then I wud give it some more castor-oil, and go out to the field to do some work, and when I came in about an hour after, the black pig wass"—breaking down completely with tears in her voice and eyes—"the black pig wass . . . wass before its Maker."

Nor is this attribution of quasi-human characteristics and relations to the lower animals confined to Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland. I knew an old labourer, Bob Docherty, in an Ayrshire village, who contrived to make both ends meet by adding to the work of his hands the proceeds of a litter of pigs periodically presented to him by a brood sow, which fell seriously ill. Bob was much respected, and great sympathy was felt for him. One of his neighbours who had been doing what he could for the invalid, and was a witness of its dying struggles, went home to his wife solemnised by its death and said, "Ah! Mary, Bob Docherty's pig's in eternity noo."

A story akin to these, and, I understand, well attested as genuine, is told of an eminent D.D. in one of the Border counties. He was paying a

round of visits among his parishioners, and on inquiring at one of the houses how they all were, was told they were all quite well except Dauvit, who was so ill that they had scarcely any hope of his recovery; for he was very old, and had been ill for several weeks, and all the remedies they had tried proved of no use. The minister sympathised with the family, and tried to comfort them by saying that as long as there was life there was hope. Before leaving he conducted a short service, and in his prayer Dauvit was duly remembered. The reverend gentleman's annoyance may be imagined when he learnt that his petitions had been offered, not for the aged head of the house, but for a donkey that bore the honoured Scriptural name.

Visitors to Dublin must have observed the exceedingly ragged and disreputable attire of many of the car-drivers. I am indebted to an Irish lady for the following, which furnishes a good specimen of Irish humour. A gentleman wishing a car was offered the service of one, the driver of which was enveloped in a bundle of rags. He refused him, and signalled to another driver respectably dressed, to whom he said that it was a disgrace to Dublin to allow any one so shamefully ragged as the rejected Jarvie to ply for

hire. "Ah, sur," he replied, "you must excuse him, sur; he can't help it."

"Why can't he help it? Why does his wife not mend his clothes for him?"

"Ah, your honour, he has no wife."

"Then why doesn't he get another coat?"

"He can't, sur. I assure you he can't."

"Why can't he?"

"Well, sur, it has been tried once or twice, but it can't be done. He is so very ticklesome that divil a tailor in Dublin daar lay a tape on him."

It is strange but true that the Irishman is the best representative of ludicrous "bulls" and also of dexterous repartees, mental characteristics that have apparently nothing in common, and are even antagonistic. An Irish gentleman told me of an exceedingly happy reply of the well-known and witty Father Healy, who excited the envy and jealousy of his brother priests by his never being found at a loss for an answer. They accordingly prepared a trap for him, from which they thought he could not find escape. At an evening party a lull in the conversation was judiciously chosen, and one of the conspirators called out to Healy, who was at the other end of the table, "By the way, Healy, what is the

difference between the seraphim and the cherubim?" "Oh," replied Healy promptly, "there *was* a difference, but they've made it up."

A similar instance is that of two M.P.'s (whose names I suppress) of opposite political opinions, both sharp-tempered and in the habit of picking holes in each other's coats. They were having a game at billiards, when one of them—a notorious but unsuccessful tuft-hunter—saw the other play a stroke which he did not understand, and bawled out in a rasping tone, "What on earth made you play that stroke?" "I played it," replied the other viciously, "to get what you have all your life tried for in vain. I played it for position."

In the autumn of 1884 I visited Canada as a member of the British Association.

A number of tours were arranged for by the Canadians as necessary emollient alteratives to scientific and philosophical discussion. Many who were neither philosophers nor scientists, and among these myself, took advantage of these excursions. One of the most extensive was a run from Montreal to the Rockies, and back by Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, and New York. There was considerable excitement in connection with the ensuing Presidential election, about which and previous contests many stories

were told. I venture to reproduce one which I thought worthy of being remembered. The famous orator Webster on the occasion of his candidature addressing a huge concourse in the open air, had some of his majestic periods spoiled by an enemy from Buffalo, who, amid the admiring silence of the rest of the audience, kept shouting "Louder! louder!" Of this Webster took no notice till he came to his peroration, which was somewhat like this:—

"And now, my countrymen, as I draw to a close this speech to which with your wonted indulgence you have so kindly listened, I find myself oppressed with thoughts too big for words. Somehow the breathless attention of this vast assemblage, realising as it does the fateful occasion on which we have met, causes another scene to rise before me—a greater concourse before which we shall stand face to face to answer as I have answered to you for my actions in the past. As I think of that final scene in the catastrophe of the world, when the volumes of history shall be for ever closed, and the recording angel shall have laid down his pen, I am filled with awe. But I can imagine that in that tremendous moment, when all creation shall bow down in silence before its God, and when the mighty

archangel shall stand with one foot on the earth and the other on the ocean, and shout in a voice of thunder, that shall echo from pole to pole, that time shall be no longer,—even in that sublime, that awful moment, there will be some darned skunk from Buffalo shouting out 'Louder! louder!!'"

It is told of Sir John Macdonald, Premier of Canada, that when on one occasion in Montreal he presided over a large meeting of Scotsmen resident in Canada, the majority of the audience, Lowland and Highland alike, appeared arrayed in the kilt in recognition of the Celtic origin of their chairman. Sir John observing this remarked with characteristic humour that at all other meetings with his fellow-countrymen people were in the habit of taking off their hats to him, but he saw that to-night they had taken off—— The rest of the sentence was drowned in roars of laughter.

On my journey to the Rocky Mountains I heard from a fellow-traveller whom I did not know a marvellous, and what I thought an incredible, account of the expedition with which fire-engines could be got ready for action in American and Canadian towns. A short stay was made at Winnipeg, where fire-brigade drill

was practised twice every day in order to keep horses and men thoroughly up to the mark in a town built almost entirely of wood. The late Rev. Mr Brooke Lambert, rector of Greenwich, and I resolved to see for ourselves how far the account was correct, and went to the fire-station, watches in hand. It may seem incredible, but it is strictly true, that between the time when the signal of the supposed fire was given and the readiness of the fire-engine to rush out for its extinction exactly seven seconds passed. A short explanation may make this credible. The electric signal intimating the fire opens at the same instant the stable doors, which are just beside the engine. The horses are trained to rush out and of themselves take their places one on each side of the pole; the driver jumps on to the box; others run, some to the front of the pole, some to each side; the driver on the box pulls a string, the harness suspended above drops on to the backs of the horses, one click of a spring fixes it in position, one or two other clicks complete the fastenings of the traces, reins, and head-stalls, and all is finished. I forget how many men were employed, but there was a man at every point where he was required. It must be borne in mind that the work of each was approxi-

mately *simultaneous*. The fire being merely imaginary, the horses are at once unharnessed and return to the stable. The only awkwardness connected with such perfect drill is said to be, that as this is gone through twice every day, the horses are so accustomed to return to their stable after the drill, that when the fire is a real one they sometimes refuse to leave the station.

I went to see the principal school in Winnipeg, but I could not do so in school hours. Its plan and equipment seemed in no respect behind those of good schools in Scotland.

Fire-drill is regularly practised in school. I had not an opportunity of seeing it in operation, but an inspector of schools informed me that a school of 400 pupils can be emptied in three-quarters of a minute. The drill is very accurate. Every door and block of benches are put in charge of selected pupils, whose duties are so specific and intelligible that crowding is practically impossible and the means of rapid exit fully available.

The temptation to lay under contribution my notes and recollections of other incidents in American and Continental tours is great, but considerations of space forbid me to yield to it.

CHAPTER XXIX.

INTERCOURSE WITH THE DEPARTMENT PLEASANT — MY CONNECTION WITH IT SLACKENED, NOT BROKEN — RELATIONS WITH MANAGERS AND TEACHERS.

In view of the enormous amount of correspondence which passes daily between a large body of inspectors and the Department, in much of which there are abundant possibilities of error and oversight, it is, so far as I know, extremely seldom that the correspondence is marred by anything irritating or unpleasant. Accuracy is of course imperative, but any departure from it is pointed out for correction with genuine unfailing courtesy. I know of only two noteworthy cases, and they are now many years old, in which there was a savour of smart but not ill-natured *persiflage*. In the first case the examiner in London indulged in needless sarcasm, and as usually happens when one is tempted to use that untrustworthy weapon, the recoil of which, like that of a boomerang, is dangerous, he came

off second best. Long before the separation of the Scottish from the English Department, and when the number of pupil-teachers was comparatively small, their examination papers were sent up to London along with the school report. My colleague, Mr David Middleton, had on one occasion, from hurry or oversight, marked as correct an exercise in arithmetic in which there was a slight error. This was observed by an examiner in the Education Office, and presented an opportunity of gently "sitting upon" an inspector too tempting to be foregone. He accordingly worked out the sum in blue pencil on the margin of the exercise, and, doubtless in the hope of receiving a repentant explanation and apology, sent the paper with his correction to Mr Middleton with the cutting query, "Mr Middleton, do you still approve?" Taking advantage of the curt question which admitted of a simple categorical reply, and feeling that he could afford to be found chargeable with a slight mistake without losing his character as an efficient officer, he replied, "Certainly not.—D.M." His friends insinuated that he utilised his initials, which readily lend themselves to the form D—Mn. As to the accuracy of the insinuation I have no opinion.

Another colleague, who had hired a carriage for his visit to a school, had a diary of his weekly duties and expenses returned to him, the Treasury official whose duty it is to check all such expenditure, and whose inquiries are sometimes unnecessary and vexatious, suggesting the question, "Mr X, was the railway not available for this journey? The distance as the crow flies is about eight miles."

"No," replied Mr X, "for (1) I am not a crow, and (2) there is a navigable river between the railway station and the school, and though I can swim my assistant can't."

It is only fair to say that the Treasury officials and not "My Lords" are responsible for irritating questions of this kind, which are sometimes accompanied by expressions of regret by the Education Department that they have no choice but to forward to the persons concerned all questions or objections proceeding from the Treasury. When I retired from the service I did so with a comfortable feeling of having been treated with a fairness which was not only considerate but kindly; that the Department and I had contrived to spend nearer forty than thirty years in the furtherance of a common object, in the mutual interchange of good offices and

friendly counsels, in connection with which nothing remains but pleasing memories.

When my service after an extension of a year and a half beyond the statutory limits came to an end, I received from Lord Balfour and Sir Henry Craik a most hearty and gratifying recognition of what I had attempted to do in the discharge of duty, accompanied by a request that, though no longer officially connected with them, I should look with a kindly eye on their doings, and communicate with them on any points which I might think worthy of being discussed. To this request I have several times gladly, and I hope profitably, responded.

It is a pleasure to feel that the tie connecting me with the Education Department is, from my being asked to take part in the examination of secondary schools, only slackened, not broken.

While I can refer thus heartily to my relations with the heads of the Department, I can speak in similar terms of my colleagues in the inspectorate, with whom my intercourse has been all that could be desired. In all the districts in which I have been placed I have been closely associated almost throughout with men who not only knew their work and did it, but between whom and

myself there was generally the most friendly and satisfactory understanding. With school boards and other managers I have been equally fortunate. I do not say that there were not, at wide intervals, cases in which there was an intelligible divergence of opinion on minor points, but I have a distinct impression that, as a rule, every suggestion I made was fairly considered, and either adopted or declined for reasons which were thought on the whole satisfactory.

With regard to teachers my attitude has never been one of suspicion and distrust. I dealt with them as fellow-workers with me in a common cause, for the successful promotion of which sympathetic co-operation was essential. I have tried to be fair to them and also to the Department whose servant I was, and while better pleased to praise than to blame I have praised without favour, and when necessary, though with regret, found fault without fear. I have endeavoured to stimulate intelligence, give direction to honest effort, and recognise with kindly encouragement good work of very different types wherever found and by whatever methods produced, holding, as I do, that excellence is not the result of any one uniform and stereotyped method. I am painfully conscious that I have

fallen considerably short of my ideal, but my faults (and which of us has none?) have been lightly assessed and generously pardoned. The recollection of my intercourse with the men and women among whom my official life has been spent is a very pleasant one. I think of them as a most valuable class of public servants, year by year taking a higher level in culture and social position, and doing eminently useful work with praiseworthy fidelity and success, many of them for emoluments below their merits. I am always glad to recognise and be recognised everywhere by teachers with whom I have come into contact. The great kindness which I have experienced at their hands in Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Edinburgh leaves no doubt in my mind as to the sincerity of their response to this friendly feeling.

I have always had and still have excellent health, and, I should think, an almost unique record in one respect, that on the score of health I never had occasion to ask leave of absence during my long service. My life has been on the whole a very busy one, and not very favourable to continuous literary effort; but I have been able from time to time to snatch a few hours from official work and utilise them in

dealing with topics, educational and other, in which I was interested.

A retrospect of the past forty years fills me not unreasonably with a very large measure of content. While it represents a good deal of hard work it also recalls the memory of many congenial friendships, and of much enjoyment which has left no after-taste of bitterness. It is accompanied by a consciousness of having been engaged in important work, of having tried with more or less success to do it, and of having retired from it physically and mentally sound, before the capacity of enjoyment was exhausted. The result of it all is that, were it possible to put back the hands of the clock, I should cheerfully go through it again.

I do not forget that some one has said that a great (meaning *large*) book is a great evil. It falls to the lot of few to be the author of a *great* book. My ambition takes no such lofty flight. It would have been easy to make this one larger, but it is probably large enough for all the really useful matter it contains. I have put down, as they occurred to me, such a selection of my experiences — some perhaps useful, others amusing — as might be fairly readable. If I have succeeded in this, and

especially if I have said anything that may be useful to teachers or to the younger members of the inspectorate, I shall not regret the employment I have made of my leisure. And now for the present I lay down my pen.

THE END.

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