

## XII.

### “SCHEME” ANDERSON,

#### BLAIRGOWRIE :

#### A MAN OF IMAGINATION.

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Such tricks hath strong imagination. —M. N. DREAM.

It has been aptly remarked that great men, like great mountains, are judged best at a distance. “Scheme” is a notable instance of this, for it is now a generation since he “shuffled off this mortal coil,” and his wonderful experiences are more admired than even in his own day. His name is curious, and excites the speculative faculty; two theories exist to account for it. The first is that it was the popular expression of the great admiration in which his magnificent gifts of what is known as the “historical imagination” were held by his contemporaries. The second is more commonplace, and is to the effect that our friend was never asked to subscribe to anything but, by a most unfortunate coincidence, he had

#### A “GRAND SCHEME O’ HIS AIN”

on hand for that identical object, and was thus debarred, much against his will, and entirely from a strict sense of duty, &c., from enjoying the pleasure and privilege, &c., &c. It does not matter which is taken—they were both abomina-

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## Blairgowrie and Strathmore Worthies:

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tions to "Scheme" himself, who didn't always appreciate a good thing. At the height of his fame, he was located in Blairgowrie, engaged in the humble but useful occupation of butcher's assistant, and was in great demand all over the district for his skilful aid, amongst other achievements, in the first steps of what has been termed the conversion of the "prose of pig into the poetry of bacon." On such occasions "Scheme's" tongue would be as active as his knife, and old wives of both sexes would learn things never dreamt of in their philosophy of pig-killing. In Blairgowrie his favourite cronies were "Tolly" Watson, who kept the toll at the head of Jessie Street, and John Cameron, boot-maker. Settled down on the familiar seat near the receipt of custom, he would turn out first-class history quite regardless of cost, and with a celerity that would have left the most expert linotype operator two days behind every afternoon. One day "Tolly" had been making a great fuss about landing a 12-lb. salmon with ordinary trout tackle. "Man, that's naething," exclaimed "Scheme." "A'e day in the summer o' '37 I was herdin' sheep near the Lornty, and saw a fifty-pund salmon comin' up the stream. As luck would hae it, I had nae tackle wi' me, but, nae mair nor anither an' that, an' I had a young hazel up by the roots, an' made a dab at the brute, but lost my feet an' gaed splash into the water. The last I saw o' him, he was scuddin' doon the Lornty wi' the hazel bus' wavin' in the air like a full-rigged ship." "Fine, man, fine," said Cameron, "that must hae been a grand sicht!" "Naething to speak o'," replied "Scheme." "It fell out that next year, to the very day—the 19th July, I mind fine—I was herdin' at the identical spot, an' ye'd hardly believe me, billies, but I sees

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## “Scheme” Anderson, Blairgowrie.

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### THAT VERY HAZEL BUS'

come sailin' up the stream, aye stickin' in the salmon's back, an' wi' a grand crap o' nuts on it!" He lost the train once in Glasgow. "Nae mair, nor anither, an' that" (his favourite shibboleth) said he; "but I whipped on to the telegraph, an' was in Perth Station, an' had a smoke twa oors afore the train cam' in." He took a trip to London and back by the same expeditious method, and the "neebours never missed him frae the doors," explaining that he hacked off the tops of the obstructive telegraph poles with his knife as he "flew past them." Some one was talking about big "neeps." "Scheme" had been there, too. "It would be in the winter o' '38. I had twa fine ewes lost in the snaw at Easter Tullyneddie for 17 days. Man, when the thaw cam', nae mair nor anither, an' that, but there they were, inside twa grand neeps they had eaten the inside oot o'. But," said he, warming to the subject, "that was naething. I mind fine, in the winter o' '42, losing 37 sheep in the snaw at Glengirnock for hale three weeks an' twa days. Whan the snaw cleared aff, I cam' across them under some laich larick branches, an' they had a' eaten ane anither's 'oo' aff. By an' by some o' the sheep dee'd, an' jaloosin' what was wrang, nae mair nor anither, an' that, but I had their stummicks opened, an' took oot a ba' o' 'oo' frae ilk ane o' them, an' they throve wonderfu' efter that." He made

### A RECORD LEAP

once which it is feared has escaped the vigilance of Mr M'Combie Smith. He was running to catch the Dundee boat, but found it just leaving the pier. "Nae mair nor anither, an' that,"

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## Blairgowrie and Strathmore Worthies :

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said he, "but I sprang on to the deck, an' the captain was that bambazed he cam' back and measured the distance. It was exactly 26 feet 4 inches." A "gamey" had killed 11 foxes one day in Glenshee. "That was puir wark," said "Scheme." "Ae morn in Glen Tilt, Munch"—(his dog)—"an' me gaed oot an' nicked 27 foxes an' a young ane afore breakfast." Some one had caught five roe-deer in Meikleour woods. That was a small affair. "Munch an' me were oot ae morn on Craig Roman, whaur I kent the roe-deer were in hunders. I fixes doon a fine young larick wi' a runnin' noose, gi'es Munch the wurd, an aff she gaes, gets awa' roon', and herds a fine roe-deer richt into the noose. Nae mair nor anither, an' that, an' up springs the tree, an' there's the brute danglin' in the air by the neck. I cuts him doon, fixes the trap again, and had seeventeen bucks and roes afore I gae up." An old wife was extolling the virtues of some hog's lard she had. "I mind o' some grand stuff I ance had," recalled

### THIS WONDERFUL MAN.

"I gae some o't to a pit-sawyer to rub on his saw, an' the rats were that mighty fond o't they eated the teeth aff the saw afore mornin'." "Man, that was a pity," remarked "Tolly." "Weel, it didna matter muckle efter a'," added he, "for he juist rubbed on some mair, an' the rats had nibbled oot a new set o' teeth afore he gaed back." "Scheme" had the honour of carrying the flag at the head of the butchers in the trades procession, which was held in celebration of the Prince of Wales' marriage in 1863. He was immensely proud of the job. The emblem on the flag was a bull's head, cleverly copied from the familiar advertisement of Coleman's mus-

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## “Scheme” Anderson, Blairgowrie.

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tard, which was new about that time, and the artist was none other than the now famous painter, David Farquharson, A.R.S.A., who is a native of the district, and was then only a humble house-painter in Blairgowrie. The sign over the “Royal Hotel,” Blairgowrie, it may be mentioned in passing, is still in evidence of his work in this line. At an earlier date—in 1842—“Scheme” was in Perth, and saw the Queen. “She noddit to me,” he was wont to declare; but there was no first-class poet about to do justice to that historic event, although our friend did his best to compensate for that grave overlook. So far as authentic tradition goes “Scheme” never met his match but once, and that was in a man from Arbroath. Our friend was discoursing at large about some grand sport he had had with his gun “ae mornin’ up in Glengirnock,” when the thunderbolt fell. “Man, ye ken naething about sport,” interjected the presumptuous stranger. “I mind aince o’ firin’ at a covey o’ paitricks; oot gaed my shot, killin’ three hunder o’ the brutes; aff gaed my ramrod wi’ the shot twa miles in the cluds, an’ stringin’ nine wild geese by the een; the gun gae sic a putt as ca’d me clean owre, killin’ a fine fat hare in the seat, an’ as I was tryin’ to get up I put my tae in the yird an’ kicked oot a foggie bees’ bike wi’ twenty pints o’ honey. *That* was a shot to blaw about!” “Scheme” looked at the man, sat blinking and thinking for a minute or two, then rose and walked off

WITHOUT UTTERING A WORD.

He did not return to his usual seat for a fortnight thereafter. He came to grief on another occasion, and in another way. The late Rev. Mr

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## Blairgowrie and Strathmore Worthies.

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Rae, Kinloch, sent in his servant to get "Scheme" to come out to kill his pig. The girl asked someone where "Scheme" Anderson stayed. Now, this bold, bad man, being lamentably deficient in the bump of veneration for the true, the beautiful, and the good, did wilfully, feloniously, and with malice aforethought, affect to reprove this trustful country girl for her loose manner of address, telling her she should on no account call him "Scheme" Anderson. "What then?" inquired she. "Why, *Mr* Scheme Anderson, of course," answered he. Then away skippeth this blithe-hearted maiden to the house indicated, knocketh at the door, and, lo, there appeareth unto her the redoubtable "Scheme" himself. Then saith he unto her, "What d'ye want, lassie?" And she answereth him, "Are you Mr Scheme Anderson?" Then saith he in a loud voice, "Wha sent ye here?" To which she replied with great fear and trembling, "Mr Rae o' Kinloch; an' please, Mr Scheme, you're to come out immediately to kill the pig." And "Mr Scheme" was wroth with a terrible wrath, and banged the door in that astonished wench's face, exclaiming in a voice of thunder, "Ye can gae back to Kinloch an' tell Mr Rae frae me to gae to blazes an' kill his pig himsel'!"