

LAMPLICHTER DAVIE'S LOVE AFFAIR.

WEE Davie Lamp was originally a handloom-weaver to trade, but was latterly a lamplichter through necessity. He wrocht the heddles and treddles as long as they supported him in a humble way, but when his earnings had fallen as low as seven shillings and sixpence a-week, and his morning porridge had become attenuated to the drumlinness of Clyde water, Davie very wisely concluded that it was about time he was seeking a change of occupation.

Davie, therefore, applied for a situation as a city lamplichter, at the handsome salary of twelve shillings a-week. His application was backed by the influence of three Bailies, five Town Councillors, thirty-six Ward Committee signatures, and two hundred weight of valuable testimonials.

He got the job. A city lamplichter! There was dignity in the very name of it—at least, so thought Mrs. Lamp, Davie's better-twa-thirds, who was proud to tell all her en-

vious neighbours that "Oor Davie was nae langer a puir, half-starved weaverty-waverty, but was now a City Lamplighter, nae less!"

"Haud yer tongue, Mrs. Lamp," said Mrs. Toddle-Bonnie when she first heard of it; "ye dinna mean to tell me that your Davie's gotten on to the Toon Cooncil—eh?"

"It's as true's ye're there, Mrs. Toddle-Bonnie," replied Mrs. Lamp, with a proud toss of her mutch-strings.

"An' will Davie wear a cock't-hat like a' the ither Toon Cooncil bodies?" further questioned Mrs. Toddle-Bonnie.

"Weel, I'll no say for the cock't-hat; but he's to get a hand-lamp, an' a skippet bonnet wi' a red band round it, onyway."

"Eh, me, Mrs. Lamp! job's o' that kind gaun aboot, an' oor Tam gaun idle! Is there ony mair vawcancies think ye, Mrs. Lamp?"

"What!—is your Tam still gaun idle, Mrs. Toddle-Bonnie?"

"Ay, Mrs. Lamp, he's still gaun idle; an', what's waur, he's got an inflammation in his twa een wi' gaun aboot the toon lookin' for wark! Could your Davie no pit in a word for him at the Cooncil, think ye?"

"Weel, I'll mention't to Davie, Mrs. Toddle-Bonnie, I'll mention't to oor Davie; but, mind ye, Tam 'll need to be highly recommended an' testimonified; for it's a purely patronage job, an', like kissin', it maistly gangs by favour."

But if Davie's wife was well pleased with his grand new civic appointment, Davie himself was still more so. He was elated beyond measure, and felt quite proud of himself when attired in his semi-official clothes, not to speak of his lighted lamp—a shining symbol of modern *enlightenment* and civilisation.

Davie's first experience was to light the stair-gases at night, and put them out in the morning. After a necessary apprenticeship at this preliminary job, he hoped to be promoted in time to the responsible dignity of carrying a patent

"stick" for lighting the street-lamps, which would obviate the necessity of "humphing" about a ladder and a hand-lamp, which, of course, he was required to do in the lighting of the stair gases.

"Meantime, however, after an approved three months' experience of stair-gas lighting, Davie was promoted to the onerous post of a street-lamp cleaner, with a gratifying advance of a shilling a-week.

Davie's experiences in this new phase of his career were varied, and occasionally picturesque in the extreme. Sometimes his ladder would get "fankled" in the crowd, as he hurried along the street. This was a common experience, and frequently brought about quite frightful results; for, on such occasions, Davie, on turning round to apologise, would instantly knock off the hats of six or eight citizens before the astonished owners could get out of the way.

But, bad as those street-accidents were, the numerous "fa's aff the ladder" which he suffered, were decidedly the worst mishaps he had to endure.

Once he fell slap across a baker's "brod," and badly fractured the man of flour beneath it. On another striking occasion, he crushed into momentary unconsciousness a speculative Quaker, who, on recovering his equilibrium and his senses, said—"Friend! I am a man of peace; go, and joke no more!" While, on a third memorable occasion—missing his man this time—Davie "lichted" on his left leg, and permanently shortened that useful bodily member by fully three inches.

The most extraordinary incident that befel him in this connection, however, remains to be told.

Davie had been out as usual doing his lamp-cleaning turn, and was just finishing his afternoon's work, when the ladder on which he was mounted was forcibly run into by a local Salvationist preacher, a certain Captain Hallelujah, the commandant of the district Salvation Army Corps.

Now the Captain happened to be mentally wrestling for

a special "sign" just at the moment of colliding with Davie's ladder, and as Davie fell plump across his shoulders, the Salvationist shouted, "Hallelujah!" and instantly hurried off to the local Barracks, with the special "sign," in the shape of Davie, clinging to his pious back.

Arrived at the Barracks, the Captain rushed into the hall, and deposited Davie on the platform in sight of the whole audience.

Recovering his feet and suspended senses at the same instant, Davie expostulated aloud, and struggled to free himself, but the energetic captain stuck to his man, and in few words explained, that while coming along to the Barracks, he had wrestled like Jacob of old for a "sign," and the devil had sent him this unruly heathen. He suggested that every member of the rank and file of the Army should fire a salute over the culprit, and send him home converted.

"Not for Davie!" shouted out the alarmed captive, who imagined that he was about to be shot dead on the spot, "not for Davie!" and, with one splendid leap, he cleared the platform, and escaped to the street before the Salvation platoon had time to cover him with their spiritual rifles.

But Davie's last noteworthy experience was of a still more comic character, and very nearly dragged him into a complex breach of promise case.

The incident came about thus: On one of the stair-heads in Davie's beat, lived an auld maid, named Miss Peggy Peppermint Draps.

Now Miss Peggy was a blooming maiden on the sunny side of sixty, who had, of course, refused hundreds of eligible offers in her day.

One night Davie met her on the stair, and by way of courtesy he remarked—

"It's a cauld nicht this, m'em."

Miss Peggy answered that it was a "raie cauld nicht, indeed," and smiled on Davie with quite juicy sweetness

Next night, when Davie's fit was heard lampin' up the stair, Miss Peggy opened her door, and handed him a cup of warm tea.

Davie, agreeably surprised, drank the warm tea, and briefly thanked her.

On the third night, however, things were brought to an acute crisis by Miss Peggy bestowing a heart-melting look on Davie, and saying to him—

“David, things are growing serious between you and me. When, oh when, is it to be?”

“When is *what* to be?” said Davie.

“Oh, Davie Lamp! Davie Lamp! hoo, oh hoo, can ye thus trifle wi' a lonely woman's feelings? Answer me, Davie, if ye value yer ain peace o' mind, when is it to be?”

“When is *what* to be, Miss Peggy?”

“When are we to be married?”

“Married, be hang't! shouted David; “the knot was tied wi' me twenty years since, an' I've been hangin' by the neck an' kickin' for my life ever since!” and picking up his ladder, Davie was at the bottom of the stair with the speed of a sixpenny telegram.

“Oh, ye perjured, twa-faced, heartless man!” he heard Miss Peggy cry after him, “to cairy on an innocent lassie sae far, and you a married man! I'll write an' tell your wife, ye unfeelin' monster!”

And so she did; for yae nicht shortly after, as Davie was sitting at the fireside, enjoying a canny blaw o' the pipe, he received a sudden slap on the back of the head, which made him see brilliant fireworks for the moment.

Looking round, he beheld Mrs. Lamp standing sentry over him, with a frying-pan in her right hand, and a letter from Miss Peggy in her left.

“Wh—wh—what's the matter?” yelled the astonished husband, “Copenhagen an' Camlachie! what's the meanin' o' this? Murder and blue-sticks! is the woman mad?”

“’Od, I’ll mad ye, ye heartless rascal! makin’ proposals o’ marriage to a stairheid auld maid, an’ you a twenty-year married man! Read that! The women folks, it seems, dinna ken ye’re married; but I’ll pit my domestic mark on ye, my fine man!”

“Feth, an’ ye’ve dune that already,” said Davie, pathetically fingering the back o’ his head, whereon had arisen in the short interval a lump as big as three closely associated duck-eggs. “The public’ll ken I’m a married man noo wi’ a vengeance!”

A full explanation was afterwards given and accepted, but Davie, poor man, was not able to put on his official skippet-bonnet next morning on account of the swelling on the back of his head; and he has since been forced to wear his worsset nicht-cap. So, if ye should happen to see a Gleska lamplichter rinnin’ aboot wi’ a Kilmarnock cool on, that’s Davie! He’s a weel-disposed, innocent, harmless man, Davie; but if ye’re “on for fun,” and ye want him to throw his ladder at ye, jist ye ask him—“Hoo’s Miss Peggy? an’ whan is’t comin’ aff?”

That mak’s a lively subject o’ Davie!