

# The Village Calendar.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE VILLAGE CALENDAR.

ONCE or twice in the year the village forgot itself and became merry. These occasions were few and happened at considerable intervals. I am not aware that a calendar peculiar to Kennetherook was ever framed, but I think if it had been it would have consisted of four days. These days, and I shall endeavour to tell you a little of each, were the Fair, Hallowe'en, Hogmanay and Handsel Monday. It is true that there were one or two other days that came in for notice, but only in a secondary way. They had once been recognised with some glow of enthusiasm. For instance, it was becoming a bit of ancient history when I first came to know the village, of how Mary MacGrowther had travelled from farm to farm for hours with a strange missive in an envelope that became more creased and dirty the further she went—a missive that was unintelligible to her, for she could not read—a missive that bore the legend—"send the gowk another mile." She might have gone far enough had she not met the kindly disposed Colonel Robertson, who, guessing her mission, read the note, told her what it meant, gave her a shilling, and sent her home with another note, which he directed to the man

who had given her the first. This note was in the Colonel's handwriting, and ran—"You leave my service on Saturday. Remember Mary MacGrowther and Hunt the Gowk." This incident was, as I have said, a bit of ancient history four decades ago, and it marked the decadence of that frolic which used to attend the first of April. Practical joking was fastly passing away, and beyond the puerile remarks, such as "Your buit's lowse," or "There's a hole in yer breeks," hunt the gowk had no place in our village calendar of forty years ago. Another day that was marked with a somewhat questionable degree of patronage was Easter Monday. I do not know how it was that Kennethcrook held Easter. I tried to learn how it came about, but nobody seemed to know. She was always Presbyterian to an extreme, and that was what made me wonder at her observance of the Passion. Her ministers preached no Easter sermons, her choirs sung no Easter anthems, but, regularly as Easter Monday came round, the dominies of two schools and the mistress of a third kept their pupils in half an hour after the usual dinner time and took the Bible lesson that should have come on in the afternoon. This lesson was always looked upon as important, and after it had been taken the children were dismissed for the day.

Their half-holiday was spent at the Drum Park, where they amused themselves in the practice of "curling coloured eggs." This, as may be readily supposed, was a time of great importance to the children. Easter Monday was

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looked forward to for weeks. They did not see in it, however, that religious significance which so many pious-minded people teach their children to see in it to-day. To them it was merely a time of merriment. I have said it was looked forward to, yes, and much anxiety was manifested in the colouring of the eggs. To have them curiously coloured was the delight. One very common colour was dark brown, and it was got by boiling the eggs in tea leaves. Some of the eggs too were of a red tint, having been boiled in flannel of that colour. Some were yellow, some blue, others variously coloured. But Easter, like Hunt the Gowk, has passed out of our calendar too. If it ever returns it will be as a religious observance rather than as a season of childish sport.

There were one or two days which had meanings for a few of the villagers, who prided themselves in their knowledge of weather lore.

“ If Candlemas day be dark and dull,”

Saunders Denovan would say as he looked at a bright sky and shook his head ominously on the second of February,

“ The half o’ winter was gane at Yule,  
If Candlemas day be bright and fair  
The half o’ winter’s to come, and mair.”

And history has it that Saunders was seldom wrong.

“ The borrowing days ” were full of meaning for some of the village folks, and according as these days turned out boisterous or mild, so was predicted a spell of good or bad weather.

Another occasion by which weather was reckoned was the time commonly referred to in the village as "the day the deer lies doon." This day, more widely known as "St Swithin's Day," was firmly believed in by many of the villagers, and, I am of opinion, is still looked forward to by a few. But in this, as in other things, the village is progressing, and it seldom expresses itself on these old world freits.

I think there is only one other day that could advance a plea for a place in the Kennethcrook Calendar, and that day was the Fast. Its claim, however, is a disputed one. It certainly called for general and public observance, but I fancy it might be ruled out of the Calendar if we argued that there were fifty-four Sabbaths in the Kennethcrook year. All work was suspended on the Fast, and to all intents and purposes it was a Sabbath.

These days then, together with the four more important ones I have named, went to the composition of Kennethcrook's table of days. Certainly while Candlemas and St Swithin's day, All Fool's day, and the Fast, might be regarded as only semi-important, there was no doubt as to the importance of the Fair and Hallowe'en, Hogmanay and Handsel Monday in the eyes of the villagers. These were red letter days in the village life, and while, in these times, the younger folks of Kennethcrook may have as vivid a conception of "hunt the gowk" as of the Fair, those of an older day who can turn back the leaves of recollection for twenty years or more can recall the

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glories that attended the summer festival known as the Fair, and the hilarity and good-feeling of the winter festival which went by the name of "Handsel Monday."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE FAIR.

WHEN Saunders Denovan's posthumous volume was issued some of the younger villagers were inclined to regard his poem, entitled "Kenneth-crook Fair," as an exaggeration of fact. That was many years ago. Let any of the younger villagers of the present day take up "Doric Lilts" and they will be inclined to strengthen that opinion. On a third Thursday in June I have once or twice within the past few years heard this remark uttered like a lament,—“Eh, me! This is the Fair. A fell odds sin' when I mind.” Yes, and do you know what it is that keeps the Fair in memory? The Fast day is still observed, and it happens on the Wednesday before the Fair. The Sacrament falls on the Sabbath after. An attempt was made to get the communion season altered in order to give it a greater observance with sanctity. But these changes were viewed with horror by the villagers and this one was never carried into effect. Time, however, has brought much for which the clergy of other days yearned, and, as there is no Fair now to disturb the peace of the communion, the sacrament is still observed on its time-honoured day.

The Fair of forty years ago was a great event.

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Work was suspended in the village for the week. Anvils ceased to clink, and looms to brrr. Indeed, the Fair and Handsel Monday were almost the only festive breaks in the monotony of village life. It was then that Luckie Jack carried on but one branch of her multiform establishment. Ribbons and laces and buttons were at this time removed from her window, and great piles of sweets took their place. These were arranged like a miniature pyramid and from their midst rose great stalks of candy fashioned like shepherds' crooks. It was then, too, that Luckie bore the reputation for light weight. For the Fair she polished her scales and weights till they shone like mirrors, and, if you consider the removal of a year's grime an injustice, you may be inclined to say with the villagers that Luckie did give light weight. The women folk questioned Luckie's scales. The men never thought of it. The purchase of a pound of mixtures was a sufficiently trying ordeal to the average young man in Kennethcrook without the further duty of calling the measure in question.

"Ay, Luckie mak's a braw penny at the Fair, that does she," old Marion Watson said one day when I asked her if she believed Luckie guilty of this offence.

"Weel-a-wat, I wad'na just like to say onything again' Luckie, for she's no' that bad a craitur gin its a letter that ye're wantin' backit, but between you and me (and here Marion lowered her voice, in case a third party should hear) she's juist jimp honest."

I have heard a parent send a child for an



errand on the day before the Fast, and these were her instructions :—"Ga 'wa' yonty to Luckie Jack's for an unce o' tea, for it'll be sma' wecht gin Thursday."

But I have more pleasant memories than these of Kennethcrook Fair.

Wednesday was a lost day to the younger of the villagers—it was the Fast. I think if ever the juvenile inhabitants of Kennethcrook resented being sent to Church, it was on the Fast day. Those to whom the following Sabbath was of no extra moment saw little use in going to the kirk on Wednesday, and back again on Saturday. The only folk who worked on the Fast day were the show folk at the Drum Park. They were beyond church attendance. The village looked upon them as outcasts who were to be patronised once a year at the Fair, and then forgotten till the next Fair came. All day long the noise of hammers broke the stillness of the semi-Sabbath. One or two of the older villagers ventured out in the evening and strolled towards the show ground. They watched the proceedings for a short time, shook their heads in a doubtful sort of way as though they thought all hope of a higher life had passed from the reach of these dwellers in tents, and then went home to wait for the dawning of the Fair. By eventide the showground was still. A motley collection of canvas tents indicated the nature of the people who dwelt therein. A few slumbering choffer-fires cast their low light amid the camps, giving a novel appearance to the scene. It was the eve of Kennethcrook Fair.

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By eight o'clock on the Fair morning the village was awake to the fun of the day.

"O' awa' in man for auld lang syne's sake, it's no' every day the Fair comes," and one overjoyed villager would draw another into the "White Horse." And so the day went on. Early in the forenoon a goodly sprinkling of the villagers might be seen walking with unsteady gait, making things lively at the show-ground, and being made the butt of every showman's contemptible wit. These were the patrons of "The White Horse" and "The Black Bull." But I am not going to draw a dark picture of the Fair. These inebriates existed for a day twice in twelve months. From Handsel Monday to the Fair they were comparative strangers to the bottle. Their sins were readily forgiven by those who had cause to feel offence, and it would ill become me to blackball them now.

There was no school that day. The Fair was a holiday for the children too. This was a day when mother vied with mother for the tidy appearance of her children. Every one was cleaner than another, to use a village saying. For nights before, hands were busy making "peenies," and patching suits, Attired as best they could be, the children (their pockets heavy with ha'penies) made their way to Luckie Jack's and the Drum Park, to spend their money and their Fair.

All along the main street stalls were erected. "Stands" the Kennethrook folks called them. Some of these were owned by villagers, but the greater number of them were the property of

wanderers who seemed to follow the Fairs. Everything, I think, was vended at these stalls. The folks were so regular in their visits that the youth of the village in time recognised them by some *sobriquet* peculiar to their wares. "Gundy Kate" was an old woman who, on a remarkably clean deal table, exposed for sale a composition that was only seen in Kennethcrook at the Fair. Luckie Jack tried hard to get the recipe from her, but Kate had been "in mair toons than Torryburn" in her day, and would not confide her secret to a sister in trade. Kate brought a large supply of candy with her and seldom required to take any away. She sold a power of stuff in a forenoon, and I have seen her packing up by twelve o'clock — her table cleared. "Cocky-nut Tam" was another of the Fair worthies. His article of sale was cocoa-nut. The whole nut could be bought for fourpence, but a halfpenny-worth was calculated by nearly every child to be sufficient, and Tam's business consisted mainly in selling bits. Towards evening, if business was slack, Tam reduced his prices, and it was no uncommon thing to get a nut for a penny. "Luckie Bag Jean" was another who catered for public favour at the Fair. She had a large stall and generally erected it just where the street widens at the junction of the Shirra's Brae and Loom Lane. A motley assortment of ornaments from attractive melodians and concertinas down to pen-and-pencil cases found a place on Jean's stall. Her rule was a penny a draw, and she plied her calling to the chorus of "All prizes, no blanks." There

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were more pen-and-pencil cases, however, than concertinas drawn in a day.

Quite a number of men, too, went from door to door with baskets of ornaments for sale. One of these is specially remembered. He sung himself into local history. The corner cupboard is one of the most valued articles of furniture in the village and nearly every villager has one. If you care to take a look through them you may find a number of ornaments peculiarly alike. These are relics of the Fair. Neat little flower-glasses they are, and they are formed by a representation of a lamb standing upon its hind trotters. These were bought from the "Lambie man," and he is chiefly remembered because of a rhyme he employed in the vending of his glasses. Every child of forty years ago knew the rhyme, and if I remember rightly it ran somewhat as follows :

Young lambs to sell, young lambs to sell,  
If I had as much money as I could tell,  
I wadna' be here wi' young lambs to sell.

But it was in the showground that the proper fun of the fair was going on. In the early afternoon business in the Main Street wavered, and those who had stalls were forced to remove nearer Drum Park if they wished for a share of public favour. All kinds of amusements went on in the show-ground. "High flies" and "hobby horses" were in active business. The "Star Pavilion" and the "Ghost Show" were the chief objects of patronage. In the one the drama was expounded, in the other strange do-

ings with the unseen world were revealed. The "Star Pavilion" is chiefly remembered for the titles of its plays. "Lost and found, or the mad man of Manchester" was what it laid before the villagers on one occasion, and this drew such audiences as to warrant a continuance of the tragic-drama. On the next occasion they gave us "Daft Jamie, or Burke and Hare, the Edinburgh murderers." The Burke and Hare atrocities were still fresh in the minds of many of our villagers, and a goodly number whose pious unbending creed would not in ordinary circumstances permit them to go to such questionable places of amusement as the "Star Pavilion" and "The Ghost Show," were tempted to patronise the showground for the sake of seeing a representation of the villains of whom they had heard so much.

One show that always claimed patronage from the villagers was the waxwork. It had a local connection in the fact that it deprived us of our band. The villagers were drawn to it on that account. It was an imposing erection, far beyond the others, that came to visit us at the Fair. The glitter of its graven images when they shone in the lurid glare of the flaming cressets was something for our villagers to look upon. The statuary, we were told, was nothing to the gorgeous images that were exhibited inside. The man who paced up and down the front of the show, and with a long whip demanded the children to stand back and allow "the ladies and gentlemen to get hinside" forgot in these moments of authority that he

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belonged to Kennethcrook. I have told you something of him already. He was one of our bandsmen. After a detailed description of the many sights that were to be seen inside—a description emphasised every now and then by a crack of the whip and the jingle of a pocketful of coppers—merryman Joe told us that the admission was “to suit hall classes—honly one penny.” When a curtain was drawn across the entrance way, and a card with the legend, “Full inside” was hung up, the exhibition began. I am not going to tell you everything that was viewed inside, for the village folks soon forgot the historic scenes that were reproduced. The one thing that remained with them was the time-honoured story of “Little Jim, the collier’s dying child.” It was to see it, I believe, that most of the folks paid their pennies.

The ghost show vied with the waxwork for the village patronage. There are ghost shows still coming about Kennethcrook, but it is many years since Pepper thrilled the villagers with his wierd exhibition. “Pepper’s Ghost” was a name that guaranteed entertainment. He never failed to draw audiences. He, too, like the proprietor of the waxwork, spared no expense in exterior decoration, and when, amid the glare of torches and gold, and the flare of drums and cymbals, the performers appeared upon the front stage, the crowds left the other shows and centred their attraction on Pepper. His entertainment was represented as “high-class.” The admission was twopence, front seats threepence, and these latter could be more conveniently

reached by a side door. Within the canvas there was a certain degree of comfort. The floor was sawdusted. The front seats were carpeted, and so long as one did not chance to sit on one of the iron bolts that held the wooden frame together, one was comfortable enough. At the back of the show there was a gallery. This was the place for those who only paid twopence and there were no seats provided. When the place was considered full, a little bell rang, and the curtain was raised. I will leave you there. You have all, doubtless, been to a ghost show, and can picture subsequent events yourselves.

There were many other places of amusement. Much money was spent at the Fair, for it seemed to be a day of special licence when the strings that were usually held tightly round purses were relaxed. Sometimes we see an occasional showman now, but these things contrast strangely with what has been. In the days of which I am writing, the din at the Drum Park was something incredible. Barrel organs and cymbals, drums and horns, kept things lively. Great pictures were rung up in front of the various tents, and on these were depicted the attractions of the shows. Freaks of nature, men with two heads and three arms, diminutive women, and animals of uncommon deformity were the objects which were exhibited for the modest sum of one penny. Our villagers were simple folk and paid their money ungrudgingly year after year to see the same old frauds.

Besides the shows there were other attrac-

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tions at the Drum Park. Travelling Cheap Jacks raised their platforms and sold all manner of articles for very small sums. Everything found a place in the Cheap Jack's van. On temporary shelves which were erected along the sides of his waggon a brilliant display was made. Crockery of every kind, pots and pans, albums and clocks, watches and other jewellery, were among the multifarious collection of articles which went to form his stock. He, too, tried to combine pleasure with profit. He usually began his work by a concert for the programme of which he and his workmen were responsible. Catchy songs were sung, and witty dialogues carried on, and these enabled him to gather crowds. In the middle of the programme, and just as a matter of variation of course, a sale was begun. The apparent low prices which he charged for his goods, appealed to the economy of many of his audience, and for a time he did a good trade. By-and-bye when sales slackened, he again appealed to his songsters, and the concert was continued. So the day went past; the crowd was pleased, and Cheap Jack was happy.

Through the crowd, men wended their way selling all sorts of nick-nacks on trays which they carried in front of them. Others, again, raised their voices above the din in their attempts to sell songs. Luckie Jack had many competitors on the Fair day. The microscope man, of whom I told you something in a previous chapter, was also among the show-folk at the Fair. His table was generally surrounded



with anxious patrons, and I think if everything had been taken into account, he was, in a comparative sense, the most successful of the entertainers. For his "Keek-show" as it was termed, the fee was a penny, and as there was always a crowd at his table, it was a case of merely looking and passing on. The marvels seen were about six in number. They were mostly connected with the microscope. One of them—the circulation of the blood in a frog's leg—used to amuse the villagers strangely.

"A deid puddock, Geordie, as ahure's ocht," = one would remark, and so another penny was laid down and another sightseer took up his place to view the mysterious.

The most wonderful, however, was the instrument by which you saw money through a brick. This did amuse the folks. Some there were who pretended to be in the secret and who alleged that they knew how the thing was done. They laughed at the credulity of the others. But I am not going to explain the mystery. I did not laugh. I did not know the secret.

One of the greatest attractions of the show-ground was "Gingerbread John." Like "Gundy Kate" and "Lucky Bag Jean," "Gingerbread John" derived his name from his business. His article of sale was ginger snaps, and the manner in which he disposed of them was amusing. Standing at his stall with a number of boys round him, he would induce one of them to run up behind some unthinking spectator, snatch off that person's cap and bring it to him. This done a great cry

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immediately got up. An angry altercation between "Gingerbread John" and the owner of the cap was carried on, during which the cap was being reduced to pieces by John's nimble fingers. Then, when he thought a sufficiently large crowd had congregated, he would offer money for a new cap to the man, and this being accepted the thing was made right. This pacification was ratified by a shower of snaps cast in all directions, and these were intended to whet the thirst of the audience for more. They generally did. For the next half-hour John was busy, and when at length the crowd did disperse some similar plan was resorted to to recollect it. There were no keepers of the peace in these days, and John carried on his work of mutilating head-gear with impunity. His article of produce was one of the treasures of the Fair. The villagers laid in a plentiful supply of his provision, and long after John had returned to his native Dunfermline a few of the snaps would be produced as one of the toothsome delicacies of a Sabbath afternoon tea.

Towards evening, when things were beginning to tire a little, the horse racing began. This was to many the most interesting of the Fair attractions. There were a good many horse-cowpers in Kennethcrook, and to these the races were a source of rare delight. The horse races took place in the Main Street. By the time for their beginning the itinerant huxters' work was at an end, and the stalls were removed. If any of these vendors made an attempt to trespass upon the time of the horse

racers, he was unceremoniously sent about his business. The Main Street may have had its obstacles as a race course, but it certainly had its advantages. For one thing the dwellers in the Main Street were privileged to a good view of the proceedings. And what although there was a brae? Why! it made the race the keener.

Excitement was great at these races. Betting was carried on to a fair extent. The stakes never went very high for who among the villagers had the will and the money to bet? A shilling was the most common of the stakes. Pennies were fairly rife, half-pennies were occasionally tabled. The children, too, were beset with this mania. I have seen one boy stake an old broken pocket-knife, that had done service for half a century, with as much deliberation as the most noted gambler at Epsom would have staked twenty thousand pounds on the issue of the Derby.

The horse races over, the day was at an end for many. Those who had come from the surrounding districts towards the Fair began to hie themselves their several ways, and soon the villagers alone were left to nurse the hilarious spirit of the festive season. Children were bedded, and the merry Andrews ceased to attract attention, The taverns alone were frequented. There the social cup was being drunk of, and friendship pledged over the flowing bowl. Song and jest kept things lively, and as no closing order was in force, the tavern lights burned brightly till the dawn.

Over in the school-house the lads and lasses

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continued the Fair into the morning of the following day. Dancing was one of the licenses allowed them at the Fair. Patey Morrison was the most noted of the village fiddlers who set themselves out to furnish music for weddings and other festivities. Patey was invariably called upon as the Fair fiddler. He had an endless stock of dance music, and that was why the villagers cared to have him. So long as the company was inclined Patey would fiddle. His expenses were not heavy, and the fun was good.

But the time came when the dancers had to stop. Late in the Friday morning the school house was cleared. Much of the incident of the day would be repeated through the year at loom and anvil. But the Fair itself was at an end.

## CHAPTER III.

### HALLOWE'EN.

Sometimes of an evening when reading my "Burns," my eyes chance to fall on "Hallowe'en," and then I remember the gusto that used to attend the celebration of that day in Kennethcreek. There still lingers among the young folks a relic of the glory of forty years ago, and in rural places it is still regarded as in olden times. Only last year I was a witness of a Hallowe'en celebration at the Farm of "Wall-E'ea," and I was pleased to see that with farmer folks the occasion is still one of mirth and song. There are some points in which the observance as held by Kennethcreek differed from that depicted by Burns, but in the main it was the same—Hallowe'en is Hallowe'en all the world over. Like the New Year and Handsel Monday, Hallowe'en was heralded by guizards. They were not guizards in the sense that they went from door to door singing songs and receiving rewards. The village youths viewed life from a different standpoint on Hallowe'en. It was mischief on which they were bent.

Adam Mautman, who for many years suffered from rheumatism, was assisted to and from the loom by a stick, which bent under the weight put upon it. The stick was treasured by Adam.

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A son had sent it to him from America, and he would sooner have parted with anything than with it. It was spliced as neatly as Adam's hands could do it and "wuppit" with as fine yarn as he could procure. That staff connected itself with the youthful depredations which were common on Hallowe'en. Adam had a pretty large garden adjoining his house, and cultivated "green kail" in its general term to a considerable extent. Cabbages held a good portion of the ground, and were planted at the part which was nearest the dyke. Adam's garden presented a rare field for plunder. His cabbages were cleared year after year.

"It was that little imp o' Satawn, Johnny Roy, that I caught at the job. Aye, he's man muckle noo, but I'se warrant he minds Adam Mautman's stick."

That was how Adam explained to me the splicing of his stick. He used to look sorrowful when he spoke of it, but I think it was sorrow at breaking his stick rather than at striking Johnny Roy.

Falling at the time it did, when the gloaming dropped early, the youthful marauders had everything in their favour. A night or two previous to the occasion, the village youths met in companies of fives and sixes, discussed their plans, and completed their preparations. The best garden which could be got at with a certain degree of easiness, was fixed upon, and when Hallowe'en came, the boys proceeded by various routes to the scene of plunder. One or two of the most daring

mounted the wall, and, while the others kept watch, uprooted the best cabbages they could find. When sufficient had been secured to equip the band, the youths set out on their mission of guizarding. In single file, and each ready to run if the circumstances warranted it, they proceeded down the street, slashing in turn with their cabbage bludgeons at each door as they passed, and all the time singing to their action the words of the old rhyme :—

Hey-how for Hallowe'en,  
A' the witches to be seen :  
Some black and some green,  
Hey-how for Hallowe'en !

These frolics were chiefly confined to Loem Lane and the Nail Raw. Some of the more crusty of the villagers often lay in wait for the youths, when serious mishaps occurred. If any householder ventured to object, such objection was regarded as an insult to the dignity of the band, and the youths immediately assembled to assert their independence. A cabbage bludgeon is a weapon both of offence and defence. The man who was courageous enough to attack the youths on the one Hallowe'en, was politic enough to remain indoors, and try to look happy when the next Hallowe'en came.

A number of the boys were content with a quieter sport. They directed their attention from the cabbage garden to the turnip field. Selecting the largest turnip possible, they proceeded to make it into a lantern by cutting out the centre, and leaving only a thin shell. In this shell they fixed a candle, and, having cut all sorts of fantastic figures on the skin,

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furnished themselves with something resembling a Chinese lantern. It was rather a finely effective sight to see rows of boys marching along the dark streets, singing their rhyme, and swinging their lanterns. Luckie Jack sold lanterns for the occasion made of coloured paper, but the difficulty with these was that they often went into flame in the hands of the boys. There was no fear of the turnip burning.

While these ploys were being carried on outside, the villagers were busy with their preparations for the performances inside. The largest pot in the house was hanging on the sney, and a blazing fire roaring beneath it. All the evening a housewife had been busy, and with the assistance of one or two neighbours who intended to be present, had prepared a huge supply of potatoes for the pot. During the time this was being done, the young men were actively engaged in bringing water from the public well. This, as they fetched it, they poured into a tub which was to supply the means necessary for "dookin." When all had been prepared and the guests had assembled, the feast began. The first item was the "chappit tatties." The potatoes, after having been boiled, were mashed, and little trinkets in the shape of three-penny pieces, rings, and china dolls were mixed with them. Then the pot was set in the centre of the floor, and each guest was armed with a spoon. When all was ready the lamp was turned down, and the place left in darkness. This was the signal for the fun to commence, and there was much merriment in



the hunt for the hidden treasure. The rings were the chief objects of interest. These were searched for eagerly. The dolls, again, were as eagerly discarded. No one wanted a doll as a present, least of all a maiden lady who chanced to be on the shady side of forty, and it was amusing to see the expressions on some of the faces when the pot was declared empty, and the lamp re-lit. Nor did the amusement end here. When the light from the lamp shone on the assembled company, it revealed some grotesque figures. Faces black and sooty, dresses besmeared with mashed potatoes, all received in the rush for the trinkets. But these things were permitted without a word of protest. Hallowe'en came but once a year.

When the pot had been removed from its conspicuous position in the centre of the floor, the tub, well filled with water, was put in its place. Into the tub the apples were thrown, and the process of "dookin" began. This was to a great extent only participated in by the men folks. The women watched the sport and received what fruit their respective partners were able to fish out. The manner of procedure was simple enough, but the capture of an apple invited much more dexterity than many of the company could command. It was simply a case of a person getting down on his knees, watching for what he considered the best apple, and then, plunging his head into the water, endeavouring to snatch it and bring it out. Many of the youths were quick at the work, and managed to bring quite a number of apples to the laps of

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their Jennies. The sport lay in seeing who would bring out most. After a time, when this amusement began to pall on the company, the tub was lifted aside, and the remaining apples divided among the children present.

In the country district around our village superstition had full swing on Hallowe'en, but in Kennethcrook there was little of that which characterised the festival in rural quarters. Such practices as "pulling the stock" and sowing hemp-seed were indulged in by one or two, but were meaningless to the greater portion of the inhabitants of Kennethcrook.

After the "dookin" was declared at an end chairs were set in a circle round the fire, and the burning of nuts began. This was undoubtedly the best sport of the evening. It was one which every guest could join in, and the diversions of the nuts gave amusement to all. The guidwife of the house, after everyone was seated, proceeded to her awmry and drew forth her nuts. These she distributed in equal quantities between the members of the circle. The mode of operation was identical in every instance with that described by Burns as pertaining to the celebration in Ayrshire, and perhaps it might be better for me to yield to the graphic delineation of the custom by the National Bard :—

"The suld guidwife's weel-hoordet nits  
Are round an' round divided,  
An' monie laes' and lasses' fates  
Are there that night decided :  
Some kindle, outhie, side by side,  
An' burn thegither trimly ;

Some start awa wi' saucy pride,  
 An' jump out owre the chimlie,  
 Fu' high that night.

Jean slips in twa, wi' tentie e'e ;  
 Wha 'twas, she wadna tell ;  
 But this is Jock, an' this is me,  
 She says in to hersel' :  
 He blessed owre her, an' she owre him,  
 As they wad never mair part,  
 Till fuff ! he started up the lum,  
 An' Jean had e'en a sair heart,  
 To see't that night.

On this charm the Kennethcrook folks placed more faith than many would be inclined to believe. The course and issue of courtships were often watched with interest after the burning of the nuts, and it is still on record of one proposal of marriage being cancelled, and that, too, after the banns had been published, because of the untoward prediction made by this charm.

After all the nuts had been cracked in the flames, and the fates of lovers decided, the festival of Hallowe'en proper was at an end. It was seldom, however, that the company dispersed before morning light. Where the room was large enough a dance was often engaged in. One year an attempt was made to inaugurate public dances, similar to those common at the Fair and Handsel Monday, but the patronage was so limited that the scheme fell through. When a fiddler could be procured, a company set to the dancing and, to the strains of the violin, were busy making the dishes dirl in the rack till the grey dawn summoned them to toil. If the room did not permit of dancing the

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Hallowe'en festival was terminated by a concert. Huge logs were piled upon the fire, and chairs were drawn in, and song and story did the rest.

But these concerts sometimes came to abrupt terminations. There was something of the nature of a special licence allowed the boys of the village on this night, and they were often out till early morning. When a band of them were together, and singing was heard from some house, the voice of mischief was a ready prompter. The houses in the village were never higher than one storey, and a boy could often reach the roof by getting on the shoulders of a companion. Once there, the rest of the company handed up clods, and these the mischievous urchin laid across the chimney top. The divots, as they were called, stopped the emission of smoke and sent it back in clouds into the crowded kitchen, upsetting the merry gathering. Sometimes the action led to serious damage—if, say, the chimney caught fire. The boys only smiled. It was good sport for them, and, although they often smarted for their follies at the hands of chastising parents, they soon forgot all their punishments, and, long ere another Hallowe'en came round, were laying plans for more extensive depredations.

## CHAPTER IV.

### HOGMANAY.

A short time after I came to Kennethcreek I realised what Hogmanay meant. In the place from which I came the word was not unknown, but I am inclined to think the folk with whom my earlier days were spent scarcely knew its import. If they could see Hogmanay celebrated here as I have seen it they might then have some idea of the meaning of the word. Not that any one in Kennethcreek could tell you what Hogmanay meant. No one ever cared to inquire. Anybody would tell you it was the day before the New Year, pretty much as anybody might tell you that Sabbath was the day for going to the kirk, but as for the derivation of the term the villagers knew nothing. They had never troubled themselves about it at all.

Hogmanay was an event in Kennethcreek. I was walking along the Main Street one bleak afternoon in December when my attention was arrested by a band of four children robed in sheets. I was a stranger to the place, and knew not what it meant. Jeems Jamieson laughed when I told him so. "G'awa, man," he said, "no ken what they is!" and again he laughed loudly. I subsequently learned who they were, and I would know them if I met them to-day.

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They were what me might call the heralds of Hogmanay.

I have visited a number of the rural villages throughout Scotland at this season, and have found the custom and manner of observance to be peculiarly alike. Kennethcrook therefore holds no unique position among the other villages, but it may not be uninteresting if I tell you something of the manner and extent of the celebrations.

The festivities began early in the forenoon, and with the young folks. For a long time no holiday was given on this occasion, but the attendance became so sparse that it was found advisable to close the schools. Long before the day came round the children had their plans laid—the houses they intended calling at, the route of their peregrinations, and so forth. They had all the enthusiasm of child-life in the matter. The older folks, too, were busy making preparations. It was seldom that anything but goodwill pervaded the atmosphere at this time.

In bands of three or four the children collected themselves. They were each attired in the garb I have already told you of—the garb that puzzled me when I saw it in the Main Street. This was a sheet wrapped round each, and folded so as to form a very large pocket in front, into which all donations were put. I do not think that I could fold the sheet to form the pocket, but there are others in the village who could. Thus attired they set out on their mission. They had a rhyme which they shouted rather than sang. It is a good time since I

heard it, for none of these bands of children have been organised for years, but I have an idea of how it ran. Unless my memory fails me it was as follows :—

Get up guidwife and shake your feathers,  
An' dinna think that we are beggars ;  
We are but bairns come to play,  
Rise up and gie's oor Hogmanay !

This was repeated as the band proceeded from house to house. One of the company was deputed to knock at the doors. When a door was opened the band began their chorus, thereby adding to the appearance of their dress the signification of their visits. A forenoon spent in this way was the means of procuring a large supply of good things with which to furnish the table at the guizard's home. Often before mid-day I have seen some of these young folks making their way home and feeling their load to be as cumbersome as it was welcome.

These were but the heralds of the evening. It was at night that the Hogmanay frolics attained their highest extent. One of the branches of Luckie Jack's multifarious business was the sale of song sheets. She always got a stock of these sheets at the beginning of December. When she hung them in her window it was a signal that Hogmanay was at hand. Her stock of songs was eagerly sought for by those who intended guizarding. After some practice at such of the songs as presented something funny and catchy, the intending guizards set about the preparation of their outfit. This latter part of the arrangements was of course known to the villagers, but each company of guizards kept

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his outfit as a secret in order that his appearance might create the greater sensation.

In the grey dark of Hogmanay afternoon, the village "waits," if I may use an alien term to distinguish them, began their work. There were three distinct classes of guizards, and each of them came in for a share of the village patronage. There were the vocalists, the instrumentalists, and the dramatists. The vocalists were generally those who, earlier in the day, had made approaches towards the hospitality of the housewives by means of the rhyme I have given you. They had, however, discarded the white attire of their earlier peregrinations, and donned an outfit of a character more burlesque for their doings of the night. It would be difficult for me to describe all the various garbs in which our guizards were attired. Their make up consisted of anything that would tend to make them look odd. Old clothes were drawn from their resting-places, and wardrobes ransacked in the search for costume. The common outfit consisted of a shirt that had once been white, with a band of coloured ribbon round the waist. The head-gear was oftentimes supplied by the ragman who visited the village occasionally. He sold brown paper hats at so many rags apiece, and these were donned by the guizards. They were shaped not unlike the mitre so famous in the dress of the Roman Catholic dignitaries. If these brown paper hats were not to be had, some old relic in the shape of a silk hat was donned for the



occasion. There was a girl, too, in every company. The guizard who was commissioned to represent the girl was always some one who had a sister, and could, accordingly, obtain an outfit with comparative ease. The girl was the official of the company. She always went before (stage manager as it were), opened doors and swept the floors with a stump of an old broom which she carried with her, while her companions sang. The proceeds of this guizarding often amounted to a considerable sum, and were, I believe, divided share and share alike among the members of the company.

The instrumentalists were guizards of a higher order. They, perhaps, bore a stronger resemblance to the order of "waits." Their sphere was outside the village. The Carse of Forrie was dotted with farm-houses, and to these the instrumentalists appealed. There were always four musicians in a company, and I think as many as three companies have left the village. This work began just in the gloaming. The first visit was to the Blair estate. I believe Colonel Robertson was cognizant of this fact, and looked upon it as his duty to entertain the callers cordially. They always got on well at Blair. I cannot speak for the truth of it, but among those glowing traditions of Kennethcrook (the authentication of which has never been asked for by the indulgent villagers) lingers the romance that the Colonel gave each company half-a-sovereign. That resolved into its four parts gave half-a-crown to each. This was certainly a fair remuneration for their services,

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but the truth of the statement was questioned by some of the villagers, although of course only in a private way, for they were never given to impeaching anyone with falsehood. "The Colonel kens better what to dae wi' his siller" was an observation of Andrew Duchart, and it expressed the opinion of a few.

These guizards departed little from their ordinary dress. They scooted their faces—at once a complete disguise. The instruments they carried were fiddles, flutes and concertinas. We had a number of fiddlers in Kennethcrook, and one violinist. He never joined the guizards. The villagers used to say that if all the violinists could play no better than he, they would be better fiddlers. They had a sarcasm which distinguished between fiddler and violinist.

The vocalists had made their calls, and the instrumentalists were doing the rounds of the farms, when the dramatists began in Kennethcrook. This was the only approach to playacting that was tolerated in the village. The good folks of Kennethcrook never seemed to see anything in it akin to the theatre, and for years it was reproduced on the boards of every hospitable floor. There was only one dramatic circle in our village. Public opinion seemed to say one was plenty. The performance was the one common over all Scotland, and known by the name of "Galatian." It is a long time since I saw a copy of the play, but it was one of the most prominent pamphlets that hung beside Luckie Jack's chap-books and song-sheets. I

believe copies of it are common enough to-day, but my knowledge of the production extends only to a few lines that are known to every person who has seen the performance given.

The chief characters in the piece were Galatian and the Black Knight; the less important were he who was, during the performance, announced as Dr Brown, and he who acted as treasurer and was named Judas. From my recollection of the production, Galatian and the Black Knight had a feud, the subject of which was the ability of the one to conquer the other. With a repetition of the great things he had done the Black Knight was introduced, and a challenge thrown to anybody to attempt to traduce the existent glory. At this point Galatian stepped forward with the declaration, Here come I, Galatian, Galatian is my name, Sword and pistol by my side, I hope to win the game. The Black Knight and Galatian then crossed swords, and fought until the latter fell mortally wounded, as the talking man informed the company. A message was at once dispatched for Dr Brown, who came with the recommendation that he was "the best doctor in the town." For nine pounds and a bottle of wine, this graduate of medicine agreed to bring the warrior back to life. True to his vow, the Doctor, taking a bottle of *inker pinker* from his pocket—which fluid I am told was more widely known as "sma' yull or ale"—administered a doze to the wounded valiant and commanded him to rise. At this demand Galatian sprang to his feet, he and the Black Knight were reconciled,

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and after some antics were gone through the whole company recited a grand finale, something after the following :—

Blessed be the master o' this house, and the mistress also,

And all the little babies that round the table grow ;  
Their pockets full of money, the bottles full of beer—  
A merry Christmas, guizards, and a happy New Year.

The dresses used in this farce were grotesque to an extreme. The white shirt, common to the guizards of the vocalist order, served as the habiliment of Galatian. The aim of the Black Knight was to make his outfit as fierce looking as possible. It often consisted of tartan and an old cavalry cap. His face, too, was disguised with whiskers as ferocious as could be. The dress of the Doctor resembled closely that of the members of the medical faculty. A black coat and, what was known by the village youths as a "tile hat," completed his outfit. Judas, whose name conjures up the existence of one who acted ignobly in a greater drama, was entrusted with the office history assigns to his immortal namesake. Judas of Galilee and Gethsamane carried the moneybag—Judas of the Hogmanay frolic was purse-bearer.

Into Judas's bag any remuneration was put, and by him it was shared with the others when the last performance of the night was over. The reward was generally a halfpenny among them, and a farl of cake with cheese to each. Little, you may think, for an entertaining performance, but at the end of an evening the company had a good many coppers for distribution among themselves.

One of the most amusing memories which I retain of "Galatian" connects itself with a higher order of things than these playful frolics of the Daft Days. Filling the pulpit of a large parish in the West of Scotland is a divine who belongs to Kennethcrook, and who gives promise of being something great in the Scottish Church. As a boy, he was anything but pious. He was, indeed, the unruly member of the family, and often by his antics and drolleries gave Sabbath within his home a sort of secondary recognition. He was more familiar with the tragic drama enacted once a year than with the epistles of Paul to the various churches in the early days of Christianity. On one occasion (and it was a Sabbath) he had been more uproarious than usual, and had been subjected to a deal of scolding during the day. Evening came, and with it the hour of worship. The books were placed on the table. Opening the Bible, the father remarked that he would read in Galatians. The young hopeful and future minister, with recollections of Hogmanay, and twitching from the severe thrashing to which he had been subjected, at once retorted:—"Ay, faither, play Galatian an' I'll be guid." The father's reply, like guizarding itself, has gone down into oblivion.

## CHAPTER V.

### HANDEL MONDAY.

Forty years ago we held Handel Monday. We do not hold it now, and the name is fastly becoming unintelligible to our villagers. The rising generation are familiar with the New Year. They are even further advanced than that; Christmas cards are quite common. To think of what Handel Monday was four decades ago is to awaken regret at the progress the village has made. I never think of it without feeling that we have lost something by allowing it to become obsolete. It is useless, however, to attempt drifting against the tide of public opinion, and the inevitable has to be accepted.

Handel Monday was the one special day of the group familiarly known as the "Daft Days." The others were accessories to its enjoyment. Hogmanay was observed with no small glow of enthusiasm; Handel Monday was regarded as the day of the year. Kennethcrook kept old Handel Monday. In this she differed from the surrounding places. Rangholm and Merlestone observed new Handel Monday, Rockburgh disregarded both old and new, and centred her festivities in the New Year.

Handel Monday was a prominent day in the village cycle. It was then that the weavers and

nailers took their holidays rather than at the New Year. If a child wanted anything that its mother could not give the answer was generally—"Wait till Handsel Monday."

I do not know that I can fully describe the doings of this festive season. Like those of the Fair, they were yet unlike. Sports were engaged in early in the day, guizarding and raffing formed the fun of the evening.

The days preceding Handsel Monday were busy days with the goodwives. In these times when the New Year and Christmas are observed by the villagers, and when the fare at such times is shortbread, one sometimes hears a cake referred to by the name of "farl." Farls of the Handsel Monday kind differed from the present day dainty in some measure, but I question whether the delicacy of these times is more enjoyed than was the more homely, if less expensive, cake of long ago. The Handsel Monday farls were simply oaten cakes, and the one feature that distinguished them from their brothers throughout the year was their abundance. Girdles were called into requisition, and it was not every guidwife that had a girdle. Mothers lent their daughters theirs, and one neighbour obliged another. These farls formed the staple article of consumption for Handsel Monday, and they were baked by the weight. A "lippy" was a small baking scarcely worth noticing; a "peck" was a little better, and a "stane" was regarded as "wise-like."

Buns, too, were baked, but I can tell you little about them. Only the other day a little boy

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was asked to give the definition of a "mystery." He replied a "fruit cake." If I had been asked to define such a thing I would have been inclined to answer "a Kennethcrook bun." These buns were mysteries, and, perhaps, not the least mystery connected with them was how so many of them were consumed.

In addition to the cakes and buns there was also a plentiful stock of whisky. I have no affection for drink, especially when I look around me and see the mischief it is working, but I would be guilty of slander were I to say that our village suffered from its use. I told you before that our inns depended on strangers, and that the Fair and Handsel Monday were the only two holidays the villagers got. So I would repeat the fact here, and, although, in telling you something of the festivity of the occasion, I am forced to tell you that the dram was recognised as a part of the celebration, I cannot say that whisky was taken to any great excess. Few if any illustrations were ever drawn from Kennethcrook in favour of a closing order.

Nor was the preparation for this festive season confined to housewives. The shopkeepers did their little part to signalise the event. The Store (for it existed in the days of which I write) made a fine display with oranges and buns. The "White Horse" had a little barrel adorned with holly in the centre of its window. The barrel was nicely painted, and had the somewhat mystic letters "F and W" inscribed upon it. The letters were rendered in two ways.



Some of the villagers looked upon them as a somewhat unintelligible contraction of Burns' famous line—"Freedom and Whisky," others said that it meant "Fire and Water." But Duncan MacAdam, whose one aim in life was to compete with the store, excelled all the others in his preparations for Handsel Monday. He was the only merchant who seemed to look with favour on the method of doing business by advertising. On one occasion he called in the village poet to assist him in his work. Saunders did his best, but I believe his muse resented such mundane affairs as cheese and onions, and that on that account his production was less meritorious than any of the others which went to the composition of "Doric Lilt." It was published in leaflet form, and widely circulated in the district. Yes, and it was highly commended. Almost anything that our poet wrote received the approbation of the villagers. Saunders seemed to think it was worth something himself, and included it in his volume. From the pages of that little book of many memories I have taken it, and in giving it to you I shall only ask that you will not form a judgment on the merits of "Doric Lilt" from it. I give it here as colour to my picture of Handsel Monday rather than as a specimen of Saunders's verse.

HURRAH FOR HOGMANAY AND HANDSEL MONDAY.\*

In this cauld season o' the year,

When folk incline good social cheer,

---

\* This poem is, with slight alteration, taken from a volume entitled "Poems and Songs," which was issued many years ago by the original of Saunders Denovan.

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I hereby intimate that I  
Still keep a shop, an' can supply  
The folk a' round, o' each degree,  
Wi' a' they need. First I hae tea  
Sae finely mixed, wi' sic a flavour.  
It's daily gainin' public favour.  
Then if ye tak' advice, I wot,  
Ye'll mak' it quickly go to pot ;  
I've coffee, too, and sugar nice,  
Bread, butter, cheese, meal, barley, rice,  
Jellies and ither sweets worth note,  
Nuts, apples, onions, powder, shot ;  
Drops, sweeties, raisins, syrup, treacle,  
Tobacco, snuff, an' fishing tackle.  
Fish, too, few o' the kind can beat them.  
They're big an' wee, like folk that eat them.  
An' I've beef ham, and pork, I trow,  
Would e'en persuade a hungry Jew  
To turn a Christian in a trice,  
And say a bit o'ts unco nice.  
Noo, as I've mentioned meat, I think,  
It suits me next to speak o' drink.  
Well, I've laid ale and porter in,  
Jamaica rum, and Holland gin.  
An' I can furnish, very handy,  
The gentle folk wi' wine and brandy ;  
An' I hae whisky too, my certy !  
Could be the soul o' ilka party.  
Mak' dullest mortals crouselly craw,  
An' fling their sorrows far awa'.

Ay, and I've something I'll a'lege  
'll gar naebody break the pledge ;  
I've cordials for teetotal folk,  
An' ither kinds, though sma' nae mock ;  
They foam and fizz—some o' them workin'  
Sae strong need wire to keep the cork in ;  
When loosed, tak' tent the cork don't flee oot,  
An' put some hapless craitur's e'e oot.  
But as enough has noo been said

About the nature o' my trade,  
 I'll close my 'pistle in the hope o'  
 Seein' ye shortly at the shop o'  
 DUNCAN MACADAM, MERCHANT, Look,  
 My shop's i' the MAIN STREET, KENNETHCROOK.

With such extensive preparations Handsel Monday was sure to be a great event.

The sports formed the chief part in the celebrations. These sports differed entirely from those of the Fair. None of the wandering fraternity turned up to grace our village at this season. No shows occupied the Drum Park, nor freaks of nature called forth cries of wonder. The amusements were entirely local. Yet, we had plenty of them, and such a diversity among them, that there was fun for everybody on pleasure bent.

There were three distinct games seasonable at Handsel Monday, viz., curling, quoiting, and cock-fighting. Curling was held in a corner of the Drum Park at the north end of the skating rink; quoiting drew its admirers to the Cow-well at the foot of the Shirra's Brae, and just behind Saunders Denovan's house; and cock-fighting was engaged in in Wullie Muckle's backyard.

Each game had its distinctive admirers, and the patrons of one performance looked upon the other events as paltry affairs. And, strange to say, there was a minister for each practice. Mr MacThomas was an enthusiastic curler, and more than once sustained the reputation of the club. Mr Turnbull was a keen quoiter, and stories of his abilities linger among the traditions of the past. The nameless Free

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Kirk minister was an eye witness of the practice of cock-fighting. Some are inclined to say that it was his love for the sport that took him to Wullie Muckle's backyard, but I will not agree to that. His love for the lower animals was one of his characteristics, and his presence at the cock-fighting exhibitions was not in vain. He seldom failed to touch the consciences of some, and although a few elated members of the Parish and Anti-Burgher kirks laughed his ideas to scorn, he made a goodly number of converts in his day. He was a pioneer of that movement which has been instrumental in framing that Act of Parliament which declares cock-fighting to be illegal.

There were other sports than curling, quoiting, and cock-fighting. These amused a few of the villagers, but the great mass of the women and the young folks wandered to the Drum Park to see what were termed the Handsel Monday games. All along the entrance to the Drum Park stalls were erected by the villagers for the sale of sweeties and other dainties. Pies and sma' ale were the chief attractions of these stalls. Behind each vendor burned a little choffer-fire, on which he kept, "piping hot," a plentiful supply of pies. If the villagers were not diplomatic they were nothing. Hot pies are traditional in Kennethcreek. They were peppered to a degree beyond necessity, and sufficient to demand a washing-down with sma' ale. Thus it was that intoxicants were introduced into company which, in other circumstances, would have shunned them.

With the exception of the pie-stalls, the others were very similar to those erected at the Fair. They were ranged in two rows, and did excellent business during the games.

The situation of the Drum Park was peculiarly suited for the sports. Wheeling the blind barrow was the chief item in the programme, and to make this event a success certain conditions had to exist. In olden days this race was run at the south end of the park, and just on the border of the Muirbog, but accidents to the luckless barrow-wheelers became so serious that it was found necessary to remove the race-course to a less dangerous part of the field. The ground on which the race took place in my day was admirably suited for the affair. On the one hand the Lunarty sped onwards, on the other was a row of fragile erections for the sale of sweetmeats. Thus sport was afforded on either side. The entrants for this race were chiefly ploughmen. Hilarious to peace breaking, they marched up to the starting post and selected their barrows. Then they calmly submitted to being blindfolded—a silk kerchief being tied firmly over the eyes. Bending down, they seized the barrow shafts, set the wheel, as they imagined, towards the winning post, and waited the signal. The distance to be traversed was something like a hundred yards, and at the starting and winning points stood large and anxious crowds. At a given signal the wheelers set out. Nor did they get far ere the fun began. To many the wheeling of a barrow seemed easy

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enough, even though the wheeler was blindfolded, but experience teaches lessons. Scarcely were twenty yards traversed before barrows were trundled against one another and the utmost confusion prevailed. One, more fortunate than the rest, would find an easy stretch, and trundle merrily on to the laughter of the spectators to find in a few minutes that he had taken the Lunarty by storm. Then it was that he would give up the race, set himself down on the bank, and try to undo the bandage round his eyes. Meantime the fun was furious on the other side. Some other competitor as fortunate as his rival had marched away in the other direction, charging a sweetie vendor, and scattering her "curlie-andras" and peppermints on the ground. But perhaps the least dangerous, yet, withal, most humorous competitor, was he who, by some freak, managed to wheel his barrow right round, and then, starting for an imaginary winning post, made a tolerably straight march in the direction opposite to the goal. When time was called, the heroes of the wheel were scattered all over the park, and it was given to them to laugh when, cloths removed, they saw in what directions they had gone. The winner was seldom near the post. Once our village errand-runner took the winning post by half a yard. That is the record race. It was said that he had practised hard for months, but that was not taken into account. He was declared the winner. Like some hero of a hundred fights, he was carried to the parlour of the

"White Horse"—his health pledged by many who, in other circumstances and at other times knew him not.

The entry money for the race was sixpence, and the prize a ham or a cheese, according as the victor desired.

Another of the main features of the Drum Park Sports was the shooting match. We had some crack shots in Kennethcrook. One of the villagers has his name emblazoned on the challenge shield which hangs in the Chambers' Museum in Edinburgh. Yes, and the village came very near to having the honour of the Queen's Prize. It was won on one occasion by a native of Merlestone who held rank as a private in the Kennethcrook Volunteers. These victories may have been the outcome of the Handsel Monday shooting matches. A wooden target which was known by the villagers as the "buid" was erected at the east end of the Drum Park. On this were painted the bull's eye and the usual rings for the making of "outers" and "innera." Each competitor had to fire with the same rifle, but in choice of position some little scope was permitted. The competitor chose his own position. There were three allowed. These were standing, kneeling, or resting. Standing was considered the best, and the man who carried the prize while standing against others who made use of the "rest," was considered to have done more than win the match. To kneel and fire was considered comparatively easy. I have seen a win disputed because it was taken by one who knelt.

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The man who fired with the use of the "rest" never won. The "rest" which was provided was a table, generally one of those which had done service earlier in the day as a sweetie-stall. He who availed himself of this assistance was too elated to fire cautiously. He had been visiting at the "Black Bull" before entering for the competition. The articles which were given for these shooting matches as presents were very varied indeed. Cheeses, hams, bottles of whisky and concertinas were among the awards. It was seldom that the shooting matches gave satisfaction. They were a source of continual quarrel. I never yet saw a match decided and allowed by all. There was always some one ready to dispute and charge the judge with partiality. At times it was difficult to get a judge. Some years before Handsel Monday was totally disregarded as a holiday the shooting matches disappeared from the sports. Those who knew said it was in order to keep down disturbance

Sometimes a quoiting match was included in the programme of events, but as it was not considered to be of general interest, it was reserved till the last. It was then that the reputed quoiters of the Cow-Well gathered around the enormous bun that was set up as the trophy. I have seen a quoiting match played in our village for five pounds, but the issue at stake on Handsel Monday was of smaller import. Still, it was treasured, and many a keen contest has been waged over it. On more than one occasion I have seen candles lit to shed light



upon some important point and decide between two close competitors.

Speaking of candles brings me to what was, perhaps, the rosiest of the day's proceedings—the evening amusements.

“Raffles” were the great attraction of the evening. Every little shop in the Main Street and out of it advertised a raffle. Cardboard placards with rude characters drawn thereon were suspended in every window. One would have the legend, “Raffles now going on,” and another would bear the words, “Raffle to-night at nine o'clock.” After nightfall the village presented an animated appearance. On either side of the Main Street was a row of lights such as were only seen on Handſel Monday evening. At each door hung a torch, the flame of which shed out into the street. Thus the village was ablaze. A chorus of voices kept the frolic at a height. Boys took up their positions at the different doors, and, if, from the wild noise you could make anything intelligible, you generally found the cry to be—“Raffles going on here.”

Many were the things decided by the dice. Tammy Roy and Sheepy Jake, the worthies who performed the duties of bellmen long ago, were busy with proclamations during the afternoon. For a long time no bellman, unless an occasional visitor from Rookburgh, has drawn the village housewives to their doors. On Handſel Monday afternoon the bells rang merrily. It was seldom they were listened to, because the proclamations about to be made had been public property for two hours. Bu

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there were some of us who were not heirs in common to this public property, and to such of us the bellman's proclamation was news.

"At sucht o'clock this nicht in Jeems Anderson's shop i' the east end of Loom Lane, Tammas Todd's muckle soo will be raffled. Come quick, for the fun's guid. Threepence pays the piper."

The most amusing of these proclamations was one made annually by Tammy Roy. It referred to the raffle of the night. Our old friend Luckie Jack held this raffle. Tammy seemed to run the intimation into unrhymed verse—

"Apples and orangers, buns and bread,  
This nicht at seven o'clock ;  
Ye ken the place, it's Luckie Jack's,  
An' tuppence is a' ye pey."

It is not too much to say that Luckie Jack had the most successful raffles of the village. The others were carried on by means of the dice. Not so with Luckie's. She set up so many articles, say a bun, an orange, an apple, and a box of rozzy ends, these last known in Kennethcrook as "spunks." These she numbered. When this was done she put a quantity of cardboard squares on which numbers were written into a bag. Then you paid your penny and drew out a number. If it chanced to correspond with a number affixed to any of the four articles set up, that article was yours. I have taken part in one or two of them. They seemed simple enough. I remember of one fellow paying his penny and drawing. He drew a number that brought him no prise. He did

not seem to understand how the thing was done, and after sitting for some time he asked if that was all he was to get for his penny. He seemed displeased when Luckie told him yes.

These raffles kept the fun at fever heat. It is difficult to imagine the excitement that prevailed. I believe Luckie Jack's was nothing to some of them. Those that were decided by the throwing of the dice were often the causes of unseemly disturbances. Points were disputed, and in the crush of a crowded room unfair advantages often taken. It was this that led to the success of Luckie Jack's raffles. There was no fraudulency in them. The entrant drew his card, the number was on it plainly enough, and so allowed for no disputations.

On Handsel Monday as on the other high days of the village, dancing played a prominent part. Once or twice a concert was attempted, but it proved a failure. The drama was expounded on one occasion. It led to the deposition of a precentor and the experiment of play-acting was never tried again. The village folks did not seem to care for attending concerts on Handsel Monday evening, and for a long time before the observance fell into that disuetude that now belongs to it no company catered for public favour. Dancing, however, was different. It was one of the few things that were perennial in Kennethcrook.

Handsel Monday, however, did not come to an end all at once. Tokens of goodwill were given and friendships sealed in the parlours of

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the "White Horse" and the "Black Bull" till the week-end at least. It was then that things began to "taper off." The Monday following saw the weavers at their looms and the nailers at their bellows. Then Handsel Monday faded into perspective. The stream of village life which had been dammed up for a time resumed its natural course, and all things went on as was their wont.