

*DAVIE TOSH'S HOGMANAY ADVENTURE.*

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DAVIE TOSH was a farm-servant lad, an' had cam' lampin' intae Gleska yae Hogmanay nicht for the purpose o' haein' a roar oot o' himsel', an' seein' the New Year brocht in at the Toon Cross.

Now, Davie was a blythe, free-going, rattlin', roarin' blade, very fond o' fun', and with ne'er a grain of soorness or selfishness in his disposition. Having a few shillings in his pocket for merry disposal on the evening in question, he was not long in foregathering with twa-three chance acquaintances, who very generously assisted him to consume the numerous "wee gills o' the best" which his excessively social appetite demanded.

In this way Davie's last solitary sixpence had been melted, and his purse being now quite empty, his chance friends of an hour suddenly disappeared in some most unaccountable way.

But our friend Davie, who was already considerably better than twa-thirds fou', set little by the loss of either friends or bawbees. He was happily oblivious to all such small vexations, as he wheeled sharp about and began to somewhat loosely "stot" hamewards in the direction o' Auld Whinnyknowe, consoling himself with the remark that if he had not waited to see the New Year "brocht in" at the Toon

Cross he had, at least, had a richt guid roar oot o' himsel', which was satisfactory to Davie in a very high degree.

It was striking the hour of eleven as Davie briskly focht his way up the auld Gallowgate, for he had several long miles of open road to travel before reaching Whinnyknowe, and the snow was lying three inches thick on the streets.

Plunging straight ahead, he had not proceeded far when he drew suddenly up, and cannily concluded to spier his way ahead, as he was not more than half sure of his exact latitude.

"I'm in Gleska," he mused, as he affectionately embraced a lamp-post for support; "I'm in Gleska, but that's a' I'm sure o'. No' a daicent Christian at han' to spier the road hame at. A'body's doon at the Cross seein' the New Year brocht in, an' it's a deid frost hereaboot."

Casting "off" from his anchorage, Davie presently set forward again, indulging a highly ornamental method of progression by making, now a leeward bicker, now a back lurch, and now a precipitate forward plunge.

"Thrawn wark this," he added, as he gathered himself up from a stiff fa' on the pavement. "It's no easy gettin' along thir confoonded uneven Gleska streets. I wish I saw mysel' yince mair back at Auld Whinnyknowe—safe in my bed atween the wife an' the wa'! I'm in the vera heart o' Gleska, certainly, but I'd be mair at hame atween the ploo-stilts, I'm thinkin'. But, hillo! wha's yon stannin' glowerin' straucht across the street at me?" he continued, very naturally mistaking an iron Post-Office pillar-box for a man. "Faith, lad, I'll across the street, an' spier my way hame at ye, as ye seem aboot the only man on the road," and full of genial anticipation, largely compounded of loose fancy and raw whisky, Davie dived across the street, and momentarily stood in the dumb presence of the snow-wrapt pillar-box, which looked not unlike a stout little man, wrapt up to the twa ears in a greatcoat.

"Ye're there, auld man," said Davie; "a guid New-Year t'ye!" and he frankly extended the hand of friendship to the dumb article addressed.

"Ay, ay," sneered Davie, "sae ye'll no return my frien'ly greeting!" and half-inquiringly he kept staggering around the pillar-box, which, with its round, short body, surmounted by a broad-shaped Tam o' Shanter shaped top, looked for all the world like the counter-part of a dumpy, well-fed, middle-aged shopkeeper. "Man, ye're a dour, unsocial sort o' a bit body!" continued Davie; "but maybe ye'd tell's the road to Whinnyknowe, if ye'll dae naething mair! Speak twa words to a freen, man, an' no stand dumbly there wi' yer han's in yer coat-pouches, an' yer bannet drawn doon owre the point o' yer nose," and steadying himself for a moment, by a strong effort of will, Davie stuck his thumbs inside the armpits of his waistcoat, and surveying his silent friend, sarcastically resumed:—

"Ye're there, are ye? ye blin' auld deaf-an'-dumb doddie! Stannin' there under the hap o' yer muckle coat an' yer Kilmarnock bannet, wi' yer tongue stack atween your teeth, an' nae mair Christian feelin' in yer breist than's in this auld hat o' mine."

Losing his balance, however, while he yet spoke, Davie staggered backwards several paces, and ultimately fell "clyte" down on the middle of the street.

Sitting still there for a moment, with head erect, and glowerin' eyes, he presently noticed a thin, smart-motioned little man stealthily approach the pillar-box with hurried and furtive gesture, who was none other than the Post-Office bag-lifter, doing his late rounds.

Now Postie was on this occasion somewhat behind time in lifting the "bags," having been tasting with a friend—a very pardonable slip in view of the conviviality of the season—and he was now intent on making up for lost time by hurrying through with his work.

Glancing suspiciously around, as if to avoid notice, Postie stepped close up to the pillar-box, and at once began unlocking the small door for the purpose of lifting and carrying away the bag of letters suspended inside.

Davie, past active interference for the moment, eyed Postie's movements where he sat, judging him, with lightning activity, to be nothing less than a burglar, intent on committing a midnight robbery on the person of his unknown friend.

In a moment Postie had flung open the pillar-box door, and removed the bag of letters.

"If the plunderin' loon hasna open't the chiel's topcoat, and rifled his twa breeks' pouches clean!" thought Davie. "A street robbery, or my name's no Davie Tosh! Hy, hy, there! murder! robbery! thieves! police!" sang out Davie, and struggling heroically to his lost feet, he was just in time to witness Postie turn sharp round, and make a hurried exit from the spot.

Now, Postie in his great haste to get baek to official headquarters, literally ran for it, and honest Davie, very naturally concluding that the burglar had taken sudden fright, and was running off with the stolen booty, followed hard after, in close, but irregular pursuit, shouting out as he ran, "STOP THIEF! CATCH THE THIEF! CATCH THE THIEF!"

"Fat's all tiss row apoot?" asked a Highland constable, suddenly emerging from a publican's side-door.

"Yon's the row," replied Davie, pointing at the retreating figure of Postie. "The burglar-loon has robbit yon wee mannie owre-bye yonder, at the pavement edge. I saw him lowse the chiel's topcoat, rifle his pouches, fling his purse across his left shoother, an' syne mak' aff; an' nae trifling size o' a purse it was, I can tell ye," added Davie, by way of a climax; "it was as lang as a sheep's bag."

"Oich, oich," laughed the official Donald, who for once

had the joke all to himself, "she'll no be a tief at al; she wass be a wrocht in ta Posht Offish."

"The Post Office be hanged!" retorted Davie; "I'm thinkin' it's the Pollis Office the rascal should be in. But come awa' back, an' see what the wee buddy's sayin' til't."

"Oich, oich! Did you'll no circumstooed what I'll told you? She's no a man at al; she's ta Posht Offish Pox."

"The Post Office Pox! Weel, I've heard in my day o' the Chicken Pox, and the Sma' Pox, but I never till noo heard tell o' the Post Office Pox!"

"Did she'll thocht it was a man?"

"An' what else could it be but a man? Did ye ever see a woman wearing a top-coat, and a Kilmarnock Tam o' Shanter bannet?"

"Oich, oich! you wass be seein' through ta wrang glasses: go away home, my goot man, without further loss of delay," and Donald strode loftily on.

"The wrang glasses!" soliloquised Davie; "I'm seein' through the 'wrang glasses,' am I? That canna be, seeing that I never wore 'specks' in my life. But ye're awa, are ye, Mister Pollisman! An' ye'll no mak' a case o't! Weel, tak' care, then, that Davoc Tosh disna mak' a 'case' o' you! Fine protectors of the people! A daicent man may be knockit doon and robbit on the public street, an' deil a bobby 'ill claw a deaf lug owre't! But I'll slip awa' owre an' see what the wee mannie's saying till't himsel'."

A moment after, Davie once more stood in the presence of his silent friend, addressing him with a rousing: "Hillo there, auld man! what's in yer blessed heid that ye're stannin' there stock still, an' yer bag o' siller awa'—eh?" Getting no response, he caught the pillar-box by the shoulders, and strove to shake it into a comprehension of the desperate situation.

"Faith," quo' Davie, as the pillar-box resisted his utmost efforts to move it, "ye maun surely be frozen stiff to the

grund!" Then he next bent down, and looked inquiringly into the wee man's face, beholding it, to his manifest surprise, lettered all over with "Postal Intelligence!"

Quickly the truth at last dawned in upon Davie's mixed mind, and clutching wildly at his hair for support, he exclaimed:—

"Gor-a-me, but the Hielan bobbie has had the best end o' the stick for yince in his life! I'm e'en seein' this nicht thro' owre mony 'glasses'—spectacles or no spectacles! Guid-bye, frien,' guid-bye! I'm no likely to meet ye in the flesh again, for if Postie hasna robbed ye' o' yer purse, he's at least awa' wi' yer stam Mack; an' I'm thinkin' a body without a stam Mack is in a fully waur condition than a man without a purse?"

And, wheeling sharply about, Davie Tosh made instant tracks for the douce farm-lands o' Auld Whinnyknowe.