

*THE AMATEUR PHRENOLOGIST.*

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WATTY TREDDLES, a stocking-weaver in Camlachie, and his wife Peggy, had a highly promising son, who had been born with a soul far above weaver's dressing. He was cut out for a distinguished career, the fond parents believed, as he had broken more windows, "plunk't" the school oftener, drowned more dogs, and killed more cats than any other boy in the district.

He was, in fact, a real born genius, who only needed opportunity to distinguish himself, and whose great natural talents required and deserved adequate expansion at the College classes.

"Pit him to the College," urged Peggy, "an' mak' him either a minister or a doctor, for the clever callant's fit for either, or baith o' them. He has an e'e like a lighted candle, an' as for his broo, it's as braid's a pavement, an's a fair kirk-steeples for heicht."

"Canny a wee, wife; ca' canny there," cautiously put in the old weaver. ' We maun mak' oor way sure an' sicker, stap by stap, an' look weel afore we lowp the dyke, no' kennin' what's beyond it. I've ken't a chiel hurriedly jump a dyke an' land up to the hoehs in a dib on the ither side."

"An' what then?" sharply put in Peggy? "Is the laddie to be nae better than a puir creeshie weaver, like——"

"Like wha, or what, Peggy?"

"Weel, then, like his faither, if I maun say't."

"Canny there, wife! ca' canny wi' yer tongue!"

"Tak' yer ain way owre the dyke, then, whatever that may turn oot to be," snapped Peggy.

"Which is this: I'll ca' in lang-leggit Haffy Taffy, the stickit minister. He's the wonder o' the district for knowledge, an' he's reckoned the most desperately learned man in the hale o' Camlachie, includin' baith weavers an'

ministers, half daft as some think him. It's said his neck's twisted wi' pure knowledge. Onyway, he's reckoned a grand hand at the bump-readin', an' can read heids, I'm telt, jist like a minister ca'in' awa' through an afternoon sermon on the Twal Apostles. For a gill, Haffy 'ill tell us what's in the laddie's heid, an what's no' in't, an' syne we can decide on a suitable profession for him—in the line o' Haffy's learned suggestions, of course."

"Eh, me! that's a rale grand idea," agreed Peggy. "I hope an' trust Haffy 'ill find the money-bump big in the laddie's heid. It wad ding every ither bump to perfect sticks, an' wad prove vera usefu' in gaun' to the market, I'm sure. But I'm fear't for't, for the money-bump's no' in oor family."

"Hang the money-bump!" retorted Watty, "what mortal man could save money in this hoose, wi' every blessed sixpence carefully shaken oot o' his twa breeks' pouches nicht after nicht, as regularly as the mune rises? Woman, ha'e ye no a single particle o' soul inside yer checkit short-goon whatever? Try an' pit a handfu' o' sound philosophy in yer purse, woman, an' let the coppers gang for a time."

"A' richt, my fine man! I'll pit aside the meal-dish for a time, also, jist to try ye, an' syne mix yer parritch the morn's mornin' wi' some plain cauld watter an' a handfu' or twa o' nice pure philosophy. If ye ha'ena the wind strong on the stomach efter that it'll no' be for want o' an ample vawcancy, I'm thinkin'."

Later on the same day it was arranged that Haffy Taffy, the lang-leggit phrenological chap, should come round to the house that evening on special invitation, and read for them their talented son's wonderful and highly-promising head.

Conformably to this arrangement, and well knowing Haffy's predominant tastes, a half-mutchkin of Duncan Tod's best Glenlivet was duly brocht in and set carefully

by in the cupboard. And the dram being once in the house, the lang-leggit, dry-nebbit phrenological chap, as if guided by a keen instinct, was not long behind it.

In fine feather, Haffy presently turned up, with a great roll of scientific manuscript under his arm, a look of light and leading in his grand eyes, a dirty-white "choker" round his thin, wry neck, politeness and eloquence on his facile tongue, and with his very scant hair most carefully parted in the middle. In fact, it was quite effusively obvious that the scientific Haffy, daft or no' daft, clearly considered himself quite the professional "toff" that evening, and was making a highly successful effort to look the distinguished professional genius on this very special occasion.

But the chief feature of the philosophic Haffy's personal get-up was certainly centred in his two legs, which were encased in a pair of all but skin-tight "strides," grey in colour, and sprung widely at the feet, with a white stripe running longitudinally up and down their entire length, and which, taken in connection with his soiled white "choker," constituted him a fairly-balanced compromise between a minister in reduced circumstances and a journeyman tailor on the spree. His legs in themselves were also of that type best described by the euphonious term of "pipe stapples." They were obviously intended by nature for jumping, or perhaps more strictly for running purposes. Stickit minister or no' stickit minister, Haffy, in point of fact, could jump like a lively flea when half on, which was oftener than otherwise; and as for the matter of running, there was no man in all Camlachie that could run faster or farther *into debt* than he could, giving him only his head for it. He was a bit of a practical juggler, too, Haffy having devoted a portion of his effervescing genius for occult science and mystery to the trick of sleight-of-hand legerdemain. In this very fine state of "get-up," he grandiloquently stepped

into the stocking-weaver's homely little parlour that evening, full of the important business under arrangement.

"Good evening, friends. Hope I see you all blooming?" was the philosophic Haffy's laconic greeting.

"Like tatties in July," replied Watty, getting to his feet, and deferentially pushing a chair towards his visitor. "I needna ask ye hoo ye're haudin' yersel'," he naively added, "for I see ye're fair shinin'—frae the legs up."

The philosophic Haffy smiled benevolently, and subsided very gingerly into the proffered chair.

Taking off his jaunty hat, which had the greyish metal gloss of a newly blackleaded grate, he revealed to the eyes of the homely domestic pair a forehead which shone and rose into the sublime altitude and polish of a metal dish-cover. Haffy next spread out on the table before their wondering eyes a phrenological chart illustrative of the interesting science of heads.

The chart showed a hairless female head, all spaced into little squares, and marked off and classified according to the teachings of phrenology, in the ordinary way.

"There it is—science beautifully reduced to order and instructive detail at a single comprehensive glance," loftily said Haffy, with a grandiloquent wave of the hand.

"Eh, me?" exclaimed Peggy, lifting both hands in astonishment; "whaur did ye get that woman's shaved heid? She's no' three weeks oot o' the Infirmary wi' the fever, I'm fearin'."

Watty, equally amazed, very carefully cleaned and adjusted his specks, and then solemnly surveyed the interesting chart.

"Wonderful, most wonderful!" he said, as his eyes wandered over the figured chart. "But what," he asked, "is the meaning o' a' thir wee squares, sae carefully marked aff, named, an' numbered, jist like sae mony drapers' tradetickets?"

"Let me briefly explain," replied the romantic Haffy.

“Phrenologists, you see, have divided off the human head into some thirty-six different compartments, in every one of which a passion, a perception, or a principle is located.”

“Eh, me!” once more broke in Peggy, “whaever heard the ekwal o’ that? Jist for a’ the world like a kist o’ drawers wi’ a’ the faimily Sunday claes pit bye in’t.”

“To a hair, madam—to a very fine hair,” acceded the facile Haffy. “Now, observe,” he quickly added, “these passions and principles are active and passive, according to size and cultivation. Exercise of any organ of the human head gives activity to that organ; indolence, or the neglect of it, gives passivity. In fact, these separate organs of the human head can be played on just like so many fiddles.”

“What!” suddenly broke in old Watty, “d’ye mean to tell me that there’s organs and fiddles in men’s heids? Whew! that cock ’ll no’ fecht, nick its kaim as ye will. A—a—a greater lee than that never was wabbit in auld Camlachie.”

“Do not misunderstand me, pray. Merely the expressive language of figure, I assure you—merely and solely the expressive language of figure. Well, to resume: a person who is largely developed here (pointing to Benevolence) will be a good man, probably a public philanthropist, or a Gospel preacher.”

“That’s oor young son,” once more broke in Peggy. “He has a lump fair on the roof o’ his heid as big as a juck’s egg.”

“Oh, then, my dear madam, just bring him in at once,” said the romantic and highly facile Haffy. “I can illustrate my subject still better from the living human head, I daresay.”

“An’ jist bring ben the dram also, when ye’re at it,” added Watty. “A body wad need something to haud their wits firm thegither under sic a scoutherin’ lash o’ knowledge. The wab-weavin’s an intricate job, some think; but, by my faith, the phrenology trade’s far intricater.

The two subjects thus in immediate request were soon in the little room, to the more liquid and potent of which Haffy did instant and ample justice, putting over his allowance with a hearty smack.

"And now to business," he said, smiling blandly at the young hopeful standing so passively before him. "Your head, sir,—there! Ah! capital—grand—famous," he went on, exhausting all his available stock of high-sounding adjectives. "This *is* a head, and no mistake!"

"Didna I tell ye the laddie was made for the pulpit?" triumphantly thrust in Peggy.

"Not exactly the pulpit, my dear woman," mildly rejoined the highly adaptable Haffy. "Pulpit gown and cassock are not exactly for your son. He's of the Christopher Columbus type, I find."

"But what, in auld Harry's name, is the yiss o' anither Christopher Columbus when America's been already discovered twa hunder years since?" put in the old weaver. "Graip his heid again, Haffy, an' try an' fetch him oot as a precentor, a doctor, or, to please oor wife there, a minister o' the Gospel."

"Couldn't, my dear sir, if you was to give me a whole Atlas of gold. The laws of Nature are unalterable. This young man is a born Christopher Columbus, I tell ye, and as such he must sink or swim."

"Noo, when I come to think on't," put in Peggy, "when he was jist a wee schule-laddie, no' that heicht, he was fair mad for paper boats, oor wee bairn. A shoo'er o' rain couldna fa' but he was oot sailin' his paper ships in the gutters."

"That's just it," naively added Haffy, "the highest development in this young man's head, I find, is an organ recently discovered by myself, and called in Latin *Aquabus purabus marinabus*, and which means in English *pure sea water*."

“What!” exclaimed the old weaver, “d’ye mean to threep doun my throat that the laddie’s got the watter in the heid?”

“His head’s full of water, I assure you, figuratively speaking,” answered Haffy, with a complacent smile, which gradually broadened out so ineffably as almost to connect the two corners of his mouth with his rather long and flabby ears.

“Weel, I’ve seen stooky feegurs in my time,” said Watty, “but as for your feegurs o’ speech, I ken but little o’ them. Hoosomever, that there is either sea, river, or pump watter in the laddie’s heid, swall’t at the croon as it looks, is what I’ll no thole said o’ him, phrenology here or phrenology yonder.”

“*Aquabus purabus marinabus*,” smilingly maintained the facile Haffy, “that’s the grand feature of this promising young man’s finely-gifted, Columbus-like peak-of-Teneriffe, marine head.”

“Weel,” said the old weaver, giving up the argued point, “I’ve heard o’ mulk in a cocoa-nut, but hang me if ever I heard tell o’ sea-watter in the human heid. It beats cock-fechtin’.”

“Man, ye’re awful slow in the uptak’,” again broke in Peggy. “D’ye no’ perceive that that’s maybe whaur a’ the saut tears come frae when a body’s broken wi’ sorrow an’ greetin’!”

“Capital, my dear madam—capital!” exclaimed the facile Haffy, helping himself to a fresh tumbler.

“Lord, so it is! I never saw’t till this moment. There’s a reason for a’ things, if we could only win at the bottom o’ them, I must admit.”

“Believe me, *aquabus purabus marinabus* is the young man’s strong bit,” added Haffy. “Take my advice and send him off to sea at once. He’s an embryotic Columbus. Give him plenty of water and he’ll swim, proudly swim, onwards and upwards to immortal glory.”

The old weaver did not exactly see how any one could very well *swim upwards* to glory. However, he swallowed the ad-

jective along with a fresh glass, and made no comment there-  
anent, concluding in his own canny mind, very probably,  
that it was another of Haffy's bamboozling figures of speech.

After this, conversation flowed into general channels, and  
on Peggy graciously praising Haffy for his wonderful  
cleverness, he offered to further illustrate his talents by  
showing them a clever trick in sleight-of-hand legerdemain  
if they would only permit him.

"Have you half-a-sovereign—just for one moment?" he  
smartly inquired.

"There's no' sic an article in the hoose, I'm sorry to say.  
They're fell scarce about the district the noo," truthfully  
answered Watty.

"A half-crown will do, then," said Haffy, extending his  
open hand for the needed coin.

The half-crown was ultimately produced by Peggy from  
the bottom of an old china cup, placed handily in the corner  
of a shelf.

"Now observe," said Haffy, "this is what is designated  
the 'disappearing trick.' In other words, the half-crown  
goes; I remain."

Saying this much, Haffy introduced the half-crown to his  
mouth, and pronouncing the word "Change," the coin  
instantly fled therefrom, finding a lodgment in his coat-sleeve.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the astonished Peggy.

"Try't again," said Watty, re-adjusting his specks. "It's  
a trick, I ken, if yin could only smartly follow't up."

The trick was successfully repeated, with clever move-  
ment of hand and mouth.

The old weaver again looked blank astonishment, having  
failed to follow it.

"Observe, I'll give you one chance once more," said the  
facile Haffy, putting the coin in his mouth for the third  
time. "Now—go!"

But what's the matter with Haffy? He wriggles in his



chair, his eyes turn round, he draws in a big sigh. The half-crown is apparently swallowed by mistake this time!

Peggy, greatly alarmed, offers to run for the local apothecary, while Watty rises hurriedly from his chair for the purpose of "bungin'" the unfortunate Haffy on the back to force up the half-swallowed coin.

"No use—no need," calmly says Haffy, recovering breath and speech with quite surprising alacrity. "It's gone—it's over—it's swallowed—it's lost, irretrievably lost, I tell you. And that's the end of it—a narrow escape for me!"

So said the cunning Haffy, the swallowed half-crown being cleverly secreted up his sleeve all the time, as before.

"Now I'll retire, I think," he said, getting smartly to his feet, putting at the same moment the phrenological chart under his arm. "Remember what I told you. Your son is a local Columbus, *minus* a discovered America. Given the water, he'll swim. Good-night, friends, good-night."

"Na, na, my fine chiel! that cock 'ill no' fecht," quickly thrust in the old weaver. "Sit ye down a bit till Peggy prepares ye an emetic o' saut an' het watter to gar ye bock up the swallowed half-croon. Ye're no' gaun' to dae the disappeerin' trick wi' my half-croon sae easily as a' that. Peggy, twa pints o' het watter an' a handfu' o' saut, as fast's ye can."

"Impossible, my dear sir,—impossible! I appeal to your sense, to your humanity, not to say to the pathology of the accident," expostulated Haffy, clapping on his hat.

"Pathology here or pathology yonder," replied Watty, "in twa minutes doon yer throat gangs the saut an' watter, an' up comes the half-croon, if ye dinna first produce that same swallowed coin, which I verily believe is hidden up yer sleeve this blessed minute."

"Gone, irretrievably gone!" replied Haffy, pointing pathetically to his throat.

"That'll no' dae. It could never win owre the natural twist in yer neck, Haffy."

“It’s gone—gone—gone! I tell you, and I’m going too. Remember what I’ve told you about the young man. The salt water is for his head, clearly, but would be quite out of place in my stomach. He’s a local Columbus, I tell you, *minus* America. *Aquabus purabus marinabus*, that’s his mental figure-head. Kindly let me pass, will you?”

“No, hang me if I dae. Confound yer *aquabus purabus marinabus*. Deliver up that hidden half-croon, or I’ll break yer backabus with a blowabus of this stickabus. Remember you thatabus!”

This said, Geordie, full of just wrath, made to put his comical threat into operation, seeing which, the romantic and highly learned Haffy made a frantic spring in the direction of the door and successfully cleared the premises in three magnificent kangaroo leaps.

“Confound the lang-leggit thief!” exclaimed Watty; “he’s fairly aff wi’ that half-croonabus!”

“Never mind; oor son’s to be a Columbus, he says, an’ that’s surely worth mair than the half-croon in itsel’,” said Peggy, in a mollifying tone of voice.

“Columbus be blowed! I’m only fell vex’t I didna get the chance to break his confoonded scientific back wi’ the heavy end o’ this auld stickabus. Hoosomever, if oor laddie maun gang to the sea to push his way forrit in the world, thank Heaven, we ha’e twa canals at hand, in either o’ which a word wi’ canal Tam, the manager o’ the Port-Dundas canal, wad get him articed an’ indentured for the service, if only properly wetted wi’ a frien’ly dram.”

And so, in the line of Haffy Taffy’s phrenological prophecy the youth was soon after sent to the “sea” in a Port-Dundas canal boat, where he rose to eminence in his profession, as the responsible Captain of a steam-scow, plying regularly between Port-Dundas and the foreign ports of Bowling, Kirkintilloch, and the Monkland!