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A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News.

"This is true Liberty, when Freeborn Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free."---Euripides.

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LITERATURE.

A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE.

The following touching stanzas are from the Ballad of the "Old Chapel Bell," by John G. Saxe:—

"Ah! well I mind me of a child,
A gleesome, happy maid,
Who came with constant step to church,
In comely garb arrayed,
And knelt her down full solemnly,
And penitently prayed.

"And oft, when church was done, I marked
That little maiden near
This pleasant spot, with book in hand,
As you are sitting here—
She read the Story of the Cross,
And wept with grief sincere.

"Years rolled away—and I beheld
The child to woman grown;
Her cheek was fairer, and her eye
With brighter lustre shone;
But childhoods' truth and innocence
Were still the maiden's own.

"I never rang a merrier peal
Than when, a joyous bride,
She stood beneath the sacred porch,
A noble youth beside,
And plighted him her maiden troth,
In maiden love and pride.

"I never tolled a deeper knell,
Than when, in after years,
They laid her in the church-yard here,
Where this low mound appears—
(The very grave, my boy, that you
Are watering now with tears!)

"It is thy mother! gentle boy,
That claims this tale of mine—
Thou art a flower whose fatal birth
Destroyed the parent vine!
A precious flower, thou art, my child—
TWO LIVES WERE GIVEN FOR THINE!

"One was thy sainted mother's, when
She gave the mortal birth;
And one thy Saviour's, when in death,
He shook the solid earth;
Go! boy, and live as may befit
Thy life's exceeding worth!"

The boy awoke, as from a dream,
And thoughtful, looked around,
But nothing saw, save at his feet,
His mother's lowly mound,
And by his side that ancient bell
Half hidden in the ground!

THE SNOW.

Come to the casement—we'll catch the snow,
Softly descending on earth below,
Fairer and whiter than spotless down,
Or pearl drop ta'en from a monarch's crown,
Clothing the earth in its robe's bright flow;
Is it not lovely—the pure, white snow?

See, as it falls o'er the landscape wide,
How it kindly seeks all blots to hide,
Shrouding each black, unsightly nook,
The clay-stained banks of the little brook,
Robing bare branches in ermine white,
Making all lovely, spotless and bright.

In the farm-yard watch its magic skill,
What wondrous marvels it works at will;
The well-house now is a fairy hall,
And the rough, rude fence a marble wall,
While gates and hillocks where barn fowl ranged,
To ramparts and bastions now are changed.

How softly it falls—nor breath, nor sound,
Though four feet high it should pile the ground,
Though it change the face of wood and field,
With skill that glamour could never wield,
Yet as it falls, not a murmur low—
The noiseless, silent, white-winged snow.

See in the rays of the morning bright,
How it blushes beneath the sun's red light;
How its diamond crystals gleam and shine,
Clearer than those of Golconda's mine;
Spite of wintry winds—their storm skies low,
Surely all love the beautiful snow.

MY FIRST AND LAST ROBBERY.

When I was a boy about fourteen years old, I ran away from school. I was a young donkey, no doubt, but then Dr. Birch did not forbid novels, and so he was partly to blame; for I imbibed thus early in life a taste for the romantic, which, I am happy to say, I have since entirely got rid of.

I forget for what now—no doubt it was on account of some great piece of injustice—but I resolved to imitate some hero or other I had read of, and run away to sea. This part of my life I shall not dwell upon, for the recollection of it is anything but pleasant: I shall only say that I reached Liverpool, got a ship, and then, as soon as I arrived at New York, deserted, so much was I disgusted with my romantic life. How I lived in America, is a mystery to me yet; but one fine morning I found myself in Chicago with only half-a-dollar in my pocket, and no shoes on my feet. I had seen quite enough of the world; so I thought the best thing I could do was to imitate the prodigal, and go home, trusting to my family's joy at seeing me alive, for I had not written home since I ran away from school. So I laid out some of my half-dollar in some bread and cheese, and putting the rest into a seam in my trousers, started for Detroit.

For some ninety or a hundred miles, my route lay through a forest, the path being marked every fifty yards by a piece of wood nailed crosswise to the trunk of a tree. This was all I had to guide me. My first two days passed without adventure; one night I slept in a loghouse, where they were very kind to me, and gave me a good breakfast in the morning; but the next night I had to sleep in a tree, and I can assure you the reality by no means came up to the idea I had formed of it from reading "The Swiss Family Robinson:" in the morning, when I awoke, stiff and hungry, I sincerely wished that the ingenious author had gone quietly to the bottom of the sea, instead of writing the fictitious narrative, and making a fool of me. However, I breakfasted on some of my bread and cheese, and started once more on my weary journey.

Up to this time, I had not fallen in with a human being except the people at the farm-house; but about five o'clock in the afternoon, as well as I could judge, I thought I saw some figures through the trees, and presently made them out to belong to three men. As they came closer, I saw they were very queer-looking fellows, with their faces covered over with short hair, as if they had not shaved for a month, and clad in very dilapidated garments, which bore, however, marks of having been once not only fashionable but costly. I myself was lightly enough equipped in a flannel shirt and a pair of canvas trousers; yet I am sure I looked far more respectable than any of them, for all their cloth coats with velvet collars and cuffs, and trousers tight at the knee, enlarging as they descended to the ankle, and reminding one of the barrel of a blunderbuss. In respect to foot-gear, they were variously attired. One of them boasted the possession of a pair of patent leathers, that once, no doubt, had bore part in many a dance, but now were fitter to replenish the bag of one of the gentlemen who repeat "Old clo'" about cities, than as armour for the feet on a pedestrian excursion through an American forest; for the upper leathers had disagreed with the lower, and through many a crevice the toes peeped out. Toes, do I say? Yes! for, alas, stockings had long since become a subject-matter for historians. The other two possessed what are commonly called "highlows;" and I am particular in thus recording it, for one pair of them afterwards bore a prominent position in my adventure.

But what impressed me at once in respect to these gentlemen, was that each of them carried an instrument adapted for house breaking—one a pickaxe, another a crowbar, and the third a hammer, chisel, and coil of rope. Was it possible they were going to commit burglary in the backwoods? That thought I dismissed at once, for what was there to steal? and before a second occurred to me, our meridian became identical; and the swell, as I was passing within about twenty yards, hailed me to stop, which request I complied with. He then entered into a conversation with me, making general inquiries about my position and prospects in this world, and particular ones about where I was going, and what I intended doing when I got there. These I answered to the best of my ability; and as I did not paint my future very brilliantly, he expressed the greatest pity for my forlorn condition, and ended by offering to make my fortune, on condition of my turning back and joining in their expedition. This was too disinterested by half, and much more than his own worldly prosperity appeared to warrant; so I refused, and thanking him kindly, wished him good-morning. But my friend would not allow his object to be thus frustrated, for he produced a most conclusive argument, and used it so persuasively, that I was induced to change my mind; in shape it resembled a Colt's revolver, and, like it, had a barrel and five chambers. If he had been studying rhetoric all his life, he could not have argued with greater success. I turned round with the greatest alacrity, and at his bidding shouldered the crowbar he was carrying, and marched on between him and his acquaintance with the pick-axe.

It was while proceeding in this order that I made the observations I have set down, and many more which I have not, one of which was, that we were proceeding at the rate of about three miles an hour—and considering the nature of the ground, that was *rather* quick—and another, that I was beginning to feel excessively hungry. After a while, I ventured to hint this last fact to my companion of the pickaxe, who appeared the best-natured of the party, for I was unconsciously a disciple of Lavater, and studied as much of their faces as I could see through their beards. To my great delight, he agreed with me, and said he would like some dinner; whereupon we all halted; and seeing them produce bread and meat, I said nothing about my own provender, which was carefully stowed away inside my shirt.

I made a great dinner, and so did they, though none of us said grace; but when I saw a cask of amber fluid produced, and was given a considerable portion of it to drink, my spirits rose to a very high pitch, and I began to place more confidence in the promises of my sympathising friend.

It was now, as well as I could guess, between seven and eight o'clock, and would soon be dusk, for the days were beginning to shorten, so I thought it time I should know whither we were going, and what I was to do; accordingly, fortified by the draught from the amber flask, I gave utterance to my sentiments. "I say, Mister, what game's up."

The Swell whom I addressed stared for a while, no doubt admiring my language, both on account of its brevity and also its intrinsic beauty, and thus replied:

"Well, youngster, I'll tell you, and it ain't a very long story either. You see, some time ago, I fell in at New Orleans with a coon jest returned from shutin' bars, or some sech thing, in among the red-skins up here; and he told me a long yarn about an Indian princess who departed this wicked life when he was there, and who was buried with all her jewels; and stunnin' ones they air tew, if they're as *he* says. Well, sez I to myself, what's the use of them jewels down in the ground? and the more I cogitated, the more I thought it a tarnation pity they should stay there; so myself and my two friends air here now for to try if we can't get them; and I kalkirlate we ain't far now from the spot, if it's where my shutin' friend described it."

"I guess hyar's the clump of elms," said Mr. Pickaxe.

"*You're* right, Mr. Brown," said the leader; "and now, let's follow our noses."

As we went on, I learned the whole of our project. The princess was buried in the cemetery of the tribe, about two miles from where we were, in a deep vault under a lofty sepulchre, right in the centre of the burying place; but as we were now in dangerous ground, silence was strictly enjoined, and I could not learn why I was included in the expedition. I puzzled myself to find out in vain. Was it on account of my personal appearance that they had taken such a liking to me as to prefer a fourth share to a third? Hardly so, I thought—my vanity was not so great as all that. But yet this was the only reason I could think of.

I am sure it took us at least two hours to cover those two miles, but then we had to proceed very cautiously for fear of the Indians, for if we were caught, crucifixion was the very mildest punishment we could expect. At last we reached the border of the burying-ground, and never shall I forget the sight that broke on my view when we emerged from the trees—it was so solemn, so ghastly! Long rows of white tombs were glittering in the moonlight, checkered here and there by shadows from a few willows that were scattered up and down, and from some lofty sepulchres that cowered among the more unpretending tombs. And when the branches of the willows moved in the scarcely perceptible breeze, I felt sure it was some ghoul gliding back into his grave in a hurry, to avoid being seen by mortal eyes.

While I was on the look-out for ghosts, my mates were busy reconnoitring for Indians, and none being visible, we advanced towards the centre, the rear being carefully brought up by me, still in dread of immortal creatures.

Under the shade of the tallest sepulchre we halted, and without any delay, Mr. Brown set to work with pickaxe on a slab at the base, and soon succeeded in making an opening for the crowbar, of which I was relieved by the Swell, who inserted it skilfully and raised up the slab.

As in Aladdin's adventure, the mouth of the dark hole was disclosed, but no steps were visible. So dark and so horrible looking was it, that it made me shiver to look down into it. Fancy, therefore, my feelings, when my kind sympathising friend requested me, in the blandest tone in the world, to "Jest slew down that there rope," which, as he spoke, he threw down, fastening one end to a piece of projecting masonry, "and relieve the young woman of her superfluous jewelry."

And now it dawned on my benighted intellect that it was for this purpose they had brought me, and not on account of my prepossessing appearance, and though it put an end to all doubt on the subject, it was by no means a satisfactory explanation. So little, indeed, was I pleased at it, that, without any preliminaries, I turned and ran as heard as ever I could, But, as luck would have it, when I had gone about ten yards I stumbled and fell over a stone, and before I could rise was again a prisoner.

This time my friend produced a bowie-knife, and gently insinuating the point about a quarter of an inch into a tender part, observed in a tone of voice that left not the slightest doubt on my mind of his being in earnest: "My young friend, if you try that game again, I'll jest put you outside this knife in two jiffies."

I was ignorant at the time, and am so still, of the precise period, occupied by a jiffy, but I feared it was not a protracted one, so I judged it best to obey, and went back quietly with him.

When we got to that awful hole, he repeated his former request, but suddenly I saw a loophole for escape, and suggested: "But I've no place to put 'em."

"Lend me your wiper, Brown."

"I ain't got such an article jest at present," said Mr. Brown.

"Where's yourn, Price?"

"Well, I forgot to bring it down stairs."

None of them possessed a handkerchief. At last a brilliant thought struck the Swell, and you may be sure I did not bless his ready wit. "I say, Brown! *you* divest yourself of them boots; the youngster can put the plunder into the legs."

"All serene; you have got a head-piece, and no mistake," said admiring Brown, as he took off his highlows, and dragged them on my feet. Now I had no excuse, yet it took several rather severe applications of the bowie before I could be induced to catch hold of the rope and swing myself over.

I should have said, before this, that they had given me the hammer and chisel, and a piece of candle and a tinder-box, all of which I had stowed away along with my bread and cheese. I now slid down the rope, and soon came to the end of it, but not of the pit, for I could feel nothing below me but the sides. Here was the case. Was I to let go and be dashed to atoms some hundreds of feet below; or was I to ascend and get eight inches of cold steel? Truly it was a dilemma, of which the horns were inconveniently sharp.

However, I did not long deliberate, for it was anything but a pleasant situation to be in. The wall I was leaning against was cold and clammy, and covered with all kinds of creeping abominations, that were crawling over me as I hung at the end of the rope. And besides, my lively imagination pictured to me some horrible being to seize me from below, drag me down to its abode, and there make a meal of me. So up I went as fast as I could. But before I came to the top that confounded bowie again made its acquaintance with my shoulder, and my kind friend, who introduced it, swore a fearful oath, that if I did not go down *instanter*, he would send me to the bottom and eternity together.

Down I went again, determined to jump at any hazard. But notwithstanding all my resolution, when I came to the end of the rope, I hung as long as I could. If it had been certain death I was falling to, I could not have hung another instant. Gradually the rope slipped through my fingers (for a long time I retained marks of its passage), at last it left them altogether—and I dropped. Oh, that fearful moment! Of all the sensations I ever experienced, that was the worst. Even a night-mare is nothing to it. I expected, at the very least, to be dashed to pieces in some horribe abyss, if ever I came to the bottom. All the evil I had ever done rushed into my memory in a dark mass, but with every separate sin distinct, and I lived my whole lifetime over again in short that moment; for short it was. I don't think I fell more than five feet, and then alighted on soft earth. But the delightful joy that filled my whole frame, body and mind, I cannot describe. A prisoner reprieved on the scaffold has alone experienced the same kind of feeling.

In my joy at finding myself safe, all fear passed away, and I immediately jumped up and struck a light. On looking round me, I could see that the place I was in was something like the bottom of a draw well, being about six feet square, and having in one of its sides an aperture or doorway. Into this I advanced, and after traversing a short passage, found myself in a large chamber, evidently the receptacle of the dead Indians; in niches round about the wall were coffins in every stage of decay; others were piled up at one end, and in the centre was a kind of settle, supporting an elaborately carved sarcophagus, made from the bark of some tree. This, no doubt, was the princess. So at once, in the light of my newly found courage, I determined to secure the prize. I inserted my chisel under the lid, and after a few taps from the hammer, raised it, and discovered the corpse of a young female apparently not long dead, for her face looked quite fresh and lifelike; her eyes were glassy, however, and her form rigid. She was profusely ornamented with jewels, and her grave-clothes literally sparkled with brilliants. What first struck me was a ring through her nose, containing a splendid emerald. I had just seized hold of the ring, and was about to commence my sacrilege, by severing the cartilage of her nose, when I was terrified by a loud crash from above, as if the slab had been hastily replaced. Such was the first thought that occurred to me, and I rushed out to see; but in my hurry my candle was extinguished, and as I had left my tinder-box on the settle, I could not relight it, for with the darkness all my terrors had at once more resumed their sway, and not for worlds would I have moved a step into that chamber with all the corpses. All I suffered before was nothing compared with what I felt when I looked up, and saw darkness everywhere, and knew that the slab had indeed fallen. I became perfectly paralysed by fear, and sank down in a corner unable to move hand or foot. Then suddenly I heard stealthy footsteps approaching from the direction of the chamber, and though now I think it must have been a rat, yet then so simple an explanation of such a sound never entered my mind. I felt sure it was the corpse coming to resent the sacrilege I had committed. All my blood ran cold in my veins, and I fainted; otherwise I must have gone mad.

How long I remained in this death-like stupor, I know not; but my first thought on awaking to consciousness was, where was I? The whole recollection of what had happened to me flashed on my memory at once, and I closed my eyes with a shudder, and was near going off in another swoon. What saved me was, that when I opened my eyes I saw daylight; for it was all darkness when I had fainted. Yes, it was daylight, blessed daylight, shining round about me! It was astonishing what an effect it had upon me, who in the dark was such a coward. I felt all my strength revive, and with it a feeling of hunger; so the first thing I did was to finish my bread and cheese. I then felt brave enough to face a whole churchyard, and as the light was shining in from the door of the chamber, into it I went, and looking up, saw about sixty feet over my head a large aperture, through which the light was streaming. There was no hope of escape, however, for the sides were perpendicular and quite smooth. No velvet ever appeared half so smooth to me as they did then, though in reality they were built of rough stone. This aperture was evidently on the top of the monument at whose base the slab had been removed, and no doubt, had I looked up the night before, I should have seen the moonlight; but I did not, and my candle prevented me seeing it without looking up, and when I went out into the pit, I suppose the light did not penetrate so far, or else a cloud had passed over the moon. But though it was very satisfactory to know all about the light, and where it was coming from, it by no means reconciled me to being a prisoner in such a prison, with every likelihood of been starved or eaten by rats if my comrades did not come back for me. I began, therefore, to look round for materials to build a scaffolding, if perhaps I could raise the slab; so I selected the newest coffins, and brought them out into the pit, and placing two opposite each other, put two more on these, and so on until my pile was about six feet high. Here I came to a full stop, for I could not raise up any more without endangering the safety of the whole structure, which was very ricketty; so I sat down on the settle to rest and think what I should do, and while I was there, I thought I might as well secure the jewels. So I set to work, and soon had them all in my possession—nose-ring, earrings, anklets, bracelets, and rings of every description; every ornament did I steal except those on her grave-clothes — for those I could now see were glass—and stuffed them into my boots. Having accomplished this, a bright idea struck me: I took off my shirt, and tore it into strips; these I twisted and knotted, and made into a rope about twelve feet long. It was good stout flannel, and made a very respectable strong rope. One end of it I fastened to a coffin, and mounting my scaffolding with the other, I commenced to haul. All went perfectly right until I got it up about half way, and then the treacherous flannel gave way, and the coffin fell with a crash. At the same time I lost my balance, and fell down on the other side, dragging along with me my entire pile.

Stunned and bruised, I lay for a long time unconscious, covered over with bones and decayed flesh, and skull's dust—for in their fall most of the coffins were burst open—until once more I came to life; but this time it was in darkness. For some time I could not realize where I was, until a noise above stirred the train of my memory, and I remembered all. I shook off my ghastly bed-clothes, and jumped up, for I felt sure it was my friends come back to deliver me. Soon a light shone down, and I knew the slab was raised. But my feeling of thankfulness was nipped in the bud, for on looking up I saw the end of a ladder projecting down.

'Surely the Indians are coming to bury some one,' I thought, 'and will crucify me.'

As a last chance, I felt round for my hammer, and found it just as the ladder rested on the ground close beside me, and the figure of a man began to descend. The night was dark and cloudy, so I could not tell whether it was an Indian or a white man; but the ladder left little doubt. So I took up a position in front of the ladder, and awaited the man who was coming down, resolved to give him a warm welcome. Slowly he came, and often stopped; but at last his boot rested on the last rung. This was my time; so I stepped forward, and dealt him a blow on the back of the head with all my might. With an awful yell he fell, either dead or stunned, and the cavern took up the yell, and echoed it round and round, whilst I joined in, to the best of my ability. Altogether, it was a fearful din, and enough to frighten any one outside, which it effectually did, for when I ran up the ladder as fast as I could, yelling all the while, and looked, I could see several forms just disappearing into the forest. I immediately made off in the opposite direction, and ran as hard as I could till my strength failed, when I sank down exhausted, and soon, so tired and worn out was I, fell fast asleep.

The morning was breaking when I awoke, and hearing water close by, I dragged myself to it, and after drinking some of it, felt able to proceed, though very slowly, for some hours. At last I saw smoke through the trees, and presently a log-cottage. No palace was ever half so magnificent as it appeared to me then, and no woman half so beautiful as she I saw standing in the doorway. Good she was in reality, for when she saw me, she came and helped me in, set me before a fire, gave me an excellent dinner, and believed every word I told her: how I was robbed, and nearly murdered by Indians. She even offered me a lodging for the night. But not for worlds would I have remained in the neighbourhood, for fear of the Indians, and so I pretended that I was in a great hurry to get to New York, and she let me go; but first, good soul, made me take some money as a present, and provisions, for I was still a long way from Detroit. On the morning of the third day after I left my kind hostess, I arrived safe, having met with no further adventure. In Detroit I managed to dispose of some of my spoils to a jeweller, who asked no questions, but gave about one-tenth of the value. However, I was glad to get anything at all, and, as the steamer was just starting, embarked, and two days after, was in New York.

Here I sold one of the rings for fifty pounds, and lived for a little while in great style. One day coming out of a cigar shop, I thought I saw a face I knew; I looked again, and found I was not mistaken. It was my friend with the patent leathers, looking twice as shabby as ever. He knew me at once, and immediately came over and accosted me, asking me how I had escaped.

"Escaped from the grave, you mean?" said I. "You were a pretty fellow to leave me in such a fix."

"But," explained he, "we heard the Red-skins, and had to cut for our lives; and when we came back next night to see if anything could be done for you, we found the place swarming with them, and it took us as much as ever we could do to get off safe. When we got here a week ago, we heard how the Indians had captured the robber, and crucified him, so we were sure it was you."

"You see it was not," said I coolly; and then I told him my story. We then came to the conclusion that the man I brained belonged to some other party on the same errand as ourselves, and that the Indians had found him, no doubt still insensible, and had crucified him.

Such was the end of my adventure. But our ill gotten gains brought us no luck. In less than a month, I was the only one of the party alive, for Brown and Price one night, about a week after we got the money, had a fight in a tavern, when Price settled his companion with his bowie, and was shortly after hung for it. The Swell got delirium-tremens, and died soon after; so I was the only one left, with nearly three thousand pounds in my possession (for we had sold all the jewels for five thousand). Terrified at the fate of my companions, I began to think I had not been acting as I ought, and soon came to the conclusion that I was little better than a thief. When once I began to think about the subject, it was all right. I wrote home to my friends, sold all my fine clothes and jewellery, and one dark night dropped all that was left of the money into the poor-box of the Orphan Refuge. Next morning I was on my way back to England. And thus ended My First and Last Robbery.—*Chambers*.

(From the North British Review.)

SCOTTISH HUMOUR.

Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character. By E. B. Ramsay, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S.E., Dean of Edinburgh. First and Second Series.

Familiar Illustrations of Scottish Character. By the Rev. Charles Rogers, LL.D., F.S.A. Scotland.

(Concluded from last week.)

A man of short stature and most uninviting countenance, with the peculiar expression now claimed by Mons. du Chaillu as that of the gorilla, purchased a property in a western county of Scotland, from whence he strictly excluded trespassers. Some one sent him a large monkey, which he kept about his place; and a boy having been entrusted with the delivery of a letter, and having found the monkey at the house door, was somewhat alarmed: so he threw down the letter and ran off. On his way down the avenue, the boy met the new laird, who angrily demanded what he was doing there. 'I had a letter for you, sir,' says the boy. 'Well, give it me.' 'Ah, but I gave it to your son, sir,' replies the trembling laddie. 'My son, you little rascal: I have no son.' 'Weel, sir, I canna say for that, but he had an unco leuk o' yoursell.'

A 'minister's man'—one of a class of persons of whom many anecdotes are told—was following the minister from the manse to the kirk one Sabbath afternoon, when the minister, glancing back, perceived a smile on the face of his old attendant. 'What makes you laugh, James? it is unseemly. What is there to amuse you?' 'Oh, naething particular,' says James: 'I was only thinking o' something that happened this forenoon.' 'What is that? Tell me what it was.' 'Weel, minister, dinna be angry wi' me; but ye ken the congregation here are whiles no pleased to get auld sermons fra' you, and this morning I got the better of the kirk session ony way.' 'And how was that, Jamie?' says the minister. ''Deed, sir, when we came out o' the kirk this forenoon, I kenned what they were thinking; and says I, "Eh, but you canna ca' that an auld sermon this day, for it's no' abune six weeks since you heard it last." '

The Rev. Dr. M'Leod was proceeding from the manse of D——— to church, to open a new place of worship. As he passed slowly and gravely through the crowd gathered about the doors, an elderly man, with the peculiar kind of wig known in that district,—bright, smooth, and of a reddish brown,—accosted him. 'Dr., if you please, I wish to speak to you.' 'Well, Duncan,' says the venerable Doctor, 'can ye not wait till after worship?' 'No, Doctor, I must speak to you now, for it is a matter upon my conscience.' 'Oh, since it is a matter of conscience, tell me what it is; but be brief, Duncan, for time presses.' 'The matter is this, Doctor. Ye see the clock yonder on the face of the new church. Well, there is no clock really there—nothing but the face of a clock. There is no truth in it, but only once in the twelve hours. Now, it is in my mind, very wrong, and quite against my conscience, that there should be a lie on the face of the house of the Lord.' 'Duncan, I will consider the point. But I am glad to see you looking so well; you are not young now; I remember you for many years; and what a fine head of hair you have still!' 'Eh, Doctor, you are joking now; it is long since I have had any hair.' 'Oh, Duncan, Duncan, are you going into the house of the Lord with a lie upon your head?' This settled the question; and the Doctor heard no more of the lie on the face of the clock.

Many good stories of this venerable gentleman are floating about; and few men have more happily combined the fine discernment and appreciation of humour with the higher qualities of mind and heart than his excellent son, Dr. Norman M'Leod, from whose 'Good Words,' now scattered over the land, a harvest of good and pleasant fruits may be anticipated.

We quite agree with the Dean in his estimate of Dr. Carlyle and his times. His book is amusing, and in some respects instructive; but the picture it presents of the man and his times is a very painful one. Nothing can be more apt and appropriate than the good Dean's description of the life of Dr. Carlyle and his friends, as 'of the earth, earthy.' How far the existence of such 'earthliness' in the Church and the society of these times may have arisen from some degree of reaction against the religious enthusiasm of an earlier age, and how much of it may be traced to the policy which crushed popular independence, and stifled free and earnest thought, and created and fostered a spirit of selfish and jobbing subserviency in Scotland, such as Macklin held up to ridicule in 'Sir Pertinax M'Sycophant,' whose success in life was ascribed to his 'never having a conscience,' and 'keeping aye bowing—never standing straight in the presence of a great man,' it is not within our present province to inquire. Such inquiry, though interesting, would lead us into a field of controversy on which we do not now wish to venture, and would compel us to do more than enter, as we now do, our protest against the views and sentiments of Mr. Buckle in regard to the social, political, and religious state of Scotland. That gentleman labours under misapprehensions which a little more acquaintance with the real state of parties and feelings in Scotland, during the period of which he writes, would have removed. He seems to imagine that the most liberal and tolerant of Presbyterians have been those most opposed to the Calvinism of their standards, and the strictness of their discipline.

This, however, is a great mistake in point of fact. There has always been a party in Scotland who united the principles of evangelical Calvinism in the Church with the principles of civil and religious liberty in the State,—who are at once earnest and tolerant. Of that party in the Church, Sir Henry Moncreiff, Dr. Andrew Thomson, and Dr. Chalmers may be considered as types or representatives. Of that party Dr. Carlyle and his friends were the opponents; and by that party, within and without the Established Church, is Scottish Presbyterianism truly and adequately represented. Of this, Mr. Buckle does not appear to be aware; and hence the great inaccuracy of the views to which we have adverted.

The truth is, that there is no country where the clergy, as such, and apart from their character and their labours, have so little power and influence as in Scotland. The genius of Presbyterianism is most unfavourable to priestcraft. The lay element in all our churches has great weight; and ministers must command respect and confidence by their conduct, if they desire to retain their influence.

Dean Ramsay's story of the boy who came up to the minister for examination, is, we think, a good one of its kind—ludicrous, but not humorous. The minister asked the boy how many commandments there were. 'Aiblins a hunner,' says the lad. Having been rebuked for his ignorance, he was returning home, when he met a friend on his way to the manse, and asked him, 'What will ye say, if the minister asks how many commandments there are?' 'Say?' replies the other, 'why, ten, to be sure.' To this the first lad rejoins, with great triumph, 'Ten! try ye him wi' ten! I tried him wi' a hunner, and he wasna satisfied.'

Exceedingly good, in a very different way, is the story of Doctor Henry, who, being associated with a colleague not more popular as a preacher than himself, remarked, 'An' it hadna been for that, there might hae been *twa* toom kirks this day.'

Both Dean Ramsay's and Dr. Rogers' books are crowded with stories of ministers. But, though some of the selected stories are entertaining, and a few are really good, yet, with all our respect for the reverend gentlemen, who are perhaps entitled to take greater liberties with 'the cloth' than laymen could venture to do, we think that some of the anecdotes of the clergy, or rather some of the anecdotes on sacred subjects—for the clergy, as a class, are not exempted from the comments, or even the raillery, to which others are exposed—might well have been spared. But there is something wild, striking, and almost sublime, in the story of an old Miss Johnstone, who was on her deathbed in the midst of a tremendous thunder-storm that shook the house, when, conscious of the near approach of the last enemy, in full possession of her faculties, and with no thought of profane or light allusion, she exclaimed: 'Ech, sirs, what a night for me to be fleeing through the air!' This is not merely a trait of humour out of season, nor a mark of unbecoming levity at a solemn and awful time, but a burst of strange, wild fancy, characteristic of a highly imaginative and poetic temperament. The old lady could thoroughly appreciate the poetry of Burns; and, among graver and better thoughts, there lingered in her aged breast a spirit responsive to the sublime imagery of the storm in 'Tam o' Shanter,' and of the 'Address to the Deil.' We can believe that, not in the weakness, but in the strength of her faith—not in the earthward cleavings, but in the heavenward aspirings—did she realize her flight through that midnight storm into the bright realms of light and glory. There are many instances on record, in which such quaint wild fancies, apparently, but not really, incongruous, have mingled with the steadfast trust and sublime anticipations of Scottish piety.

The singular and sometimes startling combination of sublimity and humour is one of the remarkable features of the poetry of Burns. Of this the 'Address to the Deil' is a good example. There are rare strokes of humour in some of the stanzas; yet the character of the ode is sublime, and we know nothing finer than

'Great is thy power, and great thy fame;
Far kenned and noted is thy name;
And tho' yon lowin' heugh's thy hame,
Thou travel'st far;
And, faith, thou'st neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.

'Whyles ranging like a roaring lion
For prey, a' holes an' corners trying;
Whyles on the strong-winged tempest flying,
Tirling the kirks;
Whyles in the human bosom prying,
Unseen thou lurk'st.'

Another illustration of the same peculiarity in Burns is the introduction into one of his poems in praise of whiskey—too numerous and too attractive they are—of a stanzas of singular beauty, presenting one of the most powerful and sublime pictures of a dying warrior in any language. The 'Postscript' to the 'Earnest Cry and Prayer to the Scotch Representatives' commences—

'Let half-starved slaves in warmer skies
See future wines, rich clustering, rise;
Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
But, blythe and frisky,
She eyes her free-born martial boys
Tak' aff their whisky.

'What tho' their Phœbus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms and beauty charms,
When wretches range in famished swarms
The scented groves,
Or, hounded forth, dishonour arms,
In hungry droves.

'Their gun's a burden on their shouther;
They downa bide the stink o' powther;
Their bauldest thought's a hank'ring swither
To stand or rin,
Till skelp—a shot—they're aff a' throu'ther,
To save their skin.

'But, bring a Scotsman frae his hill,
Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,
Say—such is Royal George's will,
And there's the foe;
He has nae thought but how to kill
Twa at a blow.

'Nae cauld faint-hearted doubtings tease him:
Death comes, wi' fearless eye he sees him;
Wi' bluidy hand a welcome gi'es him;
And when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin' lea'es him
In faint huzzas.'

Yet more striking is the combination of humour and sublimity in the poem of 'Tam o' Shanter.' The tale itself, in its commencement, its crisis, and its result, is eminently comic. No one acquainted with the Scottish language can read it without a hearty laugh; and it is recorded of Burns, who composed it all in one day, that he was heard breaking forth into shouts of laughter, as he walked home at night repeating it to himself. Yet we do not think that we are unduly partial, or too intensely national, when we say, that the imagery and accompaniment of this comic story, are, in their beauty and sublimity, nearly matchless. Quotation cannot do it justice, and we refrain. But, mingled with the strong, clear current of the story, what can surpass the beauty of the reflection on the evanescence of pleasure, the vivid reality of the storm, the enumeration of the places passed by Tam, as

'Weel mounted on his grey mare Meg—
A better never lifted leg—
Tam skelpit on through dub and mire,
Despising wind and rain and fire,'

each place—the ford, the stane, the cairn, the thorn—suggesting its own tale of death, and the then accumulated horrors of the spectacle which, strangely mingled with 'mirth and dancing,' met the astonished eyes of man and mare in 'Alloway's auld haunted kirk?'

It is a confirmation of what we have already said of the spontaneity and simplicity of true humour, that whenever Burns wrote epigrams he did not succeed, while the humour which gushed out freely and naturally in the midst of his songs and poems is of the highest order. Let those who are disposed to deny, or disparage, Scottish humour, read such songs as 'Sic a wife as Willie had,' or 'Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad,' or 'Tam Glen,' or 'Meg o' the Mill,' or Allan Ramsay's 'My jo, Janet,' or Burns' song, to the same air, of 'Husband, husband, cease your strife;' or read such poems as 'Hallow E'en,' or 'Death and Dr. Hornbook,' or 'The Holy Fair,' or 'The Ordination;' which last, though in some respects such as it is to be regretted that Burns ever wrote, are replete with humour. What Dean Ramsay calls the 'sly, cheerie, pawky' humour of Scotland, is nowhere better illustrated and represented than in the poetry of Burns.

The late Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck was a man of real Scottish humour; and, now that the bitter sting of party has passed away, his playful and graceful pleasantry will not be soon forgotten. Many of his songs, especially 'Jenny's Bawbee,' are excellent, and in the best comic vein.

The Laird of Logan, a gentleman of some property in Ayrshire, was well known in his day as a humorist; and many anecdotes of him are related in that county, some of which are given in Dean Ramsay's book.

At a meeting of the heritors of the parish of Cumnock, a proposal to erect a new churchyard wall was met by the Laird of Logan with the dry remark, 'I never dig dykes till the tenants complain.'

The Laird sold a horse to an Englishman, saying, 'You buy him as you see him; but he's an honest beast.' The purchaser took him home. In a few days he stumbled and fell, to the damage of his own knees and his rider's head. On this the angry purchaser remonstrated with the Laird, whose reply was, 'Well, sir, I told you he was an honest beast. Many a time has he threatened to come down wi' me, and I kenned he would keep his word some day.'

At the time of the threatened invasion the Laird had been taunted, at a meeting at Ayr, with the want of a loyal spirit at Cumnock, as no volunteer corps had there been raised to meet the coming danger. 'What sort of people are you up at Cumnock?' said an Ayr gentleman; 'you have not a single volunteer.' 'Never you heed,' says Logan, very quietly; 'if the French land at Ayr, there will soon be plenty of volunteers up at Cumnock.'

On failure of the direct line of succession, an earldom and large estate in Ayrshire passed to a branch of the family which had settled in America. A friend, meeting Logan, said, 'Well, Laird, what do you think of the new Earl of C———?' 'I canna' weel judge yet,' says Logan; 'American apples are guid, but I'm no sure about American peers' (pears).

Major Logan, a connection of the Laird's, a merry wag, whom many recollect in Ayrshire as a first-rate performer on the violin, and a great social favourite, and of whom, and his 'sentimental sister Susie,' mention is made in more than one of Burns' poems, was also a man of great natural humour. A gentleman, whose reputation for hospitality was not high, after boasting of some port-wine of great age and excellence, was prevailed on, with some difficulty, to produce a bottle. When it did appear, it was only a pint-bottle. Major Logan, on being asked his opinion, said, 'The wine is good, but it's a pity it is so little for its age.'

A certain lawyer, disposed to scoff at serious things, once said, in the presence of Major Logan, that he did not much enter into these matters, but he supposed that he held the same relation to the Deity as a vassal does to his superior. 'Probably you do,' says Logan, 'for ye pay Him *few duties*.'

Some of Major Logan's poetic effusions are remembered in Ayrshire, and are quite in accordance with the hearty and jocose character of the merry old man.

The Bar has, as might be expected, furnished a large store of jokes, puns, and comic stories. The good taste of the present day is opposed to the exhibitions of judicial jocoseness on the bench, which were tolerated, and even admired, at the close of the last century; and the same course has, to some extent, tended to restrain the comic humour of the bar in judicial proceedings.

But the wit and humour of the legal profession in Scotland has not departed. Some members of the bar, lately lost, and some, happily still spared to us, have been gifted with the true spirit of mirth, and fun, and satire, to a remarkable degree. The names of Cheape, and Outram, and Lockhart, and Logan, and of Lord Neaves, with his rare scholarship, his fine taste, and his prompt and happy wit, will occur to many of our readers. Some of the legal anecdotes given by Dr. Rogers are good.

Erskine's declining to wear Dundas' silk gown, lest he might be supposed to adopt 'the abandoned habits of his predecessor,' is well known. The following, not so well known, is, we think, at least equally good, and is thus given by Dr. Rogers:—

'Mr. A. B., a judge of the Commissary Court, talked in an inflated and pompous manner. Having failed to attend an appointment with Erskine, he explained that he had been called out of town, owing to his brother having fallen from a stile and sprained his foot. "It was fortunate for your brother," said Erskine, "that it was not *from your style* he fell, or he had certainly broken his neck." '

A clever but unsuccessful advocate having died very poor, it was remarked to Erskine, that there were 'no effects.' 'That is not wonderful,' was the reply; 'as he had no *causes*, he could have no *effects*.'

A well known story of Lord Polkemmet has a less known but very characteristic sequel in an anecdote of his grandson. Lord Polkemmet refused to let the dentist insert his finger in his mouth, saying, 'Na, ye'll bite me.' His grandson, Mr. Johnstone, while canvassing the late Mr. Hog of Newliston, declined to take any luncheon from the elector, on the ground 'that it would be treating.' The confusion of ideas is precisely the same in both cases; and that a blunder so ludicrous should be apparently hereditary, is very remarkable.

Of legal and judicial anecdotes, there are several in the Dean's 'Reminiscences;' and we are glad that the whole of 'the Diamond Beetle,' by Cranstoun, has been given: for nothing can be more graphic, spirited, and ludicrous, than the characteristic speeches of the learned judges who deliver their opinions in the case of defamation. The pith and point of legal anecdotes can, however, receive justice only in personal narration by one of a kindred spirit. There are many stories of Braxfield, and Eskgrove, and Hermand, and Henry Erskine, and John Clerk, which cannot now be recalled with sufficient accuracy for publication; but with what delight have we heard them from the eloquent lips of Lord Cockburn, when, at his hospitable board, or climbing amid the crags of the Petlands, or wandering at eve among his flowers, as the setting sun gleamed on the bonnie banks of Bonaly, we were gladdened by the outpouring of such a sparkling stream of real Scottish pleasantry as we cannot hope ever to meet again!

We must now bid farewell to the Dean and his 'Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character.' They have been, and they will be, much read and much liked. Of the language, the peculiarities, and the humour of auld Scotland, they present amusing and agreeable illustrations; and those who best know and best love their country, will appreciate and admire both the work and the character of the Rev. Edward Ramsay.

SENSATIONS ON TAKING CHLOROFORM.

A correspondent of the San Francisco Weekly *Mirror* gives the following vivid description of the sensations he felt while under the intoxication of chloroform, in which he had been placed for the purpose of having a sliver of iron extracted from his eye:—

"My last sane recollection is of the surgeon applying the handkerchief to my mouth; then the room began to magnify to gigantic proportions; a common lamp was transformed to a candelabra, more luminous and costly than ever lighted the grandest cathedral in the world. The surgeon became a giant of prodigious magnitude, holding a huge gleaming knife, with a single blow of which he might have severed me. The sound of voices in the room seemed like the clamorings of a vast multitude during the burning of the city, and a signboard screeching outside, conveyed the idea of a furious mob collected in the street for my execution. On entering the room I had noticed a large cat sitting asleep on a shelf, which turned its head lazily toward me, and then resumed its slumbers; this creature became a hideous, vampyre-like monster, with great fiery eyes, and with fangs and claws like what were fabled to belong to the griffin, walking around, and blowing fetid breath on men, and pressing its frightful paws on my breast. But the worst of all was a collection of gigantic men sharpening instruments for my dissection. I could hear the whirring of the stone and the shrieking of the highly tempered knives as the grinders laughed at the intended dissection. One was more jocose and heartless than the rest; he was my implacable enemy; we had quarrelled and fought about a schoolmate love. Presently I felt their keen knives at every joint: I besought my tormentors, but still the instruments hissed through my quivering flesh and grated along every bone. I am satisfied that all those emotions were experienced within a moment after the first inhalation which began the process of stupefaction—so swift are the evolutions of thought when sense is subdued, and when the phantom monarch of dreams leads the soul through the endless avenues, swifter in its journeying than the short lived fire which falls from the womb of an overburdened cloud.

"But the gradual revolution of mental perception succeeded; those frightful spectres began to recede; the men and knives began to diminish; the cat returned to its natural proportions and crept slowly away; the voices became less harsh and threatening, and the noise in the street was subdued to unbroken silence. I looked into a universe of light, with nothing visible, until indistinct forms appeared on the horizon, coming toward me and defining themselves as they came. One was my mother, clad in grave clothes, but, as she neared, her habiliments changed to the fabrics which glittered in the prophet's vision when he looked over the great congregation which no man could number.

"Directly she stood by me; and recognising every feature, I saw that each age mark was gone, her cheek was fresh as the young girl's when she first blushes to the whispered words of love, and, stooping to kiss me, the apparition went out, leaving another, still more beautiful and youthful; it was the figure of my young wife, who died on the birth of her first child. She held an infant in her arms, who reached down and ran his tiny fingers through my hair, but when I tried to take him in my arms, infant and mother were gone. Strange that I felt no disappointment; I knew they were but pictures that hung in the galleries of a father's heart. Everything changed to an existence of indescribable pleasure; I laughed and danced like one mad with the exhilration of unexpected deliverance from torture; the air came into my lungs gratefully as the up-gushing of cool water to the lips of a thirsty drinker.

"The aroma of celestial gardens seemed about me: I believed that I was in the territory of souls, and wondered how any one should fear to die. I could hear sounds in the street, but they seemed to be prolonged and swelled like the sounds of a great organ. Millions of symmetrical creatures passed in review, along a horizon of silver and gold, and yet I was conscious that they were the creations of a distorted imagination. * * * * * *

"Presently I became conscious of returning sense; my limbs felt unwieldy and of too great proportions to be moved by the strengthening will; my eyes opened and began to discern objects returning to natural dimensions, and I began to comprehend the conversation of persons in the room. The whole operation had not occupied half an hour, but I had lived centuries of indescribable horrors and emotions of happiness which are incomprehensible to the sane and wakeful mind. My sight is preserved, and the fragment of steel is in my possession, and, like the key of St. Peter, unlocked the celestial splendours and opened a Pandora box of hellish imagery, which even now wakes me from dreams to sudden and tremulous thankfulness."

A BOOKSELLER OF THE OLD SCHOOL.—The stock of books collected by the late respected Mr. Robert Baldock, bookseller, of 85, High Holborn, is announced for sale by Messrs. Puttick and Simpson. Mr. Baldock was one of the old school of booksellers. When young he was an assistant at the eccentric Lackington's at the Temple of the Muses, Finsbury-square, where a coach and four once drove around the shop and out at the front