Robert Chambers

Illustrations of the Author of Waverley

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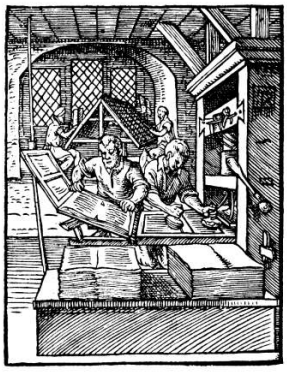
Being Notices and Anecdotes of Real Characters, Scenes, and Incidents Supposed to Be Described in His Works



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CHAPTER I.

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Waverley.

HIGHLAND FAITH AND HONOUR.

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(*The Plot of the Novel.*)

“  hen the Highlanders, upon the morning of the battle of Prestonpans, made their memorable attack, a battery of four field-pieces was stormed and carried by the Camerons and Stuarts of Appine. The late Alexander Stuart of Invernahyle was one of the foremost in the charge, and observed an officer of the king’s forces, who, scorning to join the flight of all around, remained with his sword in his hand, as if determined to the very last to defend the post assigned to him. The Highland gentleman commanded him to surrender, and received for reply a thrust, which he caught in his target. The officer was now defenceless, and the battle-axe of a gigantic Highlander (the miller of Invernahyle’s mill), was uplifted to dash his brains out, when Mr. Stuart with difficulty prevailed on him to surrender. He took charge of his enemy’s property, protected his person, and finally obtained him liberty on parole. The officer proved to be Colonel Allan Whiteford, of Ballochmyle, in Ayrshire, a

man of high character and influence, and warmly attached to the House of Hanover; yet such was the confidence existing between these two honourable men, though of different political principles, that, while the civil war was raging, and straggling officers from the Highland army were executed without mercy, Invernahyle hesitated not to pay his late captive a visit, as he went back to the Highlands to raise fresh recruits, when he spent a few days among Colonel Whiteford's whig friends as pleasantly and good humouredly as if all had been at peace around him.

"After the battle of Culloden, it was Colonel Whiteford's turn to strain every nerve to obtain Mr. Stuart's pardon. He went to the Lord Justice Clerk, to the Lord Advocate, and to all the officers of State, and each application was answered by the production of a list, in which the name of Invernahyle appeared 'marked with the sign of the beast!' At length Colonel Whiteford went to the Duke of Cumberland. From him also he received a positive refusal. He then limited his request, for the present, to a protection for Stuart's house, wife, children, and property. This was also refused by the Duke; on which Colonel Whiteford, taking his commission from his bosom, laid it on the table before his Royal Highness, and asked permission to retire from the service of a king who did not know how to spare a vanquished enemy. The Duke was struck, and even affected. He bade the Colonel take up his commission, and granted the protection he requested with so much earnestness. It was issued just in time to save the house, corn, and cattle at Invernahyle from the troops who were engaged in laying waste what it was the fashion to call 'the country of the enemy.' A small

encampment was formed on Invernahyle’s property, which they spared while plundering the country around, and searching in every direction for the leaders of the insurrection, and for Stuart in particular. He was much nearer them than they suspected; for, hidden in a cave, (like the Baron of Bradwardine,) he lay for many days within hearing of the sentinels as they called their watchword. His food was brought him by one of his daughters, a child of eight years old, whom Mrs. Stuart was under the necessity of trusting with this commission, for her own motions and those of all her inmates were closely watched. With ingenuity beyond her years, the child used to stray out among the soldiers, who were rather kind to her, and watch the moment when she was unobserved, to steal into the thicket, when she deposited whatever small store of provisions she had in charge, at some marked spot, where her father might find it. Invernahyle supported life for several weeks by means of these precarious supplies; and, as he had been wounded in the battle of Culloden, the hardships which he endured were aggravated by great bodily pain. After the soldiers had removed their quarters, he had another remarkable escape. As he now ventured to the house at night, and left it in the morning, he was espied during the dawn by a party who pursued and fired at him. The fugitive being fortunate enough to escape their search, they returned to the house, and charged the family with harbouring one of the proscribed traitors. An old woman had presence of mind enough to maintain that the man they had seen was the shepherd. “Why did he not stop when we called to him?” said the soldiers. “He is as deaf, poor man,

as a peat-stack," answered the ready-witted domestic. "Let him be sent for directly." The real shepherd accordingly was brought from the hill, and, as there was time to tutor him by the way, he was as deaf, when he made his appearance, as was necessary to maintain his character. Stuart of Invernahyle was afterwards pardoned under the act of indemnity.

"He was a noble specimen of the old Highlander, far-descended, gallant, courteous, and brave even to chivalry. He had been *out* in 1715 and 1745; was an active partaker in all the stirring scenes which passed in the Highlands between these memorable eras; and was remarkable, among other exploits, for having fought with and vanquished Rob Roy, in a trial of skill at the broadsword, a short time previous to the death of that celebrated hero, at the clachan of Balquhidder. He chanced to be in Edinburgh when Paul Jones came into the Firth of Forth, and, though then an old man, appeared in arms, and was heard to exult (to use his own words) in the prospect of 'drawing his claymore once more before he died.'"

This pleasing anecdote is given in a critique upon the first series of the "Tales of my Landlord," (supposed to be written by Sir Walter Scott,) in the thirty-second number of the *Quarterly Review*; and we heartily concur with the learned Baronet in thinking it the groundwork of "Waverley."

Yet it is somewhat remarkable that the name of a Major Talbot, as well as that of Lieutenant-Colonel Whiteford, occurs in the list of prisoners published by the Highland army, after their victory at Prestonpans.

The late Alexander Campbell, author of the “History of Poetry in Scotland,” and editor of “Albyn’s Anthology,” a gentleman whose knowledge of his native Highlands was at once extensive and accurate, used to assert that it was the *younger sister*, not the *daughter* of Mr. Stuart, that brought his food. He had heard an account of the affecting circumstance from her own mouth.

Stuart of Invernahyle marked his attachment to the cause of the exiled Prince by the composition of a beautiful song, which is to be found in Mr. Hogg’s “Jacobite Relics.”

BRADWARDINE.

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Of the genus of Bradwardine, Colonel Stewart gives the following account:—

“The armies of Sweden, Holland, and France gave employment to the younger sons of the Highland gentry, who were educated abroad in the seminaries of Leyden and Douay. Many of these returned with a competent knowledge of modern languages added to their classical education—often speaking Latin with more purity than Scotch, which, in many cases, they only learned after leaving their native homes. The race of Bradwardine is not long extinct. In my own time, several veterans might have sat for the picture of that most honourable, brave, learned, and kind-hearted personage. These gentlemen returned from the continent full of warlike Latin, French phrases, and inveterate broad Scotch. One of the last of these, Colonel Alexander Robertson, of the Scotch Brigade, uncle of the present” (now late) “Strowan, I well remember.

“Another of the Bradwardine character is still remembered by the Highlanders with a degree of admiration bordering on enthusiasm. This was John Stewart, of the family of Kincardine, in Strathspey, known to the country by the name of John Roy Stewart, an accomplished gentleman, an elegant scholar, a good poet, and a brave officer. He composed with equal facility in English, Latin and Gaelic; but it was chiefly by his songs, epigrams, and descriptive pieces, that he attracted the admiration of his countrymen. He was an active leader in the rebellion of 1745, and, during his ‘hiding’ of many months, he had more leisure to indulge his taste for poetry and song. The country traditions are full of his descriptive pieces, eulogies and laments on friends, or in allusion to the events of that unfortunate period. He had been long in the service of France and Portugal, and had risen to the rank of colonel. He was in Scotland in 1745, and commanded a regiment, composed of the tenants of his family and a considerable number of the followers of Sir George Stewart of Grandtully, who had been placed under him. With these, amounting in all to 400 men, he joined the rebel army, and proved one of its ablest partizans.”—*Sketches, vol.* ii. *notes*.

Diligent research, however, has enabled us to point out a much nearer original.

The person who held the situation in the rebel army which in the novel has been assigned to the Baron, namely, the command of their few cavalry, was Alexander, fourth Lord Forbes of Pitsligo. This nobleman, who possessed but a moderate fortune, was so much esteemed for his excellent qualities of temper and understanding, that when, after the

battle of Prestonpans, he declared his purpose of joining Prince Charles, most of the gentlemen in that part of the country put themselves under his command, thinking they could not follow a better or safer example than the conduct of Lord Pitsligo. He thus commanded a body of 150 well mounted gentlemen in the subsequent scenes of the rebellion, at the fatal close of which he escaped to France, and was attainted, in the following month, by the title of *Lord Pitsligo*, his estate and honours being of course forfeited to the crown. After this he claimed the estate before the Court of Session, on account of the misnomer, his title being properly *Lord Forbes of Pitsligo*; and that Court gave judgment in his favour, 16th November, 1749; but on an appeal it was reversed by the House of Lords, 1750.

Like Bradwardine, Lord Pitsligo had been *out* in 1715 also —though it does not appear that much notice was then taken of his defection. His opposition to the whiggery of modern times had been equally constant, and of long standing; for he was one of those staunch and honourable though mistaken patriots of the last Scottish Parliament, who had opposed the Union.

He could also boast of a smattering of the *belles lettres*; and probably plumed himself upon his literary attainments as much as the grim old pedant, his counterpart. In 1734, he published “Essays, Moral and Philosophical;” and something of the same sort appeared in 1761, when he seems to have been in the near prospect of a conclusion to his earthly trials. He died at Auchiries, in Aberdeenshire, December 21, 1762, at an advanced age, after having

possessed his title, counting from his accession in 1691, during a period of seventy-one years.

It is not unworthy of remark, that the supporters of Lord Pitsligo’s arms were two bears proper; which circumstance, connected with the great favour in which these animals were held by Bradwardine, brings the relation between the real and the fictitious personages very close.

SCOTTISH FOOLS.

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(*Davie Gellatley.*)

It appears that licensed fools were customary appendages of the Scottish Court at a very early period; and the time is not long gone by when such beings were retained at the table and in the halls of various respectable noblemen. The absence of more refined amusements made them become as necessary a part of a baronial establishment as horses and hounds still continue to be in the mansions of many modern squires. When as yet the pursuits of literature were not, and ere gaming had become vicious enough to be fashionable, the rude humours of the jester could entertain a pick-tooth hour; and, what walnuts now are to wine, and enlightened conversation to the amusements of the drawing-room, the boisterous bacchanalianism of our ancestors once found in coarse buffooneries and the alternate darkness and radiance of a foolish mind.

In later times, when all taste for such diversion had gone out, the madman of the country-side frequently found

shelter and patronage under the roofs of neighbouring gentlemen; but though the *good things* of *Daft Jamie* and *Daft Wattie* were regularly listened to by the laird, and preserved in the traditions of the household, the encouragement given to them was rather extended out of a benevolent compassion for their helpless condition than from any desire to make their talents a source of entertainment. Such was the motive of Bradwardine in protecting Davie Gellatley; and such was also that of the late Earl of Wemyss, in the support which he gave to the renowned Willie Howison, a personage of whom many anecdotes are yet told in Haddingtonshire, and whose services at Gosford House were not unlike those of Davie at Tully-Veolan.

Till within the last few years, these unfortunate persons were more frequently to be found in their respective villages throughout the country than now; and it is not long since even Edinburgh could boast of her "*Daft Laird*," her "*Bailie Duff*," and her "*Madam Bouzie*." Numerous charitable institutions now seclude most of them from the world. Yet, in many retired districts, where delicacy is not apt to be shocked by sights so common, the blind, the dumb, and the insane are still permitted to mix indiscriminately with their fellow-creatures. Poverty compels many parents to take the easiest method of supporting their unfortunate offspring—that of bringing them up with the rest of the family; the decent pride of the Scottish peasant also makes an application to charity, even in such a case as this, a matter of very rare occurrence; and while superstition points out that those whom God has sent into the world with less than

the full share of mental faculties are always made most peculiarly the objects of this care, thus rendering the possession of such a child rather a medium through which the blessings of heaven are diffused than a burden or a curse, the affectionate desire of administering to them all those tender offices which their unhappy situation so peculiarly requires, of tending them with their own eyes, and nursing them with their own hands, that large and overflowing, but not supererogatory share of tenderness with which the darkened and destitute objects are constantly regarded by parents—altogether make their domestication a matter of strong, and happily not unpleasing necessity.

The rustic idiots of Scotland are also in general blessed with a few peculiarities, which seldom fail to make them objects of popular esteem and affection. Many of them exhibit a degree of sagacity or cunning, bearing the same relation to the rest of their intellectual faculties which, in the ruins of a Grecian temple, the coarse and entire foundations bear to the few and scattered but beautiful fragments of the superstructure. This humble qualification, joined sometimes to the more agreeable one of a shrewd and sly humour, while it enables them to keep their own part, and occasionally to baffle sounder judgments, proves an engaging subject of amusement and wonder to the cottage fireside. A wild and wayward fancy, powers of song singularly great, together with a full share of the above qualifications, formed the chief characteristics of Daft Jock Gray of Gilmanscleugh, whom we are about to introduce to the reader as the counterpart of Davie Gellatley.

JOHN GRAY is a native of Gilmanscleugh, a farm in the parish of Ettrick, of which his father was formerly the shepherd, and from which, according to Border custom, he derives his popular designation or title "OF GILMANSCLEUGH." Jock is now above forty years of age, and still wanders through the neighbouring counties of Roxburgh, Selkirk, and Peebles, in a half minstrel, half mendicant manner, finding, even after the fervour of youth is past, no pleasure in a sedentary or domestic life.

Many months, many weeks, had not elapsed after Jock came into the world, before all the old women of the *Faculty* in the parish discovered that "he had a want." As he grew up, it was found that he had no capacity for the learning taught at the parish school, though, in receiving various other sorts of lore, he showed an aptitude far surpassing that of more highly gifted children. Thus, though he had not steadiness of mind to comprehend the alphabet, and Barrie's smallest primer was to him as a fountain closed and a book sealed, he caught, at a wonderfully early age, and with a rapidity almost incredible, many fragments of Border song, which he could repeat, with the music, in the precise manner of those who instructed him; and indeed he discovered an almost miraculous power of giving utterance to sounds, in all their extensive and intricate varieties.

All endeavours on the part of his parents to communicate to his mind the seeds of written knowledge having failed, Jock was abandoned to the oral lore he loved so much; and of this he soon possessed himself of an immense stock. His boyhood was passed in perfect idleness; yet if it could have been proved upon him that he had the smallest glimmering

of sense, his days would not have been so easy. In Jock's native district there are just two ways for a boy to spend his time; either he must go to school, or he must tend the cows; and it generally happens that he goes to school in summer and tends the cows in winter. But Jock's idiocy, like Caleb Balderstone's "fire," was an excuse for every duty. As to the first employment, his friend the Dominie bore him out with flying colours; for the second, the question was set for ever at rest by a *coup de main* achieved by the rascal's own happy fancy. "John," says the minister of Yarrow to him one day, "you are the idlest boy in the parish; you do nothing all day but go about from house to house; you might at least herd a few cows." "Me, sir!" says Jock, with the most stolid stare imaginable, "how could I herd the kye? Losh, sir, *I disna ken corn by garse*!"—This happy bit was enough to keep Jock comfortable all the rest of his life.

Yet though Jock did not like to be tied down to any regular task, and heartily detested both learning and herding, it could never be said of him that he was sunk in what the country people call *even-down idleset*. He sometimes condescended to be useful in running errands, and would not grudge the tear and wear of his legs upon a seven-mile journey, when he had the prospect of a halfpenny for his pains; for, like all madmen, he was not insensible, however stupid in every other thing, to the value of money, and knew a bawbee from a button with the sharpest boy in the clachan. It is recorded to his credit, that in all his errands he was ever found scrupulously honest. He was sometimes sent to no less a distance than Innerleithen, which must be at least seven miles from Gilmanscleugh, to

procure small grocery articles for his neighbours. Here an old woman, named Nelly Bathgate, kept the metropolitan grocery shop of the parish, forming a sort of cynosure to a district extending nearly from Selkirk to Peebles. This was in the days before *St. Ronan's Well* had drawn so many fashionables around that retired spot; and as yet Nelly flourished in her little shop, undisturbed by opposition, like the moon just before the creation of the stars. Rivals innumerable have now sprung up around honest Nelly; and her ancient and respectable, but unpretending sign-board, simply importing, "N. BATHGATE, GROCER," quails under the glowing and gilt-lettered rubrics of "—— ——, FROM EDINBURGH," etc., etc., etc., who specify that they import their own teas and wines, and deal both *en gros et en petit*.

For a good while Jock continued to do business with Nelly Bathgate, unannoyed, as the honest dame herself, by any other grocery shop; and indeed how there could be such a thing as another grocery shop in the whole world besides Nelly's, was quite incomprehensible to Jock. But at length the distracting object arose. A larger shop than Nelly's, with larger windows, and a larger sign-board, was opened; the proprietor had a son in Edinburgh with a great wholesale grocer in Nicolson Street; and was supplied with a great quantity of goods, at cheap prices, of a more flashy nature than any that had ever before been dreamt of, smelt, or eaten in the village. Here a strange grocery article, called pearl ashes, was sold; and being the first time that such a thing was ever heard of, Innerleithen was just in a ferment about it. Jock was strongly tempted to give his custom, or rather the custom of his employers, to this shop; for really

Nelly’s customary *snap* was growing stale upon his appetite, and he longed to taste the comfits of the new establishment. This Nelly saw and appreciated; and, to prevent the defection she feared, Jock’s allowance was forthwith doubled, and, moreover, occasionally varied by a guerdon of a sweeter sort. But still Jock hankered after the sweets of that strange forbidden shop; and, as he passed towards Nelly’s, after a long hungry journey, could almost have wished himself transformed into one of those yellow bees which buzzed about in noisy enjoyment within the window and show-glasses of the new grocer,—creatures which, to his mind, appeared to pass the most delightful and enviable life. It is certainly much to Jock’s credit, that, even under all these temptations, and though he had frequently a whole sixpence to dispose of in eight or ten different small articles, and, no less, though he had no security engaged for intromissions, so that the whole business was nothing but a question of character,—yea, in not so much as a farthing was he ever found wanting.

Nelly continued to be a good friend to Jock, and Jock adhered as stoutly to Nelly; but it was frequently observed by those who were curious in his mad humours, that his happy conquest over the love of comfits was not accomplished and preserved without many struggles between his instinctive honesty and the old Adam of his inner man. For instance, after having made all his purchases at Mrs. Bathgate’s, when he found only a single solitary farthing remain in his hand, which was to be his faithful companion all the way back to Gilmanscleugh, how forcibly it must have struck his foolish mind, that, by means of the

new grocer, he had it in his power to improve his society a thousand-fold, by the simple and easy, though almost-as-good-as-alchymical process of converting its base brazen form into a mass of gilt gingerbread. Such a temptation might have staggered St. Anthony himself, and was certainly far too much for poor Jock's humble powers of self-denial. In this dreadful emergency, his only means of safety lay in flight; and so it was observed by his rustic friends, on such occasions, that, as soon as he was fairly clear of Nelly's door, he commenced a sort of headlong trot, as if for the purpose of confounding all dishonourable thoughts in his mind, and ran with all his might out of the village, without looking once aside; for if he had trusted his eye with but one glance at that neat whitewashed window of four panes, where two biscuits, four gingerbread cakes, a small blue bottle of white caraways, and a variety of other nondescript articles of village confectionery displayed their modest yet irresistible allurements, he had been gone!

There is one species of employment in which Jock always displays the utmost willingness to be engaged. It must be understood, that, like many sounder men, he is a great admirer of the fair sex. He exhibits an almost chivalrous devotion to their cause, and takes great pleasure in serving them. Any little commission with which they may please to honour him, he executes with alacrity, and his own expression is that he would "jump Tweed, or dive the Wheel (a deep eddy in Tweed), for their sakes." He requires no reward for his services, but, like a true knight, begs only to kiss the hand of his fair employer, and is satisfied. It may be

observed, that he is at all times fond of saluting the hands of ladies that will permit him.

The author of “Waverley” has described Davie Gellatley as dressed in a grey jerkin, with scarlet cuffs, and slashed sleeves, showing a scarlet lining, a livery with which the Baron of Bradwardine indued him, in consideration of his services and character. Daft Jock Grey has at no period of his life exhibited so much personal magnificence. His usual dress is a rather shabby suit of hodden grey, with *ridge and furrow*[1] stockings; and the utmost extent of his finery is a pair of broad red garters, bound neatly below the knee-strings of his nether garments, of which, however, he is probably more vain than ever belted knight was of the royal garter. But waiving the matter of dress, their discrepance in which is purely accidental, the resemblance is complete in every other respect. The face, mien, and gestures are exactly the same. Jock walks with all that swing of the body and arms, that abstracted air and sauntering pace, which figure in the description of Davie (“Waverley,” vol i. chap. ix.), and which, it may indeed be said, are peculiar to the whole genus and body of Scottish madmen. Jock’s face is equally handsome in its outline with that given to the fool of Tully-Veolan, and is no less distinguished by “that wild, unsettled, and irregular expression, which indicated neither idiocy nor insanity, but something resembling a compound of both, where the simplicity of the fool was mixed with the extravagance of a crazed imagination.” Add to this happy picture the prosaic and somewhat unromantic circumstance of a pair of buck-teeth, and the reader has our friend Jock to a single feature.

The Highland madman is described by his pedantic patron, to be “a poor simpleton, neither *fatuus nec naturaliter idiota*, as is expressed in the brieves of furiosity, but simply a cracked-brained knave, who could execute any commission that jumped with his own humour, and made his folly a plea for avoiding every other.” This entirely agrees with the character of Jock, who is thought by many to possess much good common sense, and whose talents of music and mimicry point him out as at least ingenious. Yet to us it appears, that all Jock’s qualifications, ingenious as they may be, are nothing but indications of a weak mind. His great musical and mimetic powers, his talent and willingness of errand-going, his cunning and his excessive devotion to the humours and fancies of the fair sex, are mere caricatures of the same dispositions and talents in other men, and point out all such qualifications, when found in the best and wisest characters, as marks of fatuity and weakness. Where, for instance, was the perfection of musical genius ever found accompanied with a good understanding? Are not porters and chairman the smallest-minded among mankind? Is not cunning the lowest of the human faculties, and always found most active in the illiberal mind? And what lady’s man, what *cavaliere serviente*, what squire of dames, what man of drawing-rooms and boudoirs, ever yet exhibited the least trace of greatness or nobility of intellect? Jock, who has all these qualifications in himself, may be considered as outweighing at least four other men who severally possess them.

Like Davie Gellatley, Jock “is in good earnest the half-crazed simpleton which he appears to be, and incapable of

any steady exertion. He has just so much wild wit as saves him from the imputation of insanity, warm affections, a prodigious memory, and an ear for music." This latter quality is a point of resemblance which puts all question of their identity past the possibility of doubt. Davie it must be well remembered by the readers of "Waverley," is there represented as constantly singing wild scraps of ancient songs and ballads, which, by a beautiful fiction of the author, he is said to have received in legacy from a poetical brother who died in a decline some years before. His conversation was in general carried on by means of these, to the great annoyance of young Waverley, and such as, like him, did not comprehend the strange metaphorical meaning of his replies and allusions. Now, Jock's principal talent and means of subsistence are vested in his singular and minstrel-like powers of song, there being few of our national melodies of which he cannot chaunt forth a verse, as the occasion may suggest to his memory. He never fails to be a welcome guest with all the farmers he may chance to visit, [2] on account of his faculties of entertaining them with the tender or warlike ditties of the Border, or the more smart and vulgar songs of the modern world. It is to be remarked, that his style of singing, like the styles of all other great geniuses in the fine arts, is entirely his own. Sometimes his voice soars to the ecstasy of the highest, and sometimes descends to the melancholious grunt of the lowest pitch; while ever and anon he throws certain wild and beautiful variations into both the words and the music, *ad libitum*, which altogether stamp his performances with a character of the most perfect originality. He generally sings very much

through his nose, especially in humorous songs; and, from his making a curious hiss, or twang, on setting off into a melody, one might almost think that he employs his notorious buck-teeth in the capacity of what musicians term a *pitchfork*.

Jock, by means of his singing powers, was one of the first who circulated the rising fame of his countryman, the Ettrick Shepherd, many of whose early songs he committed to memory, and sung publicly over all the country round. One beginning, “Oh Shepherd, the weather is misty and changing,” and the well known lyric of “Love is like a dizziness,” besides being the first poetical efforts of their ingenious and wonderful author, were the earliest of Jock Gray’s favourite songs, and perhaps became the chief means of setting him up in the trade of a wandering minstrel. We have seen him standing upon a *dees stane* in the street of Peebles, entertaining upwards of a hundred people with the latter ludicrous ditty; and many a well-told penny has he made it squeeze from the iron purses of the inhabitants of that worthy town, “albeit unused to the *opening* mood.”

In singing the “Ewe-buchts, Marion,” it is remarkable that he adds a chorus which is not found in any printed edition of the song:

“Come round about the Merry-knowes, my Marion,
Come round about the Merry-knowes wi’ me;
Come round about the Merry-knowes, my Marion,
For Whitsled is lying lea.”

Whitsled is a farm in the parish of Ashkirk, county of Selkirk, lying upon the water of Ale; and Merry-knowes is the name of a particular spot in the farm. This circumstance is certainly important enough to deserve the attention of those who make Scottish song a study and object of collection; as the verse, if authentic, would go far to prove the locality of the “Ewe-buchts.”

In addition to his talent as a musician, Jock can also boast of a supplementary one, by means of which, whenever memory fails in his songs, he can supply, *currente voce*, all incidental deficiencies. He is not only a wit and a musician, but also a *poet*! He has composed several songs, which by no means want admirers in the country, though the most of them scarcely deserve the praise of even mediocrity. Indeed his poetical talents are of no higher order than what the author of an excellent article in the “Edinburgh Annual Register” happily terms “wonderfully well considering”; and seem to be admired by his rustic friends only on the benevolent principle of “where little has been given, let little be required.”

He has, however, another most remarkable gift, which the author of “Waverley” has entirely rejected in conceiving the revised and enlarged edition of his character,—a wonderful turn for *mimicry*. His powers in this art are far, far indeed, from contemptible, though it unfortunately happens that, like almost all rustic Scottish humorists, he makes ministers and sacred things his chief and favourite objects. He attends the preachings of all the ministers that fall within the scope of his peregrinations, and sometimes brings away whole *tenthlies* of their several sermons, which he lays off to

any person that desires him, with a faithfulness of imitation, in tone and gesture, which never fails to convulse his audience with laughter. He has made himself master of all the twangs, *soughs*, wheezes, coughs, *snirtles*, and bleatings, peculiar to the various parish ministers twenty miles round; and being himself of no particular sect, he feels not the least delicacy or compunction for any single class of divines—all are indiscriminately familiar to the powers of the universal Jock!

It is remarkable, that though the Scottish peasantry are almost without exception pious, they never express, so far as we have been able to discover, the least demur respecting the profanity and irreverence of this exhibition. The character of the nation may appear anomalous on this account. But we believe the mystery may be solved by supposing them so sincerely and unaffectedly devout, in all that concerns the sentiment of piety, that they do not suspect themselves of any remissness, when they make the outward circumstances, and even the ordinances of religion, the subject of wit. It is on this account, that in no country, even the most lax in religious feeling, have the matters of the church been discussed so freely as in Scotland; and nowhere are there so many jokes and good things about ministers and priests. In this case the very ministers themselves have been known to listen to Daft Jock’s mimicries of their neighbours with unqualmed delight,—never thinking, good souls, that the impartial rascal has just as little mercy on themselves at the next manse he visits. It is also to be remarked, that, in thus quizzing the worthy ministers, he does not forget to practise what the country-

people consider a piece of exquisite satire on the habits of such as *read* their sermons. Whenever he imitates any of these degenerate divines, who, by their unpopularity, form quite a sect by themselves in the country, and are not nearly so much respected as extempore preachers,[3] he must have either a book or a piece of paper open before him, from which he gravely affects to read the subject of discourse; and his audience are always trebly delighted with this species of exhibition. He was once amusing Mrs. C——, the minister's wife of Selkirk, with some imitations of the neighbouring clergymen, when she at last requested him to give her a few words in the manner of Dr. C——, who being a notorious *reader*, "Ou, Mem," says Jock, "ye maun bring me the Doctor's Bible, then, and I'll gie ye him *in style*." She brought the Bible, little suspecting the purpose for which the wag intended it, when, with the greatest effrontery, he proceeded to burlesque this unhappy peculiarity of the worthy doctor in the presence of his own wife.

Jock was always a privileged character in attending all sorts of kirks, though many ministers, who dreaded a future sufferance under his relentless caricaturing powers, would have been glad to exclude him. He never seems to pay any attention to the sermon, or even deigns to sit down, like other decent Christians, but wanders constantly about from gallery to gallery, upstairs and downstairs. His erratic habit is not altogether without its use. When he observes any person sleeping during the sermon, he reaches over to the place, and taps him gently on the head with his *kent* till he awake; should he in any of his future rounds (for he parades as regularly about as a policeman in a large city) observe

the drowsy person repeating the offence, he gives him a tremendous thwack over the pate; and he increases the punishment so much at every subsequent offence, that, like the military punishment for desertion, the third infliction almost amounts to death itself. A most laughable incident once occurred in —— church, on a drowsy summer afternoon, when the windows were let down, admitting and emitting a thousand flies, whose monotonous buzz, joined to the somniferous snuffle of Dr. ——, would have been fit music for the bedchamber of Morpheus, even though that honest god was lying ill of the toothache, the gout, or any other equally *woukrife* disorder. A bailie, who had dined, as is usual in most country towns, between sermons, could not resist the propensity of his nature, and, fairly overpowered, at last was under the necessity of affronting the preacher to his very face, by laying down his head upon the book-board; when his capacious, bald round crown might have been mistaken, at first sight, for the face of the clock placed in the front of the gallery immediately below. Jock was soon at him with his stick, and, with great difficulty, succeeded in rousing him. But the indulgence was too great to be long resisted, and down again went the bailie’s head. This was not to be borne. Jock considered his authority sacred, and feared not either the frowns of elders, nor the more threatening scowls of kirk-officers, when his duty was to be done. So his arm went forth, and the *kent* descended a second time with little reverence upon the offending sconce; upon which the magistrate started up with an astonished stare, in which the sentiment of surprise was as completely concentrated as in the face of the inimitable Mackay, when

he cries out, “Hang a magistrate! My conscience!” The contrast between the bailie’s stupid and drowsy face, smarting and writhing from the blow, which Jock had laid on pretty soundly, and the aspect of the *natural* himself, who still stood at the head of the pew, shaking his stick, and looking at the magistrate with an air in which authority, admonition, and a threat of further punishment, were strangely mingled, altogether formed a scene of striking and irresistible burlesque; and while the Doctor’s customary snuffle was increased to a perfect whimper of distress, the whole congregation showed in their faces evident symptoms of everything but the demureness proper to a place of worship.

Sometimes, when in a sitting mood, Jock takes a modest seat on the pulpit stairs, where there likewise usually roost a number of deaf old women, who cannot hear in any other part of the church. These old ladies, whom the reader will remember as the unfortunate persons that Dominie Sampson sprawled over, in his premature descent from the pulpit, when he *stickit* his first preaching, our waggish friend would endeavour to torment by every means which his knavish humour could invent. He would tread upon their corns, lean amorously upon their laps, purloin their *specks* (spectacles), set them on a false scent after the psalm, and, sometimes getting behind them, plant his longest and most serious face over their black cathedral-looking bonnets, like an owl looking over an ivied wall, while few of the audience could contain their gravity at the extreme humour of the scene. The fun was sometimes, as we ourselves have witnessed, not a little enhanced by the old lady upon whom