

In the early thirties, however, there were not the facilities for marriage that we have nowadays. "There were nae meenisters tae marry folk, nae kirks tae cry them in, an' nae leeshensse. A nottis had tae be pit up on the maist public tree o' the deestrick, an' the magistrates did the marryin.'

I mind fine seein' ane o' thae nottis," said Mr. Munro, "and it was tae this effec': 'Mary McTavish and Oliver Lasby will be mairried on sic a day at sic a place; onyane that has ony objections maun apply tae Squire Reynolds or Squire Smith.' It wis tackit on a tree by the side o' the r'od. This is the first weddin' that I mind hearn' o' in the neeborhood. I think the pairties leaved in Pilkington. The first weddin' I was at, I think it wis the first o' Lower Nichol fook, wis the mairrage o' a man o' saxty wi' a lass o' twenty. Mair than a dizzen young foux, ilka lad wi a lassie on his airm an' a flask o' whuskey in his pooch, walkit tae Guelph wi' the bride and groom, and there they were yokit by the Praisbyterian meenister, the Raiverend Mr. Smith. After giein' the meenister a gude trate o' the contents a' cor pocket peestols, we stairte! back tae Nichol again in verra gude sperits. I mind, though, that the bridesmaid an' the best man had a quarrel, an' we left the groom on the ro'd. Hoo wis that? ye say. Man, he got that drunk he couldna' walk! Sae we just gaed on without him. When we got tae the hoose we stairted the dancin' an' we danced maist a' nicht. After a while the bridegroom made his appearance, having got o'er his spree enough tae wend his way hame. When we were tired oot we went into a barn, where each took an airmfu' o' clean straw and lay doon and slep' aff the effec' o' the day and nicht."

Those were rollicking days, whiskey was cheap though money was scarce; total abstinence was a principle as yet hardly dreamed of; and nearly everybody drank more or less. Away from the restraints of home, many a promising young man went hopelessly to the ba'. Concerning the sad end of these let us practice the charity of silence, especially where pain would be caused to the living.

There were many, however, to whom "a glass too much" was merely an occasional incident, and who, in the main, lived industrious, useful, moral lives. The writer's grandfather, it is said, when he went to the village would sometimes get hilarious, and kneeling bareheaded in the bottom of his wagon or sleigh to which a team of which he was proud was attached, would overtake and pass vehicle after vehicle on the way home. James Creighton, mentioned above, emulated Burns in more ways than one. One Sunday morning he arrived early at the house of John Munro. He had been under the influence of the Muse and something even more intoxicating, and his experiences are suggested by the following lines which he sang there and then, "though maybe no just the thing for an elder's hoose on a Sawbath mornin'."