

MY FEATHERED JESTER.

BY A. C. TYNDALL.

If anyone who has recognised the leading characteristics of that problem of humanity known in the abstract as the Boy—whose manners and habits suggest not more an absorbing interest in life and all that belongs thereto, than an emulative admiration for the ways and works, in his lighter moods, of the great enemy of mankind—if such a one I say can imagine a like joyous spirit embodied in a feathered person some eighteen inches from beak to tip of tail, he or she will have a fair idea of the individual whose manners and habits have impressed the writer as entitling him to more than a passing notice.

The subject of this biography is, to all appearances, one of those rarely met with and most enviable of mortals who find their lot in life entirely to their liking. He displays an amount of energy and an enthusiasm in his daily doings, whether his occupation be seeking a suitable place of burial for a toad he has slain or that of arranging his toilet in an elm top, which I feel sure entitle him to a high place in the esteem of that gifted bard who sings untiringly the praise of "things as they are." This is not because he views life with the eyes of the unsophisticated denizen of the wilds. His earliest recollections of life on this planet being associated with his surroundings as a privileged member of the family circle, it may be regarded as a pardonable mistake on the part of this, in some respects, amiable bird, to suppose, as he evidently does, that it is the ties of blood which unite him to the friends of his youth of a widely different description zoologically. Nothing at all cares he for the opinion of his black-coated brothers, though they jeer and scoff at him for a corvine molly-coddle, since he prefers civilization and its luxuries to the joys of the life Bohemian and the companionship of the birds of ill omen.

It is, I believe, not often that anyone meeting a member of the crow family daily fails to be impressed by the force of character and amount of will power—not infrequently wrongly exercised—common to the crow kind, independently of difference in species or sub-species. And although my feathered friend is responsible