

tirl them to the sark; and, waes me! wha kens but the bluidy villain may tak their lives! The puir weemen are maist frightened out o' their wits, and the bairns skirling after them. I canna thol't it! I canna thol't it! I hae been lang a faithfu' servant to ye, Laird; but gin ye dinna turn the ween aboot, and blaw the scoundrel out o' our gate, I'll na staur a fit, but will just sit here till the tide comes. Sae, tak yere wull o't."

While the minister was praying the white caps began to dot the Frith. A heavy gale swept over the waters, and Jones was compelled to abandon his enterprise, and put to sea. The summons for the magistrates of Leith was never delivered; and the good people of Kirkcaldy always regarded that timely gale as an answer to the earnest prayer of Mr. Shirra. In after years, when complimented for the power of that appeal, the old minister would humbly say, "I prayed—the Laird sent the weend!"

Now, that Mr. Shirra, like some other good men of his class and day, occasionally spoke of God, and to God, in a manner not quite consistent with reverence and godly fear, we suspect, must be admitted. But it is taxing our credulity a little too largely, to tell us that he ever came within sight of such absurdity and blasphemy, as the above. Indeed, we suppose the people of Kirkcaldy would require an interpreter, for some of the Scotch words put into his mouth. Mr. Johnston's account, which we believe may be fully relied on, is as follows:—

"There are few who have not heard the story which is told of Mr. Shirra, respecting the threatened destruction of the shipping in the port of Leith by the American pirate, Paul Jones, in the year 1799. The story has been variously related. It has been said, that when the inhabitants of Kirkcaldy were in a state of great excitement and consternation at the sight of the free-booter's squadron, Mr. Shirra took an old arm-chair and sat down in it on the sands, declaring that if God did not listen to his prayer, and send a strong westerly wind to drive the pirate's vessels out of the Firth, he would sit there and be drowned. This version of the story is clumsy and offensive, and, we are glad to say, absolutely false. It was made, and circulated, and believed, by those who did not know Mr. Shirra.

"By others it has been related, that on the morning when Paul Jones was attempting to sail to Leith from the little island of Inchkeith, on the east of which his vessels had been riding at anchor during the preceding night, Mr. Shirra went to the shore of Kirkcaldy, and kneeling on the sands, in the midst of a great and terror-stricken multitude, poured out an earnest prayer for deliverance. It is added, that while he was thus engaged, the wind, which was blowing from the west, increased to a violent gale; in consequence of which, Paul Jones and those under his authority were obliged to sail eastward, and, ere long, were driven out to sea.

"This edition of the story, though more in accordance with Mr. Shirra's known character and habits, is no better authenticated than that which we have given above. The anecdote, as we have it from unquestionable authority, is deprived of much of the air of romance which the imagination of story-tellers has cast around it. It is as follows:—On the morning after the ships had anchored under cover of Inchkeith, Mr. Shirra went into the house of one of the members of his congregation, who lived upon the shore, and inquired, 'What vessels those were that were beating up the Firth?' The person addressed said, that he had heard from some of his neighbours, that they were American privateers. On hearing this, Mr. Shirra looked up to heaven and said, 'Lord, if they are enemies, put thou a hook in their nose and a bridle in their jaws, and take them back to where they came from.' In going along the shore, a little afterwards, Mr. Shirra said to a friend, 'The Lord wi' his wind could easily blaw them out o' the Firth.' The result is well known. The wind