

pose Betsy's quick fingers had the letter out and her curious eyes were scanning its contents.

"It's the minister's that I forgot to post," blurted Jamie, when he had recovered from his consternation. "Give me it back; it's no right to read it."

"I am thinking it is right enough, Jamie," replied the girl, in very serious tones; "and that it is Providence who has sent it to us. The minister will take no harm from our knowing this, for no other one will ever hear tell of it; and it is our help he needs."

Jamie was subdued by her solemn tones, and sat down beside her on a chair, and read the letter for himself.

"Who would have thought it; and he looked so happy when I told him of our marriage, Betsy."

"He is a kind man is the minister, and it's M'Gaw who is at the bottom of this. I heard him telling father not half an hour ago that he was going to rouse the congregation and make a great speech at the meeting on Friday, and turn the minister out."

"What can we do, Betsy?"

"We will have to do something, Jamie. He is a vicious man is M'Gaw, and the worst is half the folks are feared of him."

The minister little thought that night as he tossed restlessly on his bed that two heads were being put together on his behalf, and two brains—and these not by any means the weakest in the congregation—were devising methods for the humiliation of his enemy.

"It beats everything, Jamie. I am real proud of you, lad. It will make M'Gaw the laughing stock of the whole parish; he will not say as much as a 'whist' against the minister again."

"It was you who thought of it, Betsy," said her lover gallantly, as they bade each other good-night, and sealed their conspiracy with a kiss.

M'Gaw dearly loved delivering an oration. Not that he was a fluent speaker; an impromptu speech was an impossibility to him. But on a special occasion, when he had ample time for preparation, he rolled the words off his tongue with many an interpolated smack of self-satisfaction.

He had first to commit most laboriously his thoughts to paper. This entailed much thumbing of the dictionary; his weakness for big words would never allow him to use a short one if another of more syllables was within the range of possibility. Then followed the much more arduous task of transferring the writing to his memory, and numerous rehearsals of the delivery in the stable with the old mare as his only audience. Truly it was no light task, but the glory was ample reward.

The speech had reached the stable stage two days before the soiree, showing in itself that it was an occasion of uncommon importance. As he addressed with vehemence the mare, which went on calmly munching her hay, he little imagined that he had another unseen listener. Jamie Scott, who knew of the grocer's ways, had been on the alert, and smuggled himself into the loft. There, pencil in hand, he acted the part of "the chiel takin' notes."

Next morning he was off to Glasgow. It meant making a hole in Betsy's stocking, for she had saved up her own "tocher"; but both she and Jamie, with the true sympathy of lovers, had agreed that the best wedding gift they could give to each other would be the getting for the minister the bride he wanted.

Jamie was a perfect mimic, and he could imitate Donald M'Gaw's accent to perfection. The instrument maker whose shop he visited laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks as Jamie delivered the session-clerk's oration, along with the author's stable comments, into the big phonograph. Of course he had to be told part of the story, and his imagination filled in the rest.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he said to his customer, "I will not charge you a half-penny for making this plate. My only bargain is that I shall have the sole use of it after your soiree performance is over."

The eventful night at last arrived. Fortune seemed to favour Donald M'Gaw. The minister was still confined to bed, and therefore the field was entirely free for his operations. The burly figure of the grocer seemed to have swelled in magnitude; an air of great importance marked every action. He almost grew impatient at the preliminaries of tea and social, as he longed for the moment of his vision, when he would stand up and deliver himself of the mighty oration that burdened his mind.

But local tradition decreed that there must be preliminaries, not only a substantial tea, but local talent must have an opportunity of airing itself. Donald had no ear for music, and to sit this performance out would be too great a strain on his strung nerve; besides, it had been customary on such a night for the session to discuss congregational matters in private, while the youth indulged in half an hour's amusement.

Hence the coast was also clear when Jamie Scott stepped to the front to give a selection on the big gramophone, whose huge trumpet had been an object of interest and awe to the youngsters during the tea.

"My first piece has a local interest," began Jamie in the most innocent of tones. "It is entitled, 'The Preparation of a Soiree Speech,' and is a reproduction of our reverend friend, Mr. Donald M'Gaw's forth-coming prodigious effort of to-night, as delivered in his best style to his old mare," whirr-r-r.

"Ladies and gentlemen, on this auspicious occasion I feel it my profound duty to speak on a most momentous and calamitous subject.—(Aye, that sounds no half bad; it wul mak' them think a muckle heap more o' Donald M'Gaw, the silly bodies.)—Oor meenister—na, na, I main say our minister—has forfeited—(it's a gey deefcut word that, but I'll hae to get my tongue round it somehow)—the respect and confidence of the whole congregation—(Thar, that's guid.)—He has grossly insulted and assaulted its session-clerk.—(That wul mak' them think he used his neevies; they'll no ken the rafe truth about it.)—He has persistently continued to read his sermons, and no speak them out like a man.—(I would like gey weel to say 'like mae!') but perhaps that would be ower muckle caetered like.)—There are houses he has not visited for weeks.—(that's sure to tak')—and he has descended to personalities in the pulpit.—(My, that's grund! There's naithin' like the dictionary for thae words.)—To sum up, I beg to move that we petition the Presbytery to remove him out of his place.—(That, perhaps, doensna sound so weel, but it's Scripture like.)"

The audience by this time had got so hilarious that Jamie had to stop the machine. For three minutes no one was capable of speech, but only inarticulate exclamations filled the hall, while tears of mirth flowed in copious streams. It was on this scene that the angust session, headed by Donald M'Gaw, entered with long and serious faces. The session-clerk scowled with anger on the frivolity, and that checked it for a moment. With a very grave mien he took his seat, and commanded silence. Then he rose, while a mysterious hush held the audience spell-bound.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began in sonorous tones, "on this auspicious occasion I feel it my profound duty to speak on a most momentous and calamitous subject—"

He got no further. The bounds of restraint were burst, and peal after peal of laughter rang through the hall. The speaker stood dumb with astonishment, his big eyes rolled round with wonder, and then flashed with anger. There were people actually laughing at him who had big debts against them on his ledger, the audacity of it!

"Gang on, gang on!" shouted a voice from the back.

But memory now failed the astonished man; the threads of his speech had slipped from him, and no wonder. His stare became more vacant, and wrath yielded to fright as he realized with horror that he could not remember what came next.

"Oor meenister," prompted another. "Forfeited," shouted a third; "it is a grand word."

Donald M'Gaw, in despair, mopped his perspiring forehead with his handkerchief, but still the words would not come, and the people only laughed the louder. In despair, seeing the vestry door open, he turned and fled, never again to enter that church.

When the laughter had at last subsided, Betsy's father proposed that a committee be appointed to make arrangements for getting up a suitable presentation to the minister and his bride. This was carried with hearty enthusiasm. And that night, when one of the elders took the news to the manse, it only added to the minister's wonder, for he had just received a most tender epistle from Gertrude, in which she made no mention of his letter; not till later did he learn of the loyalty of the lovers.—Scottish Review.

A FAREWELL

My fairest child, I have no song to give
you;
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and
gray;
Yet ere we part, one lesson I can leave
you
For every day.

Be good, sweet maid and let who will be
clever;
Do noble things, nor dream them, all
day long;
And so make life, death, and that vast
forever
One grand, sweet song.
—Charles Kingsley.

WHEN THEY QUARRELED.

Alice and Bertha played in the same garden, because they were little sisters.

They were always playing in the garden and everybody who passed by would say, "Hello, Alice!" and "Hello, Bertha!" and the little sisters would run to the fence and say: "Good morning! Good morning!"

But one day a very sad thing happened. Alice and Bertha had a quarrel.

Alice wanted to play that her house was under the pink rose bush by the fountain. But Bertha wanted to play that her house was under the pink rose bush by the fountain. So Alice said that she wouldn't play at all, and Bertha said neither would she. They each walked around the garden alone. It was sad.

They thought the sun did not seem bright, and they did not like the little fountain, and they were very miserable and did not know what to do.

So Alice walked back to see what Bertha was doing. And what do you suppose that was?

Why, Bertha was walking back to see what Alice was doing.

Just then a little bird flew down and took a bath in the fountain. He splashed and splashed and splashed. Alice clapped her hands and laughed. And Bertha did too.

Alice and Bertha looked at each other and kept right on laughing and laughing.

"You may have your house by the pink rose bush, Bertha," said Alice.

"Oh, no! You have yours there," said Bertha.

"I tell you what," Alice said. "We will have our house there together."

The dreadful quarrel was over at last, and the two little sisters were happy again.—St. Nicholas.