

MAJOR.—Tell it not in Toronto the muddy, and Hamilton the ambitious, that the gustful art is at such a low ebb in their borders!

LAIRD.—Dinna rin awa' wi' the harrows, Crabtree, my man! My observation has respect no' sae muckle to the dwellers in fenced cities, as to bits o' farmer bodies, like your humble, obedient servant to command.

DOCTOR.—How polite we are waxing in our declining years!

LAIRD.—If politeness is the only disease that will kill you, your lease o' life must be as languid as that o' the wandering Jews!

MAJOR.—Leaving the locomotive Hebrew, however, let us stick to the main question. Wherein, may I ask, do our agriculturalists fall short in *table gumption*, if I may use such an expression?

LAIRD.—As example is better than precept, I shall give you a case in point.

DOCTOR.—Follow my lead, Sir Purser, if you be wise, and get your smoking tackle in order. Bonnie Braes has planted his tin canister of snuff before him, which is a sure and certain sign that he meditateth a homily long as a chain of sausages!

LAIRD.—It would be a gracious and merciful dispensation if a link o' the aforesaid chain, choked a certain quack salver that shall be nameless!

MAJOR.—Consider the quack salver suffocated accordingly, and proceed in peace.

LAIRD.—Last week I was invited to dinner by my guid auld friend Tummas McQueen, on the anniversary o' his fiftieth wedding-day. The number o' guests didna' fa' far short o' twa score. I'm wrang—there were mair than that. Let me see. First, there was douce Adam Simpson and his gude wife; that's twa to begin wi'. Secondly—

DOCTOR.—Mr. Chairman, I rise to order—

LAIRD.—Sit doon, ye incarnate sorrow! There can be nae order when ye are present!

MAJOR.—For mercy's sake, Sangrado, confine yourself to the process of fumigation, and, Bonnie Braes, be so good as dispense with the muster roll of the revellers at neighbour McQueen's Saturnalian re-union.

LAIRD.—As Tummas and his honest helpmate never were divorced, I canna' see how there could be any re-union in the case.

MAJOR.—In the words of Dryden—

"Go on, sweet rustic, with thy artless tale.

DOCTOR.—

And, Purser, let me have the mug of ale.

LAIRD.—

In which you'll dip your lugs, I will go bail!

PURSER.—

Up with the anchor, Laird, and make full sail!"

LAIRD.—To continue my story—although there's little story about it—the grace was said, the covers were removed, and, lo, and behold, there were revealed at the head o' the table four o' the noblest saumon trout that ever blessed the eye o' sharp-set man. There lay the charmers in their virgin beauty, sending up an appetizing reek, mair odorous than a' the spices o' Arabia. The very recollection maks me hungry as a hawk!

DOCTOR(*aside*).—Oh Jupiter! Hungry already!

Within the last half hour, a leg of lamb

The knave discussed, and divers pounds of ham!

LAIRD.—Nane o' ye require to be informed that salmon trout, or indeed fish o' any kind for that matter, must be eaten piping hot, if ye would enjoy them in perfection. I grant that when discussed cauld, wi' the addition o' pepper vinegar—or sauce, as the ignorant Yankees say—they are nae sae bad at a pinch, but in a lukewarm condition they are enough to scunner a Russian.

MAJOR.—Admitting the truth of your culinary strictures, I fail to discover their bearing upon the text.

LAIRD.—Bide a blink. Tummas lost nae time in helping his company to instalments o' the piscatorial treasures; but did each recipient fa' to work like a rational and accountable being, the instant that his share was set before him? Wi' shame and humiliation o' face, I hae to state that the very reverse was the case! The puir idiots sat like stocks and stanes without touching fork or bread, wi' the rivers suffering deterioration every passing moment o' time! It wasna' till the last guest was served (wha happened to be a certain agriculturalist, named Bonnie Braes) that the silly-looking Synod took heart o' grace to tackle the mercies, and even then ilka ane looked to see if his comrade was ready to begin. I was in a frying rage, to see sae muckle guid meat wasted after sic a nonsensical, I may say wicked, fashion, for it is wickedness to abuse the gifts o' Providence! It was a' that I could do, to restrain myself frae gra-ping some o' the louts by the neck, and dabbling their noses into the sair misguided sunkets!

DOCTOR.—Did none of the delinquents belong to your ecclesiastical jurisdiction? A day's fasting, climaxed by a stance upon the cutty-