

THE WIT OF FOOTE, THE DRAMATIST.

No man was ever so free from toadyism; rank was no shield against his wit, which would strike as hard at a duke as a menial. "Well, Foote, here I am, ready as usual to swallow all your good things," said the Duke of Cumberland, one night, in the green-room of the Haymarket. "Really, your Highness must have an excellent digestion," replied the wit, "for you never bring any up again." A Scotch peer, notoriously thrifty, served his wine in very small glasses, and descended eloquently upon its age and excellence. "It is very little of its age," observed Foote. Sometimes this humor amounted to insolence; as, for instance, after dining at a nobleman's house, not to his satisfaction, and finding the servants ranged in the hall when he was departing, he inquired for the cook and butler, and upon their stepping forward said to the first, "Here's half-a-crown for my eating;" and to the other, "Here's five shillings for my wine; but, by —, I never had so bad a dinner for the money in my life." Dining with Lord Townsend after a duel, he suggested that his lordship might have got rid of his antagonist in a more deadly way. "How!" inquired his host. "By inviting him to a dinner like this, and poisoning him," was the sharp reply. The Duke of Norfolk, who was rather too fond of the bottle, asked him in what new character he should go to a masquerade. "Go sober," answered Foote. Being taken into White's, one day, a nobleman remarked to him that his handkerchief was hanging out of his pocket. "Thank you, my lord," he replied, "thank you; you know the company better than I do." A rich contractor was holding forth upon the instability of the world. "Can you account for it, sir?" he asked, turning to Foote. "Well, not clearly," he responded, "unless we suppose it was built by contract." "Why are you for ever humming that air?" he asked of a gentleman who had no idea of time. "Because it haunts me." "No wonder, for you are for ever murdering it." Garrick, of whose great fame he was undoubtedly envious, was a constant butt for his sarcasms; and yet Garrick, whether from fear or friendship it would be difficult to determine, did him many kindnesses, was always ready to oblige him with money, and stood firmly by him throughout the Jackson prosecution, which last act of friendship touched Foote at last with gratitude, for in one of his letters, addressed to Garrick, he writes: "God forever bless you! May nothing but halcyon days and nights crown the rest of your life, is the sincere prayer of Samuel Foote." Garrick's notorious meanness, however, furnished him with many a witticism. At one of Foote's dinner parties an announcement was made of the arrival of Mr. Garrick's servants. "Oh, let them wait," he replied to his footman, "but be sure you lock up the pantry!" One day a gentleman, while conversing with Foote, was speaking of Garrick, having reflected upon some person's parsimony, and ended by observing, "Why did he not take the beam out of his own eye before attacking the mote in other people's?" "Because," retorted Foote, "he is not sure of selling the timber." "Where on earth can it be gone?" said Foote, when Garrick dropped a guinea at the Bedford one night, and was searching for it in vain. "To the devil, I think," answered the actor irritably. "Let you alone, David, for making a guinea go further than any one else," was the reply. He could never forego his jest, however solemn the occasion. He had been to the funeral of Holland, the actor, whose father was a baker. "Poor fellow!" he said in the Bedford that evening, the tears scarcely dry upon his cheeks. "I have been to see him shoved into the family oven." He once said of an actress, who was remarkably awkward with her arms, that she kept the Graces at arms' length. But Johnson considered that Foote surpassed every one he had ever heard in humorous narrative; and that although Garrick, the great conversationalist of the age, surpassed him in gaiety, delicacy, and elegance, Foote provoked much more laughter. A gentleman who had conceived a prejudice against him, related to Boswell his first meeting with him at a dinner. "Having no good opinion of the fellow," he said, "I was resolved not to be pleased. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back in my chair and laugh it out. No, sir, he was irresistible." This most unscrupulous of mimics and satirists was himself exceedingly thin-skinned. When at one time Woodward, and at another Wilkinson, threatened him with a retort in kind, he ran away to Garrick and Rich, their managers, foaming with passion, and threatening the most violent retaliations. Boswell relates that, after hearing him at a dinner-table indulge in all kinds of coarse jocularity against Johnson, he observed that he had heard the great lexicographer say a very good thing of Mr. Foote himself. He (Boswell) had asked him one day if he did not think Foote an infidel. "I do not know, sir, that the fellow is an infidel," replied Johnson; "but if he be an infidel, he is an infidel as a dog is an infidel; that is to say, he has never thought upon the subject." Boswell adds that he never saw Foote look so disconcerted. "What, sir!" he exclaimed, indignantly, "to talk thus of a man of liberal education; a man who for years was at the University of Oxford; a man who has added sixteen new characters to the literature of his country!"

THE SCHOOL-MASTER'S GUESTS.

I.

The district school-master was sitting behind his book-laden desk, Close-watching the motions of scholars, pathetic and gay, and grotesque.

As whisper the half-leafless branches, when Autumn's brisk breezes have come, His little scrub-thicket of pupils sent upward a half-smothered hum.

Like the frequent sharp bang of a wagon, when treading a forest path o'er, Resounded the feet of his pupils, whenever their heels struck the floor.

There was little Tom Timms on the front seat, whose face was withstanding a drouth; And jolly Jack Gibbs just behind him, with a rainy new moon for a mouth.

There were both of the Smith boys, as studious as if they bore names that could bloom; And Jim Jones, a heaven-built mechanic, the slyest young knave in the room,

With a countenance grave as a horse's, and his honest eyes fixed on a pin, Queer-bent on a deeply laid project to tunnel Joe Hawkins's skin.

There were anxious young novices, drilling their spelling books into the brain, Loud-puffing each half-whispered letter, like an engine just starting its train.

There was one fiercely muscular fellow, who scowled at the sums on his slate, And leered at the innocent figures a look of unspeakable hate,

And set his white teeth close together, and gave his thin lips a short twist, As to say, "I could whip you, confound you! could such things be done with the fist?"



"AND NODDED OBLIQUELY, AND MUTTERED, 'THEM 'ERE IS MY SENTIMENTS TEW.'"

There were two knowing girls in the corner, each one with some beauty possessed, In a whisper discussing the problem which one the young master likes best.

A class in the front, with their readers, were telling, with difficult pains, How perished brave Marco Bozzaris while bleeding at all of his veins;

And a boy on the floor to be punished, a statue of idleness stood, Making faces at all of the others, and enjoying the scene all he could.

II.

Around were the walls gray and dingy, which every old school-sanctum hath, With man's a break on their surface, where grinned a wood-grating of lath.

A patch of thick plaster, just over the school-master's rickety chair, Seemed threaten'ingly o'er him suspended, like Damocles' sword by a hair.

There were tracks on the desks where the knife-blades had wandered in search of their prey; Their tops were as dusky spattered as if they drank ink every day.

The square stove it puffed and it crackled, and broke out in red-flaming sores, Till the great iron gridrump trembled like a dog fierce to rush out-o'-doors.

White snow-flakes looked in at the windows; the gale pressed its lips to the cracks; And the children's hot faces were streaming, the while they were freezing their backs.

III.

Now, Marco Bozzaris had fallen, and all of his sufferings were o'er, And the class to their seats were retreating, when footsteps were heard at the door;

And five of the good district fathers marched into the room in a row, And stood themselves up by the hot fire, and shook off their white cloaks of snow;

And the spokesman, a grave squire of sixty, with countenance solemnly sad, Spoke thus, while the children all listened, with all of the ears that they had:

"We've come here, school-master, intendin' to cast an inquirin' eye 'round, Concernin' complaints that's been entered, an' fault that has lately been found; To pace off the width of your doin's, an' witness what you've been about, An' see if it's payin' to keep you, or whether we'd best turn you out.

"The first thing I'm bid for to mention is, when the class gets up to read, You give 'em too tight of a reinin', an' touch 'em up more than they need; You're nicer than wise in the matter of holdin' the book in one han', An' you turn a stray g in their doin's, an' tack an odd d on their an'.

"There ain't no great good comes of speakin' the words so polite, as I see, Providin' you know what the facts is, an' tell 'em off jest as they be.

An' then there's that readin' in concert, is censured from first unto last; It kicks up a heap of a racket, when folks is a travellin' past.

Whatever is done as to readin', providin' things go to my say, Sha'n't hang on no new-fangled hinges, but swing in the old-fashioned way."

And the other four good district fathers gave quick the consent that was due, And nodded obliquely, and muttered, "Them 'ere is my sentiments tew."

"Then, as to your spellin': I've heern tell, by them as has looked into this, That you turn the u out o' your labour, an' make the word shorter than 'tis;

An' clip the k off o' yer musick, which makes my son Ephraim perplexed,

Now if, 'stead of doin' your duty, your carryin' matters on so As to make the gals say that they love you, it's just all that I want to know;—"

IV.

Now Jim, the young heaven-built mechanic, in the dusk of evening before, Had well-nigh unjointed the stove-pipe, to make it come down to the floor;

And the squire bringing smartly his foot down, as a clincher to what he had said, A joint of the pipe fell upon him, and larruped him square on the head.

The soot flew in clouds all about him, and blotted with black all the place, And the squire and the other four fathers were peppered with black in the face.

The school, ever sharp for amusement, laid down all their cumbersome books, And, spite of the teacher's endeavors, laughed loud at their visitor's looks.

And the squire, as he stalked to the doorway, swore oaths of a violent hue; And the four district fathers, who followed, seemed to say, "Them's my sentiments tew."

LITERARY.

Two of Tennyson's idyls, "Elaine" and "Enid," have been translated into Spanish.

The Neapolitan poet, Vincenzo Baffi, is about to publish a version of Moore's poems.

MR. LONGFELLOW will soon be seventy. He is said to be a fine picture of beautiful manhood.

HARRIET HOSMER'S book, will be entitled "On the Loggia: a Story of Art and Rome."

CHARLES READE denies that he is the author of "The Queen of Connaught," and it is understood that the writer is a lady.

THERE is in the press a third series of "The Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson," by the Rev. Andrew K. H. Boyd.

CHARLES ALGERNON SWINBURNE has joined the Church of England leaving the Roman Church in which he was born.

THE title of Mr. Wilkie Collins's new novel, which was commenced in the January number of *Temple Bar*, is "The Two Destinies."

THE Rev. William Arthur, the well-known Wesleyan minister, is writing a history of Ultramontanism, based upon documents not hitherto made public.

MR. GLADSTONE is busily engaged on his new book on Homer, which will be an expansion of what he has already written for *The Contemporary Review* on the same subject.

La Vie au Temps des Cours d'Amour, a work on the beliefs and domestic manners and customs of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is announced in Paris, by Antony Méray.

A hundred years ago four newspapers were published in New York, the *Royal Gazette*, organ of the British authorities, the *Mercury*, the *Constitutional Gazette*, and the *New York Journal*, the organ of the Sons of Liberty, published by John Holt, who at one time was compelled to take groceries and other goods in exchange for his paper.

THE King of Bavaria has bestowed the knighthood of the Order of Maximilian on Professor Max Müller. This order is confined to a limited number of men distinguished in science and in art. As in the case of the order *pour le mérite*, the right of election belongs to the knights themselves, but their choice has to be confirmed by the Sovereign.

MISS FLORENCE DUNCAN, of Ottawa, was in New York, last week, and read a paper on art before the Ladies' Art Association. She was formerly a resident of that city, where she has a sister, Miss Alice Donlevy, the artist. She is, on the staff of the *Ottawa Citizen*, having adopted journalism as a profession, adding another example of the success of ladies in that department.

GEORGE MACDONALD intends publishing a verse translation of "The Spiritual Songs of Novalis." This was the assumed name of Friedrich Van Hardenburg, one of the most remarkable mystics of modern Germany, whose "Hymns to the Night" are a sad and beautiful setting to music of fine thoughts, with a somewhat consumptive tendency. The author of "David Elgibrod" has also nearly ready "The Wise Woman," a parable.

SEÑOR CANOVAS DEL CASTILLO has, amid the worries of active political life, found leisure to write an introduction to the "History of Philip III, of Spain," about to be published, which is from the pen of the Marqués de la Fuensanta del Valle. The main feature of the introduction will be the discovery by Señor Canovas of the real author of the history of that king, hitherto attributed to Vivanco.

An autotype fac-simile edition of Milton's *Commonplace Book* is to be published in London from the manuscript recently discovered. It contains notes in Milton's handwriting from upward of 80 works read by him, and these notes are in general his deductions, and not mere extracts from the works read. There are other entries by four or five different hands, presumably made at Milton's dictation. The MS. is quarto size, and contains 80 written pages.

"THE BELLS" of Poe was first published in the November number of *Sartain's Magazine*, for 1849. The poem, when first left for publication, some time in June or July of the year, consisted of only two short stanzas, as follows:

THE BELLS.—A SONG.
The bells! hear the bells!
The merry wedding bells!
How fairy-like a melody there swells
From the silver, tinkling bells
Of the bells, bells, bells!
Of the bells!
The bells!—ah, the bells!
The heavy, iron bells!
Hear the tolling of the bells!
Hear the knells!
How horrible a monody there floats
From their throats—
From their deep, doleful throats!
How I shudder at the notes
From the melancholy throats
Of the bells, bells, bells!
Of the bells!

This was the entire poem in its original form, as first offered to *Sartain's Magazine*. It was accepted in that form and put in type, but before its appearance the author enlarged it to nearly its present size and form, and again, before its actual publication he sent a second version in the form in which it finally appeared.

An' when he spells out as he ought'r, you pass the word on to the next.

They say there's some new-grafted books here that don't take them letters along; But if it is so, just depend on't, them new-grafted books is made wrong.

You might just as well say that Jackson didn't know all there was about war, As to say that old Spellin'-book Webster didn't know what them letters were for."

And the other four good district fathers gave quick the consent that was due, And scratched their heads slyly and softly, and said, "Them's my sentiments tew."

"Then, also, your 'rithmetic doin's, as they are reported to me, Is that you have Tare an' Tret out, an' also the old Rule o' Three;

An' likewise brought in a new study, some high-steppin' scholars to please, With saw-bucks an' crosses and pot-hooks, and w's, x, y's and z's.

We ain't got no time for such foolin'; there ain't no great good to be reached By tiptein' child'n up higher than ever their fathers was teach'd."

And the other four good district fathers gave quick the consent that was due, And cocked one eye up to the ceiling, and said, "Them's my sentiments tew."

"Another thing, I must here mention, comes into the question to-day, Concernin' some things in the grammer, you're teachin' our gals for to say.

My gals is as steady as clock-work, an' never give cause for much fear, But they come home from school t'other evenin' a-talkin' such stuff as this here:

"I love," an' "Thou lovest," an' "He loves," an' "Ye love," an' "You love," an' "They—"
An' they answered my questions, "It's grammar"—'twas all I could get 'em to say.