Thistledown Frae Scotland.

(Contributed.)

HUMOURS OF SCOTTISH RURAL LIFE.

Affording better opportunities for the development of individual character than are to be found in the busy town and crowded city, country life is more congenial also to the growth and exercise of the faculty of original humour. In the denser populations information on every intelligible subject is so readily accessible through the medium of books, magazines, morning and evening papers, and courses of lectures, etc., that it is incumbent on any one to form his or her own idea of any particular matter. Ideas here are supplied readymade, like everything else, and warranted free from adulteration; and thus your city and townspeople see very generally eye to eye, and from frequency of contact with each other, and the causes already indicated, are forcibly rubbed into something like a general mental, as well as a physical, similitude. In the rural districts of the country it is altogether different. Books are scarce, daily newspapers rarely appear, there are no courses of scieitific or other lectures, and so the individual mind has largely to form its own idea of every particular subject; and as very much of what is most enjoyable in humorous Scottish stories and anecdotes arises from "simple and matter of-fact references made to circumstances which are unusual." Thus it is that the best as well as the most of our Scottish humour is bred of rural life. Every book of native anecdotes—every bout of storytelling reveals this fact.

A very good story is told of a native of Glenisla, in Forfarshire and belongs to the time when Matthew Henry's famous Bible commentary was the apple of every real Scotsman's eye. One Geordie Scott, thereaway, was so fain to possess a copy of "Matthew Henry," as this bible was long familiarly termed that he suggested to his wife (the two lived alone together) that they might sell the cow and purchase one with the price she would realize. The wife demurred at first, but latterly consented, with one proviso—namely that Geordie would be willing to take "treacle ale" to his porridge every morning. This the good man at once agreed to. So crummie departed, and "Matthew Henry" arrived. A few weeks passed, and the big ha' Bible gave great delight, but the "treacle ale" was like to turn Geordie's stamach a' thegither.

"Dod, wife," said he one morning, "I doot that treacle ale's no gaun to do wi' me, we'll need to try and get a wee drap milk to the parritch. What do ye think?"

Janet had been missing her troke with the cow, and was rueing that she had consented to the "niffer."

"Deed, gude man," says she, "a bargain's a bargain. An' gin ye will hae milk, an' winna want it, ye maun just gang an milk "Matthew Henry."

Your rural Scot is reflective and argumentative to a degree.

"Dinna tell me," said a sapient Forfarshire laird of the old school. Dinna tell me that the earth's shaped like an orange, an' that it whirls round about fika twenty-four 'oors. It's a' nonsense. The Seidlaw Hills lie to the North and the Tay to the Sooth at nicht when I gang to my bed. I' the mornin' when I rise I find them the same. and that's gude proof that the earth disna turn round. I'll tell ye what it is—an' I speak wi' authority of ane wha's gi'en the maitter a deal o' thocht—the earth's spread oot just like a muckle barley scone, in which the Howe o' Strathmore represents a knuckle mark."

Reflective, I said, very! And the ordinary Scotch farmer's love of gain is proverbial. Life in his eyes is valuable chiefly as a season in which to make money. Money being the root o' a' evil—an wha disna like to have a pull at the root. Thus not very long ago, while about half a dozen farmers were returning home by train from the Perth weekly market, they talked about how this friend and that friend was in his health; and about some others who had died recently, and how much money each of them must have left.

"Ay, but men dinna live nearly sae long nooadays as they did in the Bible times," remarked one, with a heavy sigh.

"Eh, man, na," broke in another, who had hitherto not spoken. "An, I was just thinking there to mysel' a minute syne, that Methuselah must have been worth a power o' money when he dee'd, if he was onything o' a savin kind o' a man ava."

Waggish some of them, and wild not a few. There were many rare good fellows among the farmers of Perthshire; genuine humorists, too. Here was how one of them proposed the toast of "The late Queen Victoria," at a Cattle Show dinner. He was Chairman, and "Noo, gentlemen," said he, "fill a' your glasses, for I'm about to bring forrit the Queen." (Applause.) Our Queen, gentlemen; is really a wonderfu' woman, if I may say it. She's ane o' the gude auld sort; nae whilmaleeries or falderalls aboot her, but a douce daicent bodie. Respectable, beyond a' doot brocht up a grand family o faur'd lads and lassies—her son wad be a credit to ony and they're a' weel mairr dauchter is nae less than mar the Duke o' Argyle's son (Cheers). Gentlemen, ye'll believe it, but I once saw the (Sensation). I did. It was took my auld broon coo to the Show. I mind o' her weel-sle sic hair; sic—(Interruption cries of 'Is it the coo or the ye're proposin'?') The Queen, men. I beg your pardon, but talkin' aboot the coo. However the Queen; somebody pointed to me at the Perth station. And she was, smart an' tidy-like; a I to myself: 'Gin my auld wo hame slips awa' ye needna wa widow anither hour langer.' (C Nod, gentlemen, the whisky the nicht's lang, the weather and the roads are saft, and wi naebody that comes to grief wi' ye; every glass to the bo "The Queen!"

Speaking of Perthshire wort minds me of another charac story. A thrifty middle-aged ce that ilk, until a year or tw lived a life of easy bachelorh only domestic companion be antiquated maiden sister. Ab period indicated, however, fol the example of the majority sex, he took unto himself a whom he brought home to re gether with his sister and h "Twa women in ane ower m ony house," says the proverb this instance proved no exc The new-comer soon made th tion so hot for her sister-in-l the crofter perceived that a struction of his household w stantly necessary. He was eq the occasion; the wife was d **Sans Ceremonie.** On being inte ed by a neighbour on the po his action, Peter made the re "Was I gaun, think ye, to l sister abused by a woman th a drap's bluid to ony o' the us?"

Very good. And Peter's philo reply brings vividly before m characteristic figure of honest mas Brown, a well known dea a small Perthshire village, h had little or no idea of things our; yet, as if by the inspira accident, he was continually m remarks, and answering questi language and manner the mo vocative of laughter. One day t Church minister—now of worl fame—was passing along whit mas was busily engaged a thatching of a stack in his ow barnyard, and snatching ra the circumstance as a means improvement of the moment divine called out:

"You are thatching, I see. Do you think you will require any such work in the future ance?"

"Not at all, Sir," was the h and innocent rejoinder; "this to hold out water."

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