

# The Family Circle.

## THE ORIGINAL VERSION OF "DIXIE."

The song of "Dixie" is indelibly connected with the South. We all know the air, but few have seen the original song. There have been many versions, but we here present the original from which they all sprang.

I wish I was in the land ob cotton  
Old times dar am not forgotten,  
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land.  
In Dixie land, whar I was born in,  
Early on one frosty mornin',  
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land.  
Den I wish I was in Dixie,  
Hooray! hooray!  
In Dixie lan. I'll took my stand,  
To lib an' die in Dixie.  
Away, away, away down South in Dixie;  
Away, away, away down South in Dixie.

Old misses marry "Will de weaber,"  
William was a gay deceiver;

Look away, etc.

But when he put his arms around 'r,  
He smiled as fierce as a forty pounder;  
Look away, etc.  
Den I wish I was in Dixie, etc.

His face was sharp as a butcher's cleaver,  
But dat did not seem to greaber 'er;

Look away, etc.

Old missus acted the foolish part,  
And died for the man who broke her heart;  
Look away, etc.  
Den I wish I was in Dixie, etc.

Now here's a health to the next old missus,  
And all the gals that want to kiss us;

Look away, etc.

But if you want to drive away sorrow,  
Come and hear dis nig to-morrow;  
Look away, etc.  
Den I wish I was in Dixie, etc.

Dars buckwheat cakes and Ingen batter,  
Makes you fat or a little fatter;

Look away, etc.

Den hoe it down and scratch your grabble,  
To Dixie's land I'm bound to trable;  
Look away, etc.  
Den I wish I was in Dixie, etc.

—Memphis Commercial.

## OUR SERMON TASTER.

BY IAN MACLAREN.

A Drumtochty man, standing six feet three in his boots, sat himself down one day in the study of a London West End minister, and gazed before him with the countenance of a sphinx.

The sight struck awe into the townsman's heart, and the power of speech was paralysed within him.

"A'm frae Drumtochty," began a deep, solemn voice. "Ye'll hae heard o' Drumtochty, of coorse. A've jined the polis; the pay is no that bad, and the work is naethin' tae an able-bodied man."

When these particulars had been digested by the audience—

"It's a crooded place London, and the fouk's aye in a tiravie (commotion), rinnin' here an' rinnin' there, and the maist feck o' them dinna ken whar they're gaein'."

"It's officer this and officer that frae mornin' till nicht. It's peetiifu' tae see the helplessness o' the bodies in their ain toon. And they're freevolous," continued the figure, refreshing itself with a reminiscence.

"It wes this verra mornin' that a man askit me hoo tae get tae the Strand."

"Haud on," I says, "till ye come tae a cross street, and dinna gang doon it, and when ye see another pass it, but whup roond the third, and yir nose'll bring ye tae the Strand."

"He was a shachlin bit cratur, and he lookit up at me."

"Where were you born, officer?" in his clippit English tongue.

"Drumtochty," a' said, "an' we hev juist ae man as sma' as you in the hale Glen."

"He gied awa' lauchin' like tae split his sides, an' the fac' is there's no ain o' them asks me a question but he lauchs. They're a licht-headed fouk, and no sair educat. But we maunna boast; they hevna hed oor advantages."

The minister made a brave effort to assert himself.

"Is there anything I can do?" but the figure simply waved its hand and resumed:

"A'm comin' tae that, but a' thoct ye wud be wantin' ma opeenion o' London."

"Weel, ye see, the first thing a' did, of coorse, after settlin' doon, was tae gae roond the kirks and hear what kin' o' ministers they hae up here. A've been in sixteen kirks the last three months, an' a' wud hae been, in mair had it no bin for ma oors."

"Aye, aye, a' ken ye 'ill be wantin' ma judgment," interpreting a movement in the chair, "an' ye 'ill hae it. Some was puir stuff—plenty o' water and little meal—and some wasna sae bad for England. But ye 'ill be pleased to know, here the figure relaxed and beamed on the anxious minister, 'that a'm rael weel satisfied wi' yer el', and a'm thinkin' o' sittin' under ye."

"Man," were Drumtochty's last words, "a' wish Elspeth Macfadyen cud hear ye, her 'at pries (tastes) the sermons in 'oor Glen: a' believe she wud pass ye, an' it ye got a certeeeficat frae Elspeth, ye wud be a proud man."

Drumtochty read widely—Soutar was soaked in Carlyle, and Marget Howe knew her "In Memoriam" by heart—but our intellectual life centred on the weekly sermon. Men thought about Sabbath as they followed the plow in our caller air, and braced themselves for an effort at the giving out of the text. The hearer had his snuff and selected his attitude, and from that moment to the close he never moved nor took his eyes off the preacher. There was a tradition that one of the Disruption fathers had preached in the Free Kirk for one hour and fifty minutes on the bulwarks of Zion, and had left the impression that he was only playing round the outskirts of his subject. No preacher with anything to say could complain of Drumtochty, for he got a patient, honest, critical hearing from beginning to end. If a preacher were slightly equipped, the audience may have been trying. Well-meaning evangelists who came with what they called 'a simple Gospel address,' and were accustomed to have their warmer passages punctuated with rounds of spiritual applause in the shape of smiles and nods, lost heart in the face of that judicial front, and afterwards described Drumtochty in the religious papers as 'dead.' It was as well that these good men walked in a vain show, for their hearers were painfully alive.

"Whar did yon wakely body come frae, Burnbrae? it was licht wark the day. There was nae thoct worth mentionin', and onything he hed was eked oot by repetition. Tae sae naethin' o' bairnly stories."

"He lives aboot England, a'm telt, an' dis a feck o' gude in his ain place. He hesna muckle in his head, a'lli alloo that, Netherton, but he's an earnest bit cratur."

"Ou aye, and foo' o' self-conceit. Did ye hear hoo often he said "I?" a' got as far as saxty-three, and then a' lost coont. But a keepit "dear," it cam tae the hundred neat."

"Weel?" a' says tae Elspeth Macfadyen. A'kent she wud hae his measure.

"Gruel, Netherton, juist gruel, and eneuch tae scunner (disgust) ye wi' sugar."

It was the birthright of every native of the parish to be a critic, and certain were allowed to be experts in special departments. Lachlan Campbell in doctrine and Jamie Soutar in logic—but as an all round practitioner Mrs. Macfadyen had a solitary reputation. It rested on a long series of unreversed judgments, with felicitous strokes of description that passed into the literary capital of the Glen. One felt it was genius, and could only note contributing circumstances—an eye that took in the preacher from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot; an almost uncanny insight into character; an instinct to seize on every scrap of evidence; a memory that was simply an automatic register; an unflinching sense of fitness; and an absolute impartiality regarding subject.

It goes without saying that Mrs. Macfadyen did not take nervous little notes during the sermon—all writing on Sabbath, in kirk or outside, was strictly forbidden in Drumtochty—or mark her Bible, or practise

any other profane device of feeble-minded hearer. It did not matter how elaborate or how incoherent a sermon might be, it could not confuse our critic.

When John Peddie, of Muirtown, who always approached two hours, and usually had to leave out the last head, took time at the Drumtochty Fast and gave, at length, his famous discourse on the total depravity of the human race, from the text, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come," it may be admitted that the Glen wavered in its confidence. Human nature has limitations, and failure would have been no discredit to Elspeth.

"They were sayin' at the Presbytery," Burnbrae reported, "that it hes mair than seeventy heads, coontin' pints, of coorse, and a' can weel believe it. Na, na, it's no tae be expectit that Elspeth cud gie them a' aifter ae hearin'."

Jamie Soutar looked in to set his mind at rest, and Elspeth went at once to work.

"Sit doon, Jamie, for it canna be dune in a meenut."

It took twenty-three minutes exactly, for Jamie watched the clock.

"That's the laist, makin' seeventy-four, and ye may depend on every ane but that fourth pint under the saxth head. Whether it wes the "beginnin' o' faith" or "the origin," a' canna be sure, for he cleared his throat at the time."

Peter Bruce stood helpless at the Junction next Friday—Drumtochty was celebrating Elspeth—and the achievement established her for life.

Probationers who preached in the vacancy had heard rumours, and tried to identify their judge, with the disconcerting result that they addressed their floweriest passages to Mistress Stirton, who was the stupidest woman in the Free Kirk, and had once stuck in the 'chief end of man.' They never suspected the sony motherly woman, two pews behind Donald Menzies, with her face of demure interest and general air of country simplicity. It was as well for the probationers that they had not caught the glint of those black beady eyes.

"It's curious," Mrs. Macfadyen remarked to me one day, "hoo the pulpit fashions change, juist like weemen's bonnets."

"Noo a' mind when auld Doctor Ferintosh, him 'at wrote "Judas Iscariot the first Residuary," would stand twa meenutes facing the fouk, and no sit doon till he hed his snuff."

"But thae young birkies gie oot 'at they see naebody comin' in, an' cover their face with ae hand sae solemn, that if ye didna catc'a them keekin' through their fingers tae see what like the kirk is, ye wud think they were prayin'."

"There's not much escapes you," I dared to say, and although the excellent woman was not accessible to gross flattery, she seemed pleased.

"A'm thankful" that a' can see without lookin'; there's the new minister o' Netherraid, he writes his sermon on ae side o' ten sheets o' paper.

"He's that carried awa' at the end o' ilka page that he disna ken what he's daein', an' the sleeve o' his goonslips the sheet across tae the ither side o' the Bible."

"But Doctor Ferintosh was cleverer, sall it near beat me tae detect him," and Elspeth paused to enjoy the pulpit ruse. "It cam tae me sudder ae Sacrament Monday, hoo dis he ay turn up twal texts, naither mair nor le. and that set me thinkin'. Then a' noticed that he left the Bible open at the place till anither text was due, an' I wunnered a'd been sae slow. It was this wy: he askit the beadle for a glass o' water in the vestry, and shippit his sermon in atween the leaves in sae mony bits. A've wished for a gallery at a time, but there's mair credit in fiodin' it oot below—aye, an' plesure tae; a' never wearied in kirk in ma life."

Mrs. Macfadyen did not appreciate prodigal quotations of Scriptures, and had her suspicions of this practice,

"Tak the minister o' Pittendriegh noo;

he's fair fozy wi' troking in his gairden an' feeding pigs, and hesna studied a sermon for thirty year."

"Sae what dis he dae, think ye? He havers for a while on the errors o' the day, and syne he says, 'That's what man says, but what says the Apostle Paul? We shall see what the Apostle Paul says.' He puts on his glasses, and turns up the passage, and reads maybe ten verses, and then he's aff on the jundy (trot) again. When a man hes naethin' tae say, he's aye lang, and a've seen him gie half an oor o' passages, and anither half oor o' havers."

"He's a Bible preacher, at any rate," says Burnbrae tae me laist Fast, for, honest man, he hes aye some gude word for a body.

"It's ae thing," I said tae him, "tae feed a calf wi' milk, and anither tae gie it the empty cogie tae lick."

"It's curious, but a've noticed that when a Moderate gets lazy he preaches auld sermons, but a Free Kirk minister taks tae abusing his neeburs and readin' screeds o' the Bible."

"But Pittendriegh hes twa sermons, at ony rate," and Elspeth tasted the sweets of memory with such keen relish that I begged for a share.

"Well, ye see he's terrible proud o' his feenishes, and this is ane o' them:

"Heeven, ma brethren, will be far grander than the hoose o' ony earthly potentate, for there ye will no longer eat the flesh of bulls nor drink the blood o' goats, but we shall sook the juicy pear and scoop the loocious meelon. Amen."

"He hes nae mair sense o' humour than an owl, and a' aye haud that a man without humour sudna be allowed intae a poopit."

"A' hear that they have nae examination in humour at the college; it's an awfu' want, for it wud keep oot mony a dreich body."

"But the meelon's naethin' tae the goat, that cowed a' thing, at the Fast tae."

"If Jeems wes aboot a daurna mention 't; he canna behave himsel' tae this day gin he bears 't, though ye ken he's a douce man as ever lived."

"It was anither feenish, and it ran this wy:

"Noo, ma freends, a wull no be keepin' ye ony langer, and ye 'ill a' gae hame tae yir ain hooses and mind yir ain business. And as sune as ye get hame ilka man 'ill gae tae his closet and shut the door, and stand for five meenutes, and ask himsel' this solemn question, 'Am I a goat?' Amen."

"The amen near upset me mase', and a' hed tae dunge Jeems wi' ma elbow."

"He said no a word on the wy back, but a' saw it was barmin' in him, and he gied oot sudden aifter his dinner as if he hed been ta'en unweel."

"A' cam' on him in the byre, rowing in the strae like a bairn, and every ither row he took he wud say, "Am I a goat?"

"It wes na cannie for a man o' his wecht, besides being' a married man and a kirk member, and a' gied him a hearing."

"He sobered doon, and a' never saw him dae the like since. But he hesna forgot, na, na; a've seen a look come ower Jeems' face in kirk, and a've been feared."

When the Free Kirk quarrelled in their vacancy over two probationers, Mrs. Macfadyen summed them up with such excellent judgment that they were thrown over and peace restored.

"There's some o' thae Muirtown drapers can busk oot their windows that ye canna pass without lookin'; there bits o' blue and bits o' red, and a ribbon here an' a lace yonder."

"It's a bonnie show and denty, an' no wunner the lassies stan' and stare."

"But gae intae the shop, and peety me, there's next tae naethin'; it's a' in the window."

"Noo that's Maister Popinjay, as neat an' fikey a little mannies as ever a' saw in a black gown."

"His bit sermon wes six poems—five a' hed heard afore—four anecdotes—three aboot himsel' and ain aboot a lord—twa