

*THE TRAGEDY OF THE STARLING.*

By Rev. Dr. Norman McLeod.

One of Queen Victoria's most popular chaplains in Scotland, Norman McLeod, was a man whose name will long be remembered, especially by patriotic Highlanders. He was in many respects ahead of his time. In the sixties of last century the question of running trains on Sunday was a live issue. Dr. Norman McLeod refused to join the Sabbatarian fanatics who wished to stop all Sunday travel, and continue the Hebrew Sabbath instead of the more liberal view of the keeping of that day as he found it in the New Testament. In fact he had very much the same view of the questions that many liberal Roman Catholics always had that a man need not make a god of sloth as the Hebrews did, and that a certain amount of liberty on that day need not interfere with devotional exercises. As a result he suffered considerable persecution from the "unco guid" in Scotland in consequence. Our good friend Norman turned the tables on his persecutors, however, by writing the *Story of the Starling*, and printing it in his monthly magazine, "Good Words." The leading characters in the story are David Mercer, an old ex-soldier and shoemaker, who in his early days had done some poaching on shooting game, which, according to the custom then, as it is still in Scotland, was a kind of sport reserved only for the gentry. Next to David in the story is the Rev. Mr. Porteous, the parish minister, and two elders, Peter Smellie and Robert Menzies. Some day I would like to publish the whole story in full. It makes very amusing reading to the present generation. The extent to which Sabbatarianism was carried among some Scotch people, as well as so-called Puritans, in England and America, some time ago can hardly be realized in this more liberal generation. To make a long story short, David Mercer, ex-soldier shoemaker, and Presbyterian elder, got married, had a boy whom he named Charlie. He got a starling, which he taught to speak a few words, which was a great pleasure to his little boy Charlie. Some extracts from the story run as follows:

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*BOOKS.*

Another way our friends can help is by ordering some books. At the present time I am offering a bargain of the best stories of the great American humorists—Mark Twain, George Ade, Joseph Billings, Mr. Dooley, and others, in one volume of over 300 pages, illustrated, for 90c. post paid, which is only about half the original price.