

THE SCOTTISH BEADLE

(By T. B. M'Corckindale.)

In Scotland, the very land where in all his varieties he reached full perfection, the beadle is now as extinct as the doo. But his memory is green and over his grave the genial Dean Ramsay and that humorous, kind-hearted and altogether delightful gossip of literature, Dr. John Brown, of "Rab and His Friends," have reared a monument more enduring than brass. As long as the witty dean and the discursive physician are read we may say of the beadle, "Non omnis morietur" (He shall not die.) To be sure, the Jeems of the latter writer was hardly a beadle in the full sense of the word, but only a doorkeeper. Still, he had all the instincts of the true genius, and did credit to the ecclesiastical order to which he belonged. His delightful biographer tells us he had a kindly yet uncouth humor, which no man aspiring to the honorable office of a beadle can well be without.

"Can I get it out?" asked an unfortunate man, staring ruefully at the half-crown (a coin worth about sixty cents) he had inadvertently thrown into the church plate, instead of the usual bawbee. "Can I no get it out?"

"Na na," said Jeems. "In once, in forever."

"A weel, a weel," granted the disappointed man, "I'll get credit for it in heaven." To which Jeems sardonically replied: "Na, na, ye'll jist get credit for the penny."

Jeems' sardonic humor is also seen in the delight with which he ripped up the bodices of "thae young hizzies" (those young girls), who on account of their bitter yerkin (tight lacing) were seized with syncope in the crowded church in which "Rab's" father preached. Who that has ever read it can forget that description of Jeems, with his huge terrific face, and his open gully (big knife) in his hand bending over the unconscious girl, and saying to "the young doctor": "Wull oo ripp'er up noo?" which, being interpreted, means: "Will we cut her stay lace noo?"

But it is in a country parish that we find the full-blown specimen, the beadle royal, as we might call him. He is a man of consequence in the parish, and his intimate and familiar intercourse with the minister gives him a reflected glory, which, unlike Moses, is not by any means careful to conceal. At the same time he is too pawky ("knowing") to make his dignity offensive to others. His duties are multifarious. He cleans the church, rings the bell for public worship, "takes up the books," and does the graves in the churchyard. His remuneration as grave-digger is generally five shillings for each interment. Where the parish is a thinly-populated one, and a healthy one, he cannot rely greatly on this source of income.

"And, John," said a minister to a man he was about to engage as beadle, "you will have a fee of five shillings for each interment."

"Oo, ay, sir," murmured the candidate, with the suspicion that the parish was neither overcrowded nor unhealthy, "and will there be ony thing like steady wark at the grave-diggin'?"

"Steady wark!" exclaimed the astonished divine. "Mon, ye wud bury the hale parish in a fortnicht."

We knew a beadle, a cantankerous old character he was, who had manfully reserved a lair in the church-

yard for his minister when he should need the last offices the beadle could pay him. Along with the minister he was looking over the churchyard for a lair in which to bury a parishioner who had died. "This will do, I think, Tosh," said the minister, pointing to a certain spot. To which his quadrator replied: "Na, it'll no; that's the place I'm reservin' for yourself!"

It was on Sunday when he took up the books that the beadle was most impressive, and most deeply conscious of the dignity of his office. To take up the books—the pulpit Bible and Psalm book—to enter the pulpit and read to the minister, to steeek him in when he had ushered him into the pulpit—what ordinary mortal was able for these things?

Once we knew of a beadle who absolutely refused to steeek in the minister. For a generation or more the beadle had occupied that honorable position in the same parish. He had watched the boys of the house grow up until one was at length licensed to wag his head in the pulpit. By great dint of effort he was persuaded to preach for his father, the parish minister. "But, Pat," said the old ecclesiastical functionary, "you maun shave that beard, or I'll na steeek you in." Pat refused to part with his beard, and the beadle refused to steeek him in, saying he "wudna' steeek in that hairy wratch."

It is said that a beadle once exercised his right as critic upon one who was suffering from the juvenile disease of swelled head. The youth, fresh from college, was eloquent over his own qualifications as an extempore speaker. Extempore preaching being the exception rather than the rule in Scotland, the beadle began to be jealous for the character of his own minister. But he bided his time. On Sunday morning the young minister having got through what are unworthily called the "preleminaries," he addressed himself to the sermon. By way of advertising his independence of a manuscript he ostentatiously closed the Bible. But alas! in his case, too, pride went before destruction, and an haughty look before a fall. He lost the thread of his discourse, which any speaker might do, and what was more, he could not find it again, while a practiced speaker would have done. Rushing from the pulpit to the vestry, he met the beadle, who received him with a glittering eye. "Ma lad," he said, if ye had gaen up as ye've come doon, ye'd hae come doon as ye gaed up." Then which nothing could have been more true or more severe.

Another illustration to bring out the "pawkiness" of the beadle, and the quiet way in which a true Scot can deal with a difficult situation will find this paper. A young minister newly come to his parish, but unfamiliar with country life, and ignorant of what work a man, even though a beadle, could do, detailed his duties to one whom he wished to fill the double office of minister's man and beadle, a very common arrangement. "And John, you'll take in the coals and split the wood, and milk the cows, and keep the walks clean, and put in the crop in the glebe and garden."

"An' what kind o' land is yer glebe sir? Is't clay or loam?"

"I'm told it is very fine loam, John—very fine loam."

"I'm blide (glad) to hear it, sir, for gin it had been clay I'm feared I might hae been expectet to mak' bricks in my spare time." History does not tell the results of the negotiations.

But, as we said at the beginning, the kindly, couthy, pawky beadle, with his little touch of pomposity, has passed away. While your true beadle is born, not made, he needs an environment in which to grow. It may be that they are still born, but even Scotland no longer affords an atmosphere in which they can reach maturity. We preach at the invitation of a city brother in a Glasgow church. As we hunt about for the vestry, door an immaculate being in full evening dress, and clean-shaven as to his face—no "hairy wratch" is he—descends upon us. "This way, sir, this way." We follow humbly, and are at length ushered into the vestry. The sublime mortal stirs the fire, takes our overcoat, hangs our cassock on a

chair near the fire, to take off the chill or damp of the morning air. He then offers to let us see the church and pulpit, carefully points out to us unexpected pitfalls on the way, such as steps in dark corners, and brings us back to the vestry, where he offers to help us to robe. We murmur we will manage ourselves. "All right, sir. The organist will be here immediately." Spick and span, and looking far more solemn than it is possible for any human being to be, he returned on the stroke of the hour to the pulpit. We know what we are following—not a fine, venerable beadle but a Glasgow waiter! The day's duties done, he dexteriously folds our gown and cassock, helps us with our overcoat with a nimbleness born of daily habit, brushes our hat and clothes, and turns us out as immaculate as himself. So that we feel if men got their due, we would slip one of the current coins of the realm into that ready palm.

We miss more than we can tell the kindly greeting, and the kindly, though perhaps more uncouth, attentions of the auld bethral who has gone over to the majority, and whose like we shall never see again.

VOLTRINO IS A DANGEROUS DERELICT

Abandoned Liner is Floating in the Path of Navigation.

Washington, Oct. 22.—Revenue Cutter headquarters was notified today that European liners had reported that the hulk of the burned steamer Volturino was inviting another disaster by floating as a derelict in the path of navigation.

The warning in a telegram from Charles S. Hurd, of New York City, who urged immediate action looking to the destruction of the derelict.

Assistant Secretary Newton replied that the Volturino was abandoned at a place considerably eastward of the limits of the operations of the revenue cutter service.

"The service," Mr. Newton added, "does not undertake the destruction of derelicts eastward of the line drawn from Sable Island to the Bermuda Islands. It does not appear that any obligation rests upon this service to destroy a foreign derelict in mid ocean."

The steamer Volturino was still afloat and afloat on October 14, five days after flames broke out in her forward compartments, according to officers of the steamer St. Louis, which arrived at New York, Saturday. The St. Louis passed five miles north of what was left of the Volturino late Tuesday afternoon. The burning vessel had drifted about forty miles from the spot where she first caught fire.

LLOYD GEORGE OUTLINES LAND BILL.

Its Object is to Free Land From Landlordism, and Get People Back on it.

Swindon, Eng., Oct. 22.—Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George this afternoon dotted the i's and crossed the t's of the speech in which he inaugurated the Government's land campaign at Bedford on Oct. 11. He then said that it was his object to free British land from landlordism, and get the people back on it.

The two purposes the Liberal Government had set itself, he said today, were to attract and to retain the rural population on the land, and to devise means to develop both the quantity and the quality of the total agricultural products of the British Isles. Everything, he asserted, would be subordinated to the attainment of these two objects.

As the first step, said the Chancellor, it was proposed to establish a ministry of lands with control and supervision of all questions dealing with the users of land both in town and country, and the functions of the present board of agriculture would be transferred to the new ministry.

The Government, he said, intended to take the land out of chancery. Hereafter if a landlord found that "some silly settlement" hampered his scheme for improving his land he could apply to the ministry of lands which would enable him to override the barrier.

The new ministry, he continued, would operate through commissioners who would act in a judicial capacity and have the same power to reduce rents on small farms, as the Scottish courts now possess.

Large farmers also would have the right to appeal to the commissioners for a reduction of rent if the action of the state caused a rise in the wages of the farm laborer.

J. W. Copeland, of Dayton, Ohio, purchased a bottle of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy for his boy who had a cold, and before the bottle was all used the boy's cold was gone. Is that not better than to pay a five dollar doctor's bill? For sale by all dealers.

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ENTIRE SYSTEM OF C. P. R. MAY BE ELECTRIFIED.

Milwaukee, Oct. 21.—The entire system of the Canadian Pacific Railway may be electrified. This was the declaration yesterday of Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, president of the road, as he started for Winnipeg to inspect sites there for new terminals. The work now being started in the Rocky Mountains toward the location of electric instead of steam locomotives over several divisions is merely an experiment, he declared, preliminary to the installation of electricity throughout the system if the experiment proves successful. The Rocky Mountains Division, where experiment work is being done, presents every problem of handling traffic known to railroading, and if electricity succeeds there, its universal adoption on the entire system is certain. Freight and passenger trains alike are to be handled by electricity.

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