

The Hon. Johnson Blake.

GRIP, as his readers are aware, possesses remarkable powers, and astonishing things happen to him, among the rest—visions. It fell on this wise that, the other day, GRIP experienced a vision. GRIP was another personage—he suddenly found himself a modern BOSWELL, possessing the peculiar instincts of the BOSWELL tribe. Of course, he at once looked round for his affinity—his centre to satellize around—his great man to chronicle. And he was there. GRIP recognized him by his first sentence. The figure was different; it appeared younger, though still stout, and heavy as of yore. But the pomposity, the length of words, the unshakable self-assertion and continual spirit of contradiction—all were here.

"Yes, Sir," said this being, "you knew me well at a remote period; exercise your memory. Transmigration is not a fallacy; I was the distinguished JOHNSON; I am the Honorable BLAKE. You are BOSWELL; you are GRIP. In different and successive ages, it appertains to you to enlighten, to edify, to amuse a listening world with an account of my proceedings."

"Pray, Sir," said GRIP-BOSWELL, "do you find in yourself the same power of mind and force of thought, after this great change of body and place?"

"I am not thoroughly aware, Sir," returned Dr. JOHNSON BLAKE, "whether the change have caused inferiority or generated superiority of mental calibre, but I am perfectly conscious of a remarkable difference in other respects."

"If I might venture to ask," said GRIP-BOSWELL, "I would beg to know further."

"If you will divest yourself of a disagreeable tendency to circumlocution in request, and a parasitical timidity of manner in address, Sir," said the great man, "you may ask, and I shall experience pleasure in replying. I am conscious of a radical difference in fundamental principles, in the consequent action based on those principles, yet experience no remarkable difference in my habitual method of expression of those principles. In plain words, Sir, to adopt the perspicuity necessitated by your limited capacity, I discover that, since my change of mundane sphere and bodily corporization, though I yet talk like the original JOHNSON, I act like the imitation BLAKE."

"This," said his humble observer, "is strange indeed. It would please me much to hear an example, or more than one would please me yet more."

"You shall be pleased, Sir," said the sage. "In the verbal communication of ordinary conversation, as formerly, in the more elevated perorations of the rostrum, in the forensic deliveries of the tribunal, as at present, it is peculiarly agreeable to me to occasion in surrounding breasts those delightful sentiments of pleasure which a benign Creator has conferred on some the power of imparting, on all the capability of enjoying."

"At present, then, Sir, if I may so express it," said his satellite, "I will enquire what differences you perceive in particular instances in your *role* of BLAKE to the manner in which you would have treated similar instances, had they occurred in the *role* of JOHNSON."

"The attempt to express in French what may be with equivalent propriety expressed in English, is a peculiar in correction common to vulgar minds," said the sage, sharply. "But concerning the subject of your interrogations, I observe that in public disquisitions, delivered in my present life I describe to surrounding multitudes, in language rich with superabundant metaphor and brilliant with the coruscations of imagination, enhanced by the expression of gesture and the fire of apparently patriotic animation, the necessity of certain measures conducive to the prosperity of the country, and my own inalterable intention of continued connection with no party, combination, or political concatenation, which will not with immediate, consistent, and continual determination proceed to the execution of the same. In my former state of existence I should decidedly and peremptorily have dissolved connection with parties refusing so to act; in my present state I continue to assist in their deliberation, and remain a member of those combinations membership in which I have severely and unflinchingly denounced."

"And how, Sir," asked GRIP-BOSWELL, "do you account for this strange change?"

"In all nations and all ages, Sir," replied the eminent two-fold creation, "credibility of the supernatural has commended itself to the intellect of the cultivated aristocrat, and to the instinct of the uneducated plebeian. I find, in my mind, a certain distinct supernatural interference. I find myself embark in political life; I observe myself profoundly denunciatory of the meaner passions incident to a political career, yet altogether unable to resist the power of those identical passions or to prevent the entanglement of their influence."

"And what further, respected Sir?" asked the modern BOSWELL.

"It has also disagreeably impressed itself on my notice," replied the JOHNSON of to-day, "that the straightforward integrity of my original character has suffered decided diminution, if it have not undergone complete destruction. As I have but now remarked, my capabilities of promulgating instruction have in no respect lessened, my powers of myself observing the cause of action I recommend to others by no means remain unimpaired. Coalitions, for instance, met with my whole

denunciatory powers of attack, and underwent my full force of exposal. Yet I am deliberately and of free intention connected with a political combination whose composing atoms are of all others most innately repugnant. Sir, in my former state I should have loathed such action as wavering, purposeless, and most discreditably. I should have, if accidentally betrayed into its evincement, have abandoned it instantly and abhorrently. Yet I now continue it—nay, I delight in it. This I attribute distinctly to that strange supernatural influence which outweighs the intentions of mortals, and shapes their plans to its will."

"I think, Sir," said GRIP-BOSWELL, "that I remember many occasions when people would have gladly given supernatural influence as a reason for actions they had performed, if they had had any idea it would have been accepted as an excuse."

This little sentence, though expressed in that quiet, unpretentious, and frank manner characteristic of GRIP-BOSWELL, or perhaps rather of GRIP, seemed to strike some tender chord in the bosom of the sage of the past and present. His nostril swelled, his chest expanded, his eye flashed. He spoke:

"Sir," he said "I recognize in your expression a concealed and malign meaning, hostile to my character and prejudicial to my interests. Know, Sir, that the administration of which I have the honour to be an unworthy member is destined long to sway the fortunes of this land. Sir, I perceive you are a vile Tory. "Begone, Sir!"

And GRIP, with humble if sarcastic bow, retired, and he awoke, and behold, it was a vision.

Only Waiting.

The prison door stands open, and immediately in front of it stands the trembling form of the Ex-editor of the *West Durham News*, only waiting for the legal authorities to give him a final *big push*.

The Astonished Agriculturist.

DECEIVER.—Honest old farmer, whither are you going?

Do you not wish to-day to make your fortune?

I have some things here which I am now selling,

Will do it for you.

Waggons I deal in; see them in this picture.
Half of the weight and twice the strength of others,
Buggies and cutters of the same description.—
See my credentials.

Threshing-machines—one-horse ones—perfect beauties;
Ploughs of a pattern you have never seen yet,
Also a harrow warranted to always
Double the harvest.

Ask you to buy them?—nothing of the sort, Sir!
Merely I wish that you shall be my agent,
Selling them for me at a high percentage,
Here's the agreement.

You're but to sign it—just here in this corner,
Why should you always break your back at farming?
When you can make five times the money easy,
Just in your parlour?

Why should your bones, now you are getting older,
Weary with toil more fit for younger persons?
Why, there are people I have lately dealt with,
Rich in a year, sir!

FARMER.—There is much reason in what you have said, sir,
Things of that sort I can quickly sell here,
For such exist not in the parts around us—
There, I have signed it.

ONE MONTH AFTER.

VISITOR.—I have come in, Sir, on a bit of business,
Here is a note of yours which I must beg you
Just now to settle, 'tis a hundred dollars,
And overdue, Sir.

FARMER.—Blessings upon my heart, my liver also!
What can such wicked people have been made for?
This is the paper which I gave the dealer,
In those farm tools, Sir!

VISITOR.—That is a thing I nothing no about, Sir.
This is a note of yours; to-day I bought it.
Please you to pay it, for the law will make you,
Do so most quickly.

[Scene closes.]