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LONDON, ENGLAND.

And MESSRS. BAIRD & CO., P. O. Box 157, St. John's, Newfoundland, are the resident wholesale agents.

Thistle-dom Frae Scotland.

HUMOUR OF SCOTTISH POETS.
(Contributed.)

Robert Burns, Scottish Poet, was the son of a gardener, and was born at Alloway, near Ayr, Scotland, 1759 and died in 1796.

Sir Walter Scott, Scottish novelist and poet, was born at Edinburgh, 1771 and died in 1832.

There have been few great poets—few poets of any appreciable quality, indeed—anywhere, who have not had a lively and appreciative sense of humour, if they have not actually been positive and productive humourists.

It is a faculty of the human mind without which no man can be intellectually great—without which no view of life can be comprehensive and true; a faculty without which Shakespeare could no more have sounded the gamut of human feeling as he did, than a man who is colour-blind could describe the glowing iridescence of the rainbow. In Burns and Scott the most notable among Scottish poets—and mighty influences both in the republic of letters—the faculty of original humour was revealed to an extraordinary degree.

In the case of Scott the playfulness of his fancy was made manifest essentially, no doubt, in the Waverley Novels, and in conversation with individuals; his poetry being mainly martial and moving, and severe rather than lighthearted. In Burns, the greater poet, and the more impulsive genius, there was revealed the greater humourist and the reader wit, as well as the finer sentimentalist.

Alone amid the subtleties of Nature, or touched by the sunbeams in her driving moods, he was reverent in spirit and glowed with adoration as fervid and sincere as ever animated the breast of the royal Hebrew bard himself; but prompted to join the social circle at the festive board, and fired by the spirit of fun, he would dabble and delight a party for hours together by the brilliance and rapidity of his flashes of ready wit and humorous satire. The most ample and effective examples of Burns's humour occur, of course, in his poems, notably in "Tam o' Shanter," and "The Jolly Beggar," in his songs "Duncan Gray," "Tam Glen," and "Sic a Wife as Willie Had," and in some of the rhymed epistles. The impromptu epigrams and epigrams, which find a place in nearly every edition of his works, afford convincing evidence of the pungency of his electric wit, and the annihilating weight of his equally ready satire.

But with all these—particularly the poems and the songs—every adult person in Scotland is so familiar that to quote from one or other of them here would be something like superfluous labour. A few of the number of the impromptu rhymes and epigrams, with descriptions of the circumstances under which they were provoked, may, however, be reproduced en passant. The process will freshen the reader's memory, if it does not actually enlighten his mind.

Burns, like true steel, was ever ready to give fire at the touch of the flint, and being present in a company where an ill-educated pretentive was boring everyone by boasting of the many great people he had fatally been visiting, the poet gave vent to his feelings in the following impromptu stanza, which may be sure effectually silenced the babbling snob before him:

"No more of your titled acquaintances boast
And in lordly circles you've been;
An insect is only an insect at most
Though it crawl on the curls of a queen."

Having been storm-sted one Sunday at Lamington, in Clydesdale, the poet went to church, but the day was cold, and the place so uncomfortable, and the sermon so poor, that he left this protest on the pew which he had occupied:

"As could a wind as ever blew,
A cauldier Kirk, an' it's not few;
As could a preacher's ever speak—
Ye'll a' be hot ere I come back."

While in Edinburgh, he visited at the studio of a well-known painter,

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who was at that time engaged on a picture of Jacob's dream. Burns embodied his criticism of the work in the following lines, which he wrote on the back of a sketch still preserved in the painter's family:

"Dear— I'll gie some advice,
Ye'll tak' it if no' unwill:
Ye shouldna paint at angles sair,
But try and paint the devil.
To paint an angel's little mark,
Wi' Auld Nick there's less danger;
Ye'll say draw a weel-kent face
But no see weel a stranger."

Never perhaps was there a neater compliment paid to feminine loveliness than that paid by Burns to Miss Ainslie in an impromptu rhyme. During the poet's Border tour he went to church on Sunday, accompanied by the sister of his travelling companion, Mr. Robert Ainslie, of Berrywell, Dunfermline. The text for the day happened to contain a severe denunciation of obstinate sinners, with long, tongue, mischief makers, and— Mars, and the poet, observing the young lady intently turning over the leaves of her Bible in search of the passage, took out a small piece of paper and wrote the following lines, which he immediately passed to her:

"Fair maid ye need not take the hint
Nor idle texts pursue;
Twas guilty sinners that he meant
Not angels such as you."

Ready-witted graces before meat were evolved, by the poet on demand, time and again. Having met some friends to dine with them at the Globe Tavern, Dumfries, on one occasion, when a sheep's head happened to be the fare provided, he was asked to give something new as a grace, and instantly delivered the following:

"O God, when hunger pinches sore,
Do thou stand us in stead;
And send us from thy bounteous store
A few o' theseer's head."

After having dined, however, and greatly enjoyed the repast, he was appealed to return thanks, and did so in four lines revealing native wit by saying:

"O Lord, since we have feasted thus,
Which we so little merit;
Let Meg now take away the flesh,
And Joek bring in the spirit."

Than Burns's epigram "On a Suicide," nothing more scathingly sarcastic was ever written. It is as if he could not express too much scorn of the miserable coward who would eschew the obligations of life by an act of self-destruction:

"Earth'd up, here lies an imp o' hell,
Planted by Satan's dibble;
Poor silly wretch, he's damned himself—
To save the Lord the trouble."

Burns was standing one day on the quay at Greenock, when a wealthy merchant belonging to the town had the misfortune to fall into the harbor. He was no swimmer, and would certainly have been drowned had not a sailor, at the risk of his own life, plunged in and rescued him from his dangerous situation. The merchant, plunged in and rescued him from his plight, put his hand into his pocket and presented the sailor with a shilling. The crowd, who were by this time collected, loudly protested against the insignificance of the sum, but Burns, with a smile of ineffable scorn, entreated them to restrain their clamour, "For," said he, "the gentleman is, of course, the best judge of the value of his own life."

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Get MRS. STEWART'S Home Made Bread.—apr4,smo

Reminded.

A valet to a certain sporting nobleman who had procured leave to attend a race meeting next day informed his wife that his lordship had predicted that a horse named "Most Beautiful" was a certain winner.

He arose upon the morning of the race to find that the name had completely escaped his memory, but his more retentive wife posed before him

in her most alluring manner asked:
"Don't I remind you, James, of Casting a hasty glance in her direction he exclaimed excitedly: 'By Jove! Ugly Duckling!'"

Get Mrs. Stewart's Home Made Bread.—apr18,smo

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Blissful Ignorance.

John was grumbling because he had no money to buy an air-gun. "Well, now," said Ted, "if you put a bit in the post office every week, you'd soon save enough for an air-gun."

Weeks passed. "How much have you

saved?" asked Ted, when they met again.

"I'm not sure," said John.

"But haven't you a bank book?"

"Why, no. I just dropped the money every week into the pillar box as I was passing."

WATCH FOR "PALS."
aug26,tf

MUTT AND JEFF



"ROTTEN LUCK, I CALLS IT! JEFF BEAT ME TO THE CAR THIS MORNING!"



"HE'S CERTAINLY TIGHT WITH HIS 'ROLLER SKATE'. IT AIN'T SAVING ME MUCH SHOE LEATHER!"



"WHERE DID YOU GO FOR A SPIN, JEFF?"



"NOWHERE. I AIN'T HAD MY CAR OUT TODAY. BUT—"



"I'M GONNA TAKE A SPIN NOW WITH MISS SCHULTZ!"



"LISTEN, DO YOU KNOW YOUR BOAT AIN'T IN THE GARAGE?"

"SURE! I'M KEEPING IT IN MY TRUNK UNTIL I GET SOME BURGLARY INSURANCE!"

—By Bud Fisher