

the viands and liquors of the inn were good, and the conversation of the two storm-delayed gentlemen was like knife sharpening knife. In short, they spent the fortnight together in the utmost good fellowship, and were friends ever after.

One other trait of the Scottish wit which came under Foote's attention, may be noticed. At the close of an unsuccessful piece of law-business, when the agent of the opposite party called to get payment of the expenses, observing that that person was prepared for a journey, the comedian inquired where he was going. "To London," was the answer. "And how do you mean to travel?" asked the manager. "On foot," replied the wily agent, significantly depositing the cash in his pocket at the same moment.

As Foote was always ready to seize on any passing folly, either of the public or of individuals, as a means of attracting audiences, it is not surprising that the hoax of the Cock Lane Ghost, which took place in 1762, furnished him with a theme. Samuel Johnson being one of those who inclined to believe in the statements of the deceiving party, Foote resolved to bring that august character upon the stage. Johnson, dining one day at the house of Mr. Thomas Davies, the bookseller, was informed of the design entertained by Foote, and knowing very well the kind of remonstrance to which alone the mimic was accessible, he asked his host if he knew the common price of an oak stick. Being answered, sixpence, he said, "Why, then, sir, give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity, for I am determined the fellow shall not take me off with impunity." Foote soon received information of this avowal of the Herculean lexicographer, and was further told that it was Johnson's intention "to plant himself in the front of the stage-box on the first night of the proposed play, and, if any buffoon attempted to mimic him, to spring forward on the stage, knock him down in the face of the audience, and then appeal to their common feelings and protection." It is almost unnecessary to add, that Johnson's character was omitted. Johnson was not an admirer of Foote. He, very absurdly we think, termed his mimicry not a power, but a vice; and alleged that he was not good at it, being unable, he said, to take off any one unless he had some strong peculiarity. He allowed, however, that he had wit, fertility of ideas, a considerable extent of information, and was "for obstreperous broad-faced mirth without an equal." "The first time," said Dr. J., "that I was in company with Foote, was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased; and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my fork, throw myself back in my chair, and fairly laugh it out." He also told the following anecdote, still more strongly illustrative of the power of the wit;—"Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small-beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers among his numerous acquaintance. Fitzherbert was one who took his small beer, but it was so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather a favourite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance; and having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr. Fitzherbert, in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at the table; he was so delighted with Foote's stories that when he went down stairs, he told them, 'This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small beer.'"

When in Dublin in 1763, Foote produced his play of the *Orators*, in which he burlesqued Sheridan the elocutionist, and George Faulkner, an eminent printer in the Irish capital. This last gentleman, who, from egotism and every kind of coxcombry, is said to have been a rich subject for Foote's genius, prosecuted him for libel, and gained large damages. Here also some hot Hibernian spirit so far resented being made a subject of ridicule by the wit, as to kick him openly on the street. Dr. Johnson's remark on this last circumstance was bitterness steeped in bitterness—"Why, Foote must be rising in the world; when he was in England, no one thought it worth while to kick him." By his various talents, Foote was now in the enjoyment of a large income; but his invincible extravagance kept him always poor. He had a maxim, that to live in a state of constant effort to restrain expenses, is the nearest thing to absolute poverty. He had a town and country house, and a carriage, and entertained great numbers of all kinds of people in the most superb style. On one occasion, after the successful run of one of his plays, he expended twelve hundred pounds on a service of plate—re-marking when the act was spoken of by a friend with surprise, that, as he could not keep his gold, he was resolved to try if he could keep silver. On another occasion, when at Bristol, on his way to Dublin, falling into play, in which he was at all times a great dupe, he lost seventeen hundred pounds, being all that he had to commence

* Boswell.

operations with in Ireland, and was obliged to borrow a hundred to carry him on his way. In 1766, when riding home from a gentleman's house where he had been entertained in Hants, he was thrown, and had one of his legs broken in two places. He bore the amputation of the limb, not only with fortitude, but with jocularity. While the accident did not materially mar his efficiency as an actor, it procured him a positive advance in fortune. The Duke of York, brother to George III., having been present when it happened, was so much interested in consequence in behalf of the unfortunate mimic, that he obtained for him a royal patent, which enabled him to keep the Haymarket Theatre open for the four summer months as long as he lived.

With Garrick our hero was occasionally on such good terms as to borrow money from him. At other times, professional rivalry made them bitter enemies. In the year 1769, Mr. Garrick made a great hit by bringing out the celebrated Stratford Jubilee on the stage, himself appearing as one of the most important persons in the procession. Foote, pining with envy, resolved to burlesque an affair certainly very open to ridicule, and in a mock procession to introduce Garrick with all his masquerading paraphernalia, while some droll was to address him in the following lines of the jubilee laureate—

A nation's taste depends on you,
Perhaps a nation's virtues too—

whereupon the puffed-up manager was to clap his arms like the wings of a cock, and cry out

Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Garrick heard of the scheme, and for some time was like to go distracted with vexation, anticipating the utter ruin of his fame. Foote, meanwhile borrowed from him five hundred pounds, which Garrick was probably glad to give, in the hope that his kindness would soften the satirist. Soon after, Foote pettishly gave back the money, on hearing it reported that he was under obligations to Garrick. The situation of the latter gentleman was now so miserable, that some friends interfered to obtain assurance from Foote that he would spare Garrick. If it be strange to contemplate a man of such secure reputation as Garrick writhing under the fear of ridicule, it is infinitely more curious to learn that Foote, who was so impartial, as Johnson called it, as to burlesque and tell lies of every body, never took up a newspaper without dreading to meet with some squib upon himself. After the two managers had been reconciled, Garrick paid Foote a visit, and expressed some gratification at finding a bust of himself above the bureau of his brother actor. "But," said Garrick, "how can you trust me so near your gold and bank notes?" "Oh, because you have got no funds," replied the irrepressible Foote.

It would be absurd to weigh such a man as Foote in ordinary balances. Such persons are mere sports of nature, which she sends apparently for no other purpose than to promote the salutary act of laughter among the species. Yet, while Foote wanted all moral dignity, he is allowed to have been upon the whole a humane and generous man. That impartiality, also, in the distribution of his ridicule, of which Johnson spoke, might be considered as in some degree a redeeming clause in his character. And it really seems to have often served to obviate the offence which would have otherwise been taken against him. Cumberland tells in his *Memoirs*, that, having four persons one day at dinner, and one having gone behind a screen, Foote, conceiving he had left the house, began to play off his jokes against him; whereupon the subject of his ridicule cried out, "I am not gone, Foote; spare me till I am out of hearing; and now, with your leave, I will stay till these gentlemen depart, and then you shall amuse me at their cost, as you have amused them at mine." With such a man it was vain to fall into a passion. He was a being to be laughed at or with—serious censure would have been thrown away upon him, and playful sarcasm would have only vexed him, without teaching him from his own to pity another's pains. If it be thought proper to condemn poor Foote upon the score of principle, we frankly own that ours is not the pen which can frame the verdict.

THE STEAM SERVICE.

The time is not yet come—but come it will—when the masts of our Royal Navy shall be unshipped, and huge, unsightly chimneys be erected in their place. The trident will be taken out of the hand of Neptune, and replaced by the effigy of a red-hot poker; the union-jack will look like a smoke jack; and Lambton's, Russell's, and Adair's, will be made Admirals of the Black; the fore-castle will be called the Newcastle, and the cock-pit will be termed the coal-pit; a man-of-war's tender will be nothing but a Shields' collier; first lieutenants will have to attend lectures on the steam-engine, and midshipmen must take lessons as climbing boys in the art of sweeping flues. In short, the good old tune of "Rule Britannia" will give way to "Polly put the kettle on;" while the *Victory*, the *Majestic*, and the *Thunderer* of Great Britain will "paddle in the burn," like the *Harlequin*, the *Dart*, and the *Magnet* of Margate. It will be well for our song-writers to bear a wary eye to the Fleet, if they would prosper as marine poets. Some sea Gurney may get a seat at the Admiralty Board,

and then farewell, a long farewell, to the old ocean imagery; marine metaphor will require a new figure-head. Flowing sheets, snowy wings, and the old comparison of a ship to a bird will become obsolete and out of date! Poetical topsails will be taken aback, and all such things as reefs and double reefs will be shaken out of song. For my own part, I cannot be sufficiently thankful that I have not sought a Helicon of salt water; or canvassed the nine muses as a writer for their Marine Library; or made Pegasus a sea-horse, when sea-horses as well as land-horses are equally likely to be superseded by steam. After such a consummation, when the sea-service, like the tea-service, will depend chiefly on boiling water, it is very doubtful whether the Fleet will be worthy of anything but plain prose. I have tried to adapt some of our popular blue ballads to the boiler, and Dibdin certainly does not steam quite so well as a potato. However if the Sea Songs are to be in immortal use, they will have to be revised and corrected in future editions thus:

I steamed from the Downs in the Nancy,
My jib how she smoked through the breeze;
She's a vessel as tight to my fancy
As ever *boil'd* through the salt seas.

When up the *flue* the sailor goes,
And ventures on the *pot*,
The landsman, he no better knows,
But thinks hard is his *to*.

Bold Jack with smiles each danger meets,
Weights anchor, lights the log;
Trims up the *fire*, picks out the *slates*,
And drinks his can of *grog*.

Go, patter to lubbers and swabs do you see,
'Bout danger, and fear, and the like;
But a *Boulton and Watt* and good *Wall's-end* give me;
And it an't to a little I'll strike.

Though the tempest our *chimney* smack smooth shall down smite,
And shiver each *bundle* of wood;
Clear the wreck, *stir the fire*, and stow every thing tight,
And *boiling a gallop* we'll scud.

I have cooked Steevens's, or rather Inledon's "Storm," in the same way; but the pathos does not seem any the tenderer for stewing.

Hark, the boatswain hoarsely bawling,
By shovel, tongs, and poker, stand;
Down the scuttle quick be hauling,
Down your bellows, hand, boys, hand.
Now it freshens,—blow like blazes;
Now unto the coal-hole go;
Stir, boys, stir, don't mind black faces,
Up your ashes nimbly throw.

Ply your bellows, raise the wind, boys;
See the valve is clear, of course;
Let the paddles spin, don't mind, boys,
Though the weather should be worse.
Fore and aft a proper draft get,
Oil the engines, see all clear;
Hands up, each a sack of coal get,
Man the boiler, cheer, lads, cheer.

Now the dreadful thunder's roaring,
Peal on peal contending clash;
On our heads fierce rain falls pouring,
In our eyes the paddles splash.
One wide water all around us,
All above one smoke-black sky;
Different deaths at once surround us!
Hark! what means that dreadful cry?

The funnel's gone! cries ev'ry tongue out;
The engineer's washed off the deck!
A leak beneath the coal-hole's sprung out,
Call all hands to clear the wreck.
Quick, some coal, some nubble pieces;
Come, my hearts, be stout and bold;
Plumb the boiler, speed decreases,
Four feet water getting cold.

While o'er the ship wild waves are beating
We for wives or children mourn;
Alas! from hence there's no retreating:
Alas! to them there's no return.
The fire is out— we've burst the bellows,
The tinder-box is swamped below:
Heaven have mercy on poor fellows,
For only that can serve us now!

Devoutly do I hope that the kettle, though a great vocalist, will never thus appropriate the old sea songs of England. In the words of an old Greenwich pensioner, "Steaming and biling does very well for *Urn Bay* and the likes; but the craft does not look regular and shipshape to the eye of a tar who has sailed with Duncan, Howe, and Jervis; and who would rather even go without *port* than have it through a *funnel*."—Hood.

BLAME.—Men submit to correction and criticism much more readily than we suppose; only even if well-grounded, it must not be too passionate. They are like flowers, which open to gentle dews, but close to a heavy rain.

DOUBT IN TRUTH.—There are times when the stars of truth and right appear to waver, as the stars of the sky do under the sirocco. But wait till the storm is over, and you will see that it was man only, not the heavens, that wavered.